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There is no tradition more important to the American Republic than that of men and women coming together on behalf of their communities. That is precisely what has been happening in the New Communities Program in Chicago, where literally thousands of neighborhood residents have assembled over the last year or so to think about their communities and their future. The results are quality-of-life plans—summarized in the pages that follow—that set the tone and goals for these communities over the next several years.

By definition, community development people are optimists. Their mission is to make the neighborhood a better place for the people who live and work there, to bring investment and services back, to make the neighborhood more livable and to preserve healthy parts of the civic fabric.

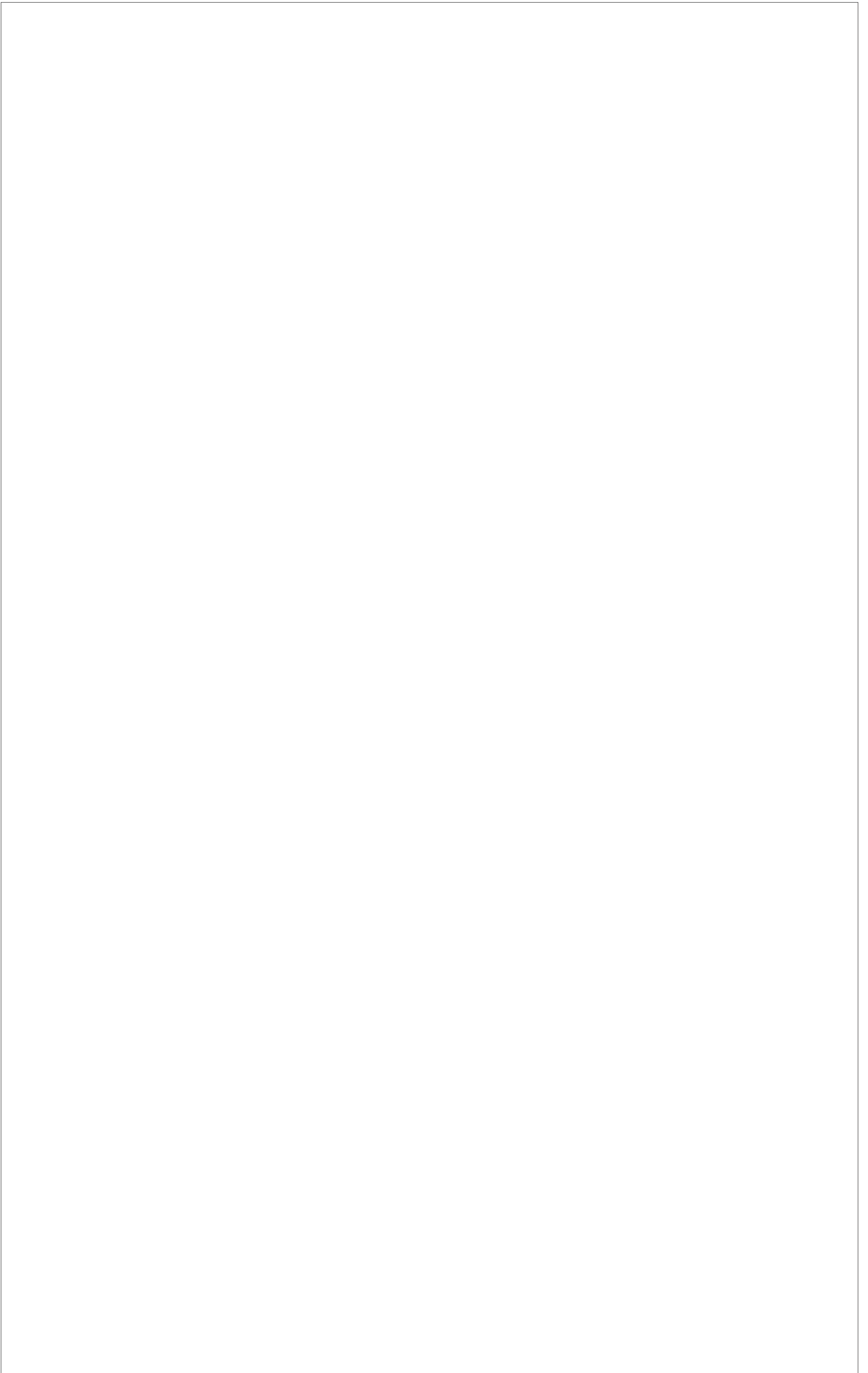
These individuals are the true heirs of the founders of our country, who were motivated by one principle in particular: human liberty. Liberty, though, is not a given. Rather, it is achieved through personal engagement in a democratic civil society in which the general welfare of that society is of the utmost concern. That in my mind is exactly the task that the many participants in the NCP process accepted when they took on the challenge of these quality-of-life plans: to create a society in which men and women, from highly disparate backgrounds, find their freedom through their personal dedication to the common weal.

We have all been greatly aided in this process through the generosity of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and in particular through the very personal interest of its president, Jonathan Fanton. We're grateful to a number of other funders as well, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Living Cities, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, Partnership for New Communities and Polk Bros. Foundation.

The pages that follow are a powerful expression of American freedom. We hope that they stir your imagination and re-ignite your own commitment to the American ideal.



Andrew Mooney
Senior Program Director
LISC/Chicago



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Grassroots planning is a powerful tool and an

COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Modern chain retailers, with their suburban focus and feel, have been slow to rediscover the buying potential of urban neighborhoods, many of which remain woefully underserved. When they do move in, “big box category killers” tend to disrupt the scale and walk-ability of traditional retail districts and to wipe out smaller, locally-owned competition. Older communities need help marketing themselves... without “selling out” their neighborly character.

Several experiments are showing early results. The city-savvy market survey firm MetroEdge is helping Quad Communities trumpet the extraordinary unmet need for retailers on the mid-South Side, which exports \$450 million a year in retail spending for lack of competitive stores. (A new plan ng 4en ge gB ver

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A new community begins with new relationships. Despite the abandoned houses that dot some blocks, the gang presence and unfamiliar faces, the people of Chicago Southwest have decided to stay and to get to know one another. There's much to build upon: great assets, including Midway Airport and Marquette Park; dozens of religious institutions and community groups; even a showcase "green bungalow block" of restored, energy-efficient homes. But also there are racial tensions and economic challenges, low-performing schools and a troubled—oftentimes exploited—housing market.

Once the white ethnic enclave that chased away the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the neighborhood saw a doubling of African-Americans during the 1990s, to 53 percent, and a gain in Hispanics to 35 percent. The community is resilient and population is growing, yet the past decade saw a drop in homeownership and a rise in the poverty rate.

Chicago Southwest includes Chicago Lawn and portions of Gage Park, West Lawn, West Elsdon and North Ashburn. Since 1974, Greater Southwest Development Corp. (GSDC) has fostered \$500 million in commercial and residential development while battling redlining and FHA/VA mortgage abuse. GSDC worked closely with a sister organization, the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP), throughout this planning process. Thirty-seven task force commissioners, more than 300 residents and dozens of institutions helped create the plan's eight strategies and 40 projects. And more than 600 turned out for the local unveiling of the plan last November.

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Built up solid with affordable bungalows, Chicago Southwest has been hit hard in recent years by predatory lending and mortgage fraud. The neighborhood will fight back with such tactics as a Housing Connection program featuring pre-and post-purchase counseling; a tenant-landlord network; an anti-foreclosure campaign; and an effort to curb Section 8 rents that distort the private market.

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Though blessed with the Southwest Industrial Corridor and the newly expanded Midway

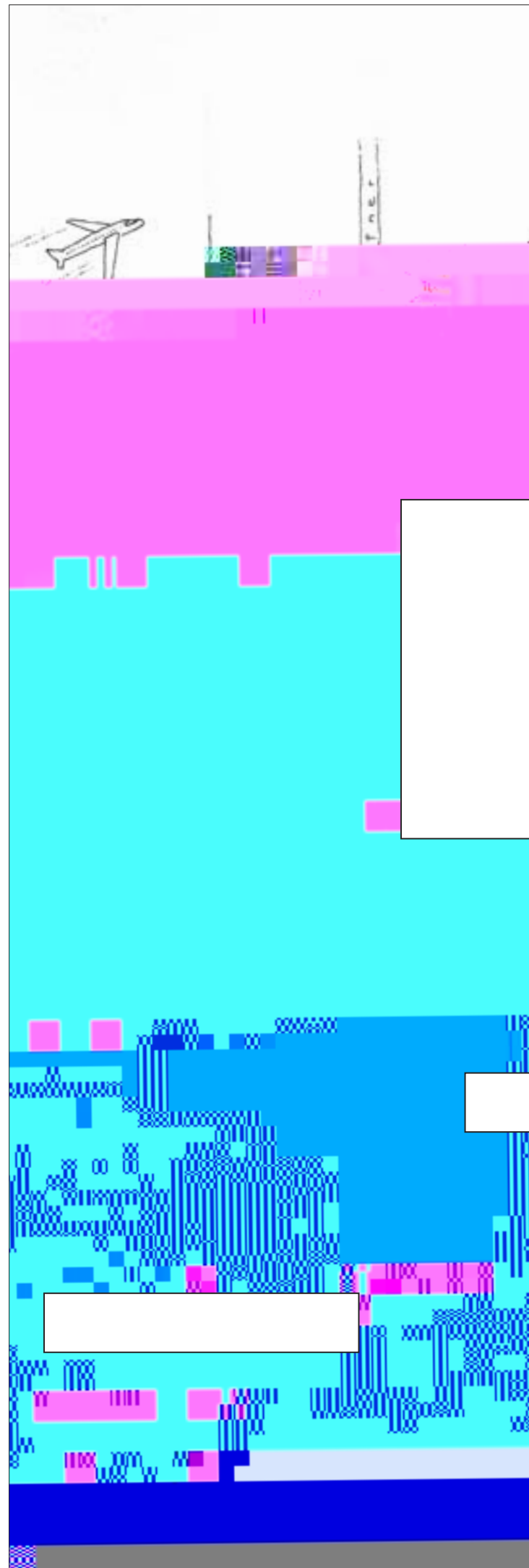
lack access to affordable health care options. The Chicago Southwest plan calls for a number of new health initiatives including public health programs in local schools, new community health centers and increased health screenings.

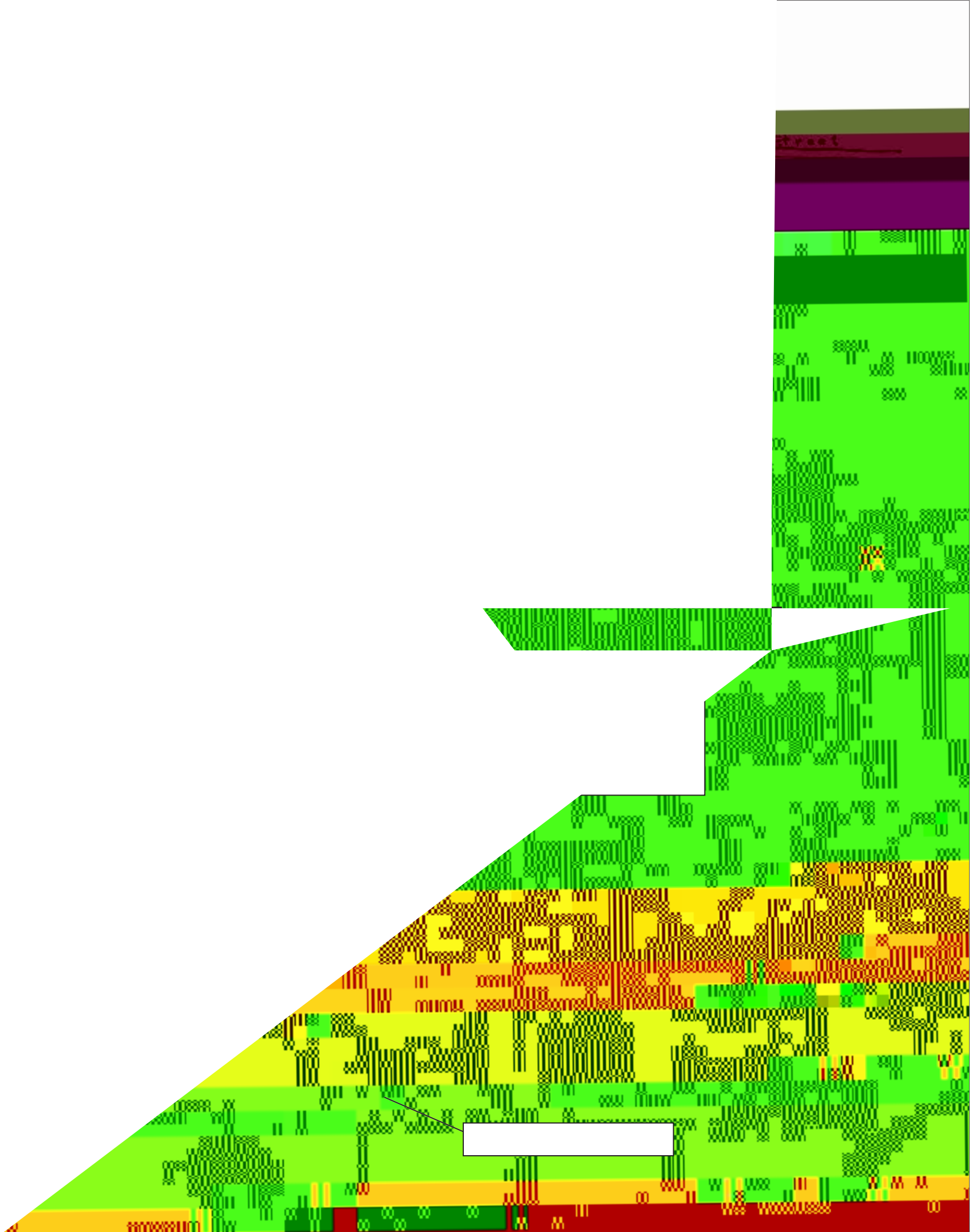
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Seeking to recruit leaders *and* good ideas for the plan, GSDC and SWOP conducted an in-depth survey of 104 individuals identified as community leaders. Using a mix of one-on-one interviews and focus groups, the leaders were asked to identify the neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Items most frequently mentioned were, respectively, community institutions, neighborhood cohesion and crime. Chicago Southwest's plan calls for renewed leadership development, especially to increase participation in the electoral process, champion civil rights, and build intercultural understanding.

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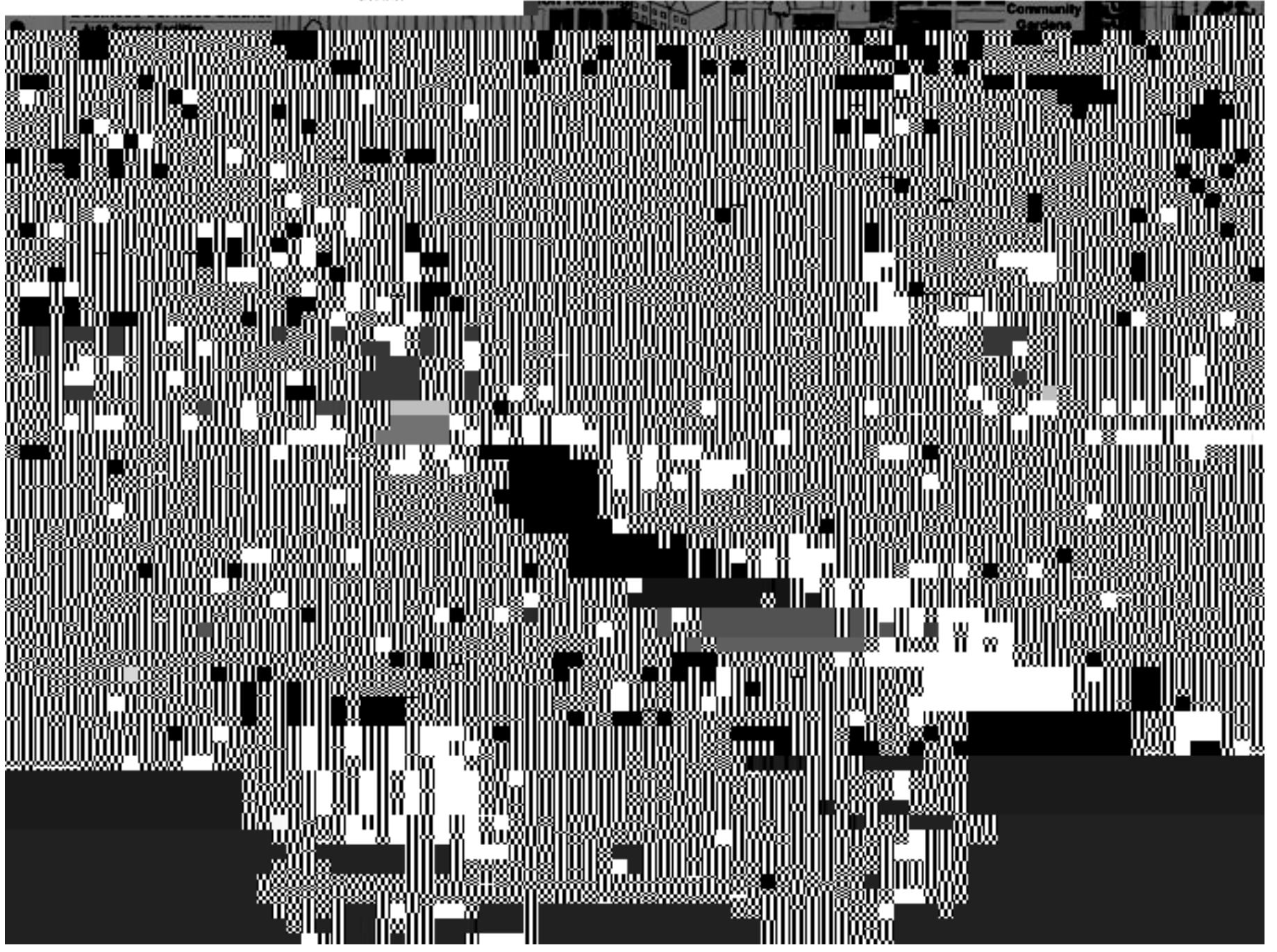


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Manufacturing Density Community Gardens



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A historic beacon for immigrants and low- to moderate-income families, Humboldt Park is being “discovered” by wealthier newcomers in search of luxury condos, proximity to Loop offices and Wicker Park nightlife. In response, the community is working even harder to stake a claim for longtime residents who wish to stay.

Familiar problems of low-income neighborhoods need attention in this proud community, split almost evenly between Latino and African-American residents. Most households are renters and nearly a third live at or below the poverty level. Gang and drug activity are serious problems, as is poor health, high unemployment and



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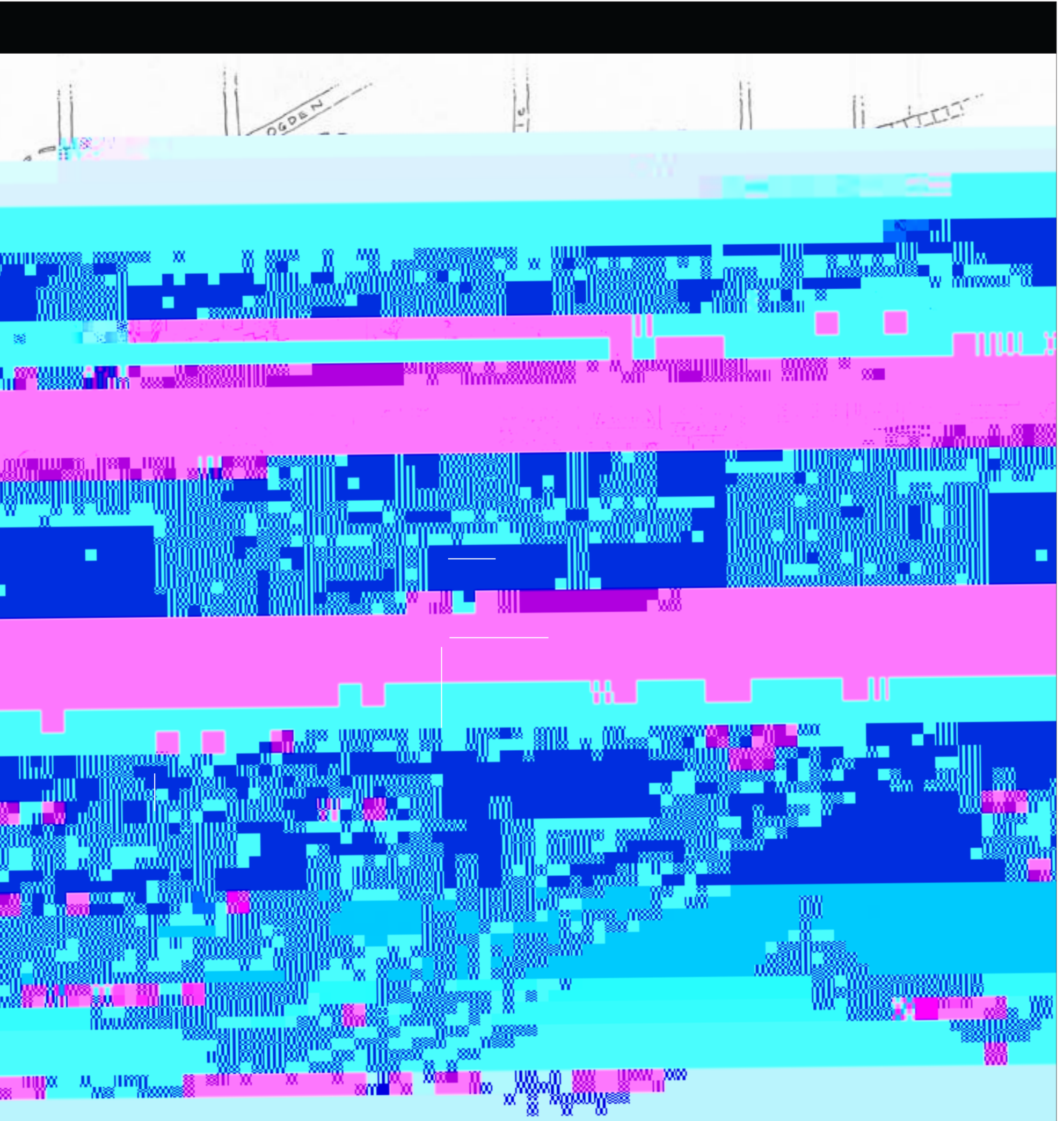
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Gentrification is issue No. 1 in this neighborhood of sturdy homes and tree-lined boulevards west of the Kennedy Expressway. As of 2000, its 82,000 residents were two-thirds Latino, but declining elementary school enrollments foretell displacement by upper-income singles and empty-nesters.



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Chicago's historic Mid-South Side is again on the threshold of greatness. Once a hotbed of commerce and culture—the “Black Metropolis” that spawned the jazz of Louis Armstrong and the moral clarity of Ida B. Wells—this area is in the midst of widespread redevelopment including the “transformation” of three Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) developments. The Quad Communities serv s v sd Chi h a r d f



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Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corporation

Born of the 1893 World's Fair and shaped by generations of community activists, Woodlawn has been down... yet now it is on the way up. The population of this mostly African-American community has stabilized at around 27,000 and new construction is beginning to fill in the community's more than 1,700 vacant lots.

The turnaround grew from nearly four decades of community organizing and pioneering development work by The Woodlawn Organization (T.W.O.), churches and block clubs. Non-profits and for-profits have built new homes along 63rd Street and many sides streets, with some values topping \$300,000. Woodlawn schools are improving with innovations such as the International Baccalaureate Program at the Andrew Carnegie School, while the Chicago Park District has taken over and renewed the Harris Recreation Center.

Launched in 1987, the Woodlawn Preservation and Investment Corp. teamed up with T.W.O. and the University of Chicago to organize the quality-of-life planning process. A core task force of 38 worked through committees and all-community meetings to engage 300 participants in the creation of eight strategies and 47 projects.

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The plan calls for beautification of the section of 63rd Street that runs under the "el" tracks, from Cottage Grove to King Drive, with a new streetscape, decorative hanging baskets and welcoming banners to support revival of retail and housing development. East of Cottage Grove, more housing is planned in the second phase of the Columbia Pointe development.

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The University is launching an ambitious redevelopment of the north side of 61st Street, to include an 800- to 900-bed student residence at Ellis Avenue; a 20,000-square-foot retail plaza at Woodlawn Avenue; and conversion of the vacant Illinois Bell switching station at Kenwood Avenue into office space. The retail component can provide convenient shopping for households in the apartment buildings and condominiums between 61st and 63rd streets.

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To expand local educational options, T.W.O. plans a math-and-science school for grades 7-12 at 1445 E. 65th Street. The University, which operates a charter school in the Kenwood neighborhood, is exploring creation of another in Woodlawn to serve children K-12. The U. of C. charter would be designed as a hub of training and leadership development for teachers and principals throughout Woodlawn and other neighborhoods.

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The community seeks broader recreation opportunities for people of all ages, including new programs at the Bessie Coleman Library and development of the Harris Recreation Center into a cultural and recreational hub. A special emphasis on expanded youth programming will be informed by a youth-oriented planning process and surveys.

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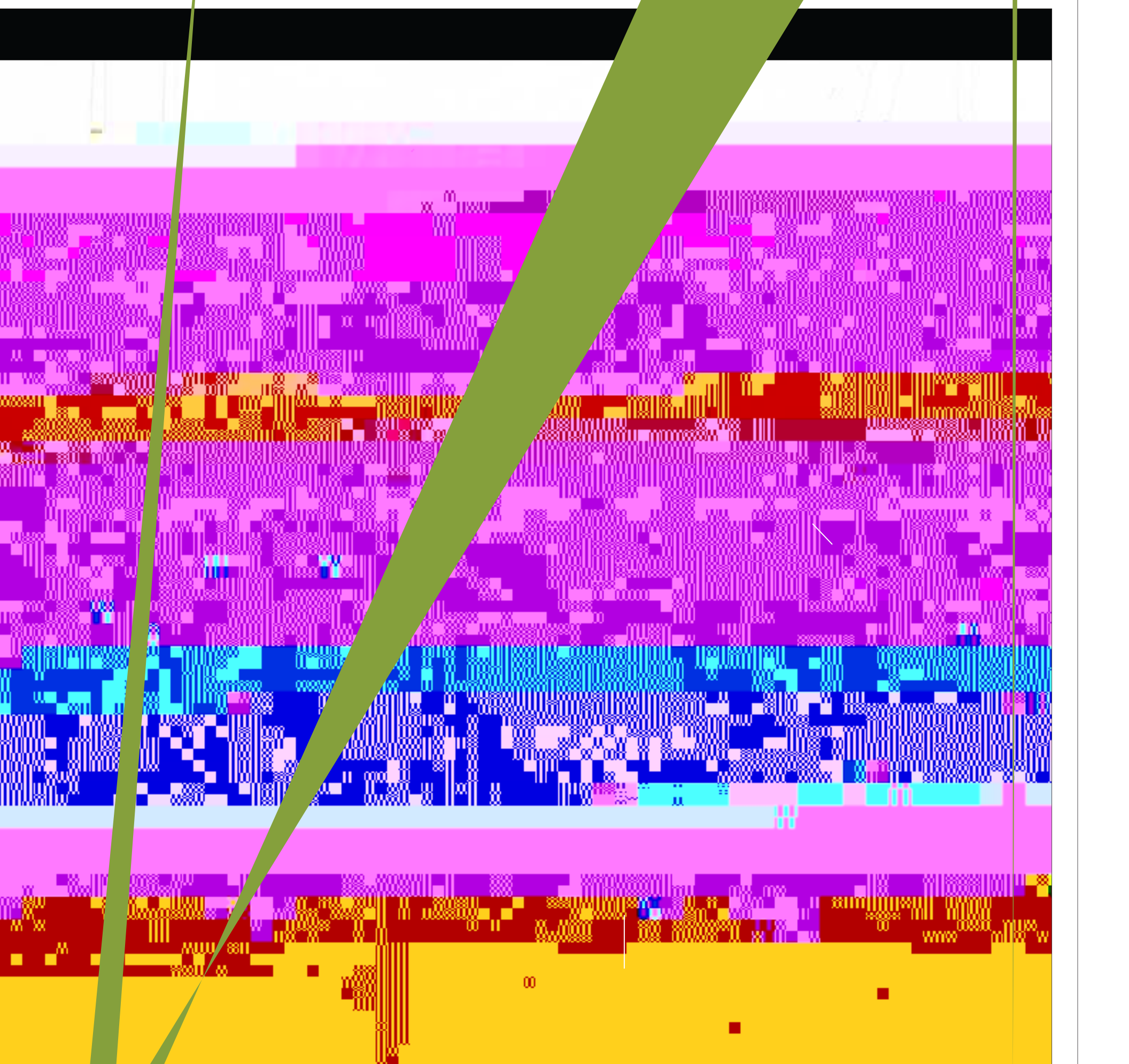
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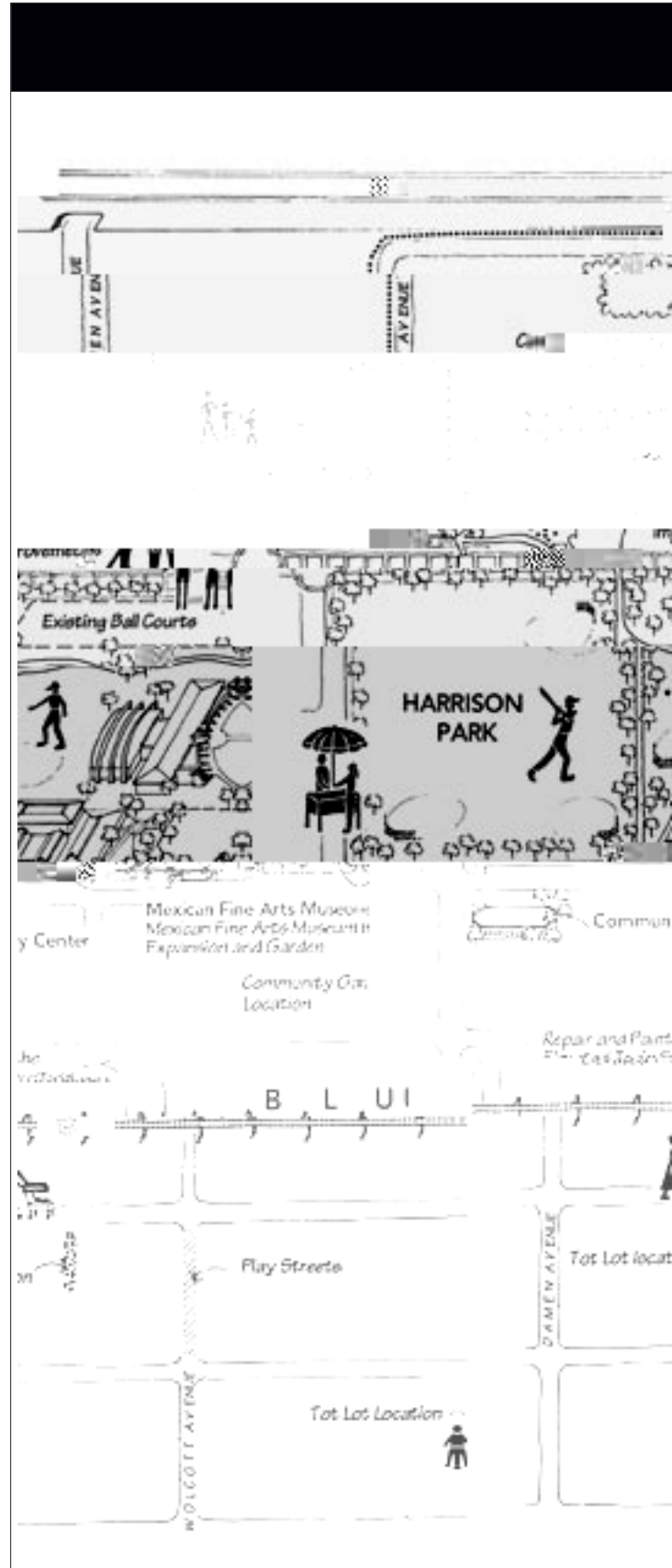
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Still recovering from the loss of its steel makers and metal benders, South Chicago saw its population (69 percent African-American, 27 percent Latino) ebb by another five percent during the '90s, to 38,596. Fewer union jobs mean incomes are relatively low, with 45 percent of households earning less than half the area median, but rates of homeownership, and of crime, closely track citywide averages.

Circumstances may change dramatically when developers convert the old USX South Works steel site, with its 537 acres of prime lakefront property, into a mix of uses including new homes, retail, industrial areas and a lakefront park. Investment of this magnitude will mean challenges, as well as opportunities, for the neighborhood's working-class families.

Founded in 1981, the Southeast Chicago Development Commission (SCDCOM) was invited by LISC in 1998 to participate in the pilot New Communities Initiative, a forerunner of NCP. Its quality-of-life plan, published in 2000, identified six strategies and 27 projects aimed at making South Chicago "a diverse, vibrant, safe, activity-filled neighborhood with healthy, educated and civically engaged residents."

Many of the plan's projects have been completed, along with others that go beyond the plan's goals. South Chicago's successes served to inspire a new class of NCP neigh i d drs ras cl s.nd tt e , ts nspire

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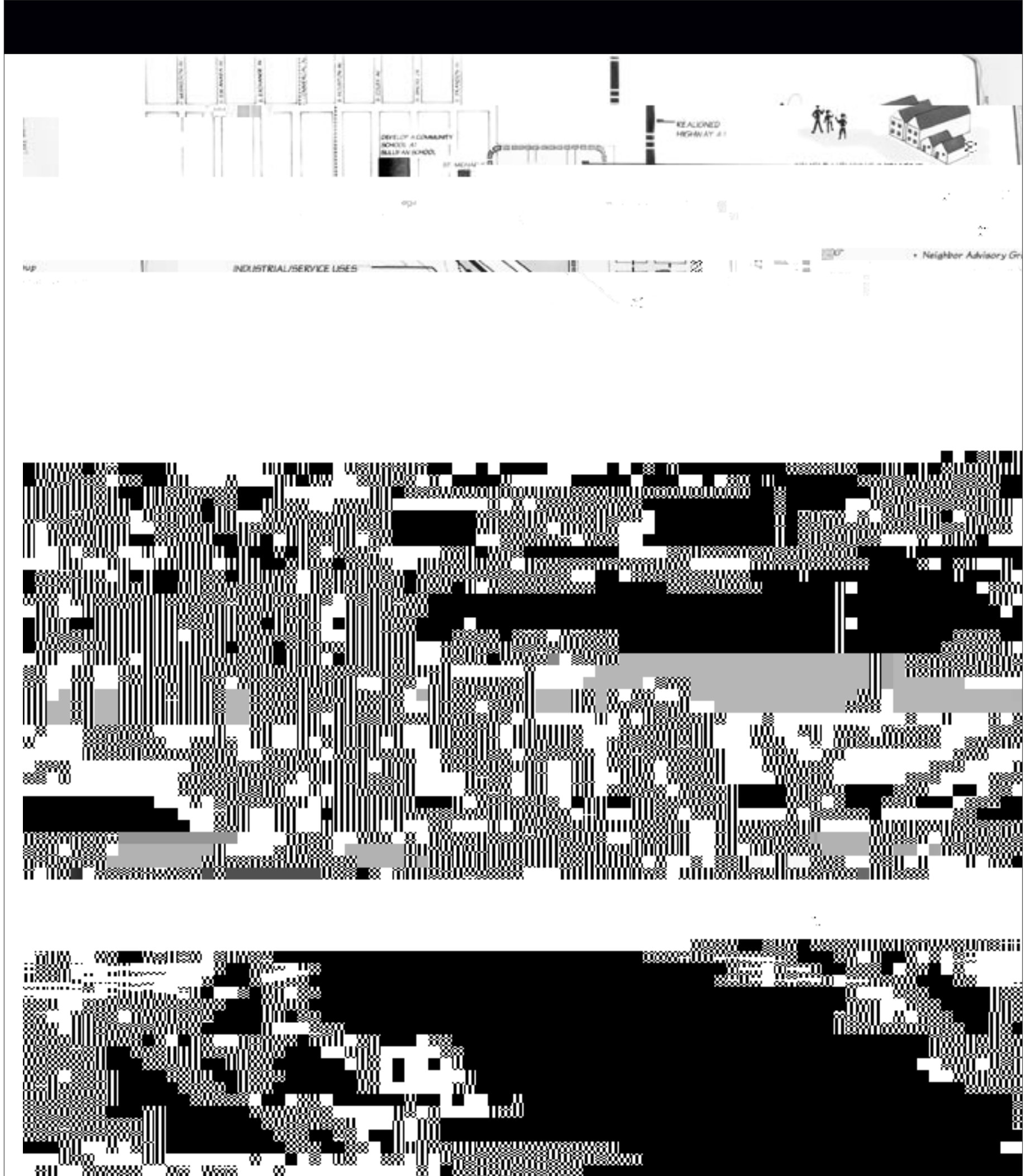
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Just across the park from the University of Chicago and Hyde Park is a neighborhood where 14,146 mostly African-American residents are eager to see better days. They may not need to wait long. Both north and south of the university, in North Kenwood and in Woodlawn, the “Hyde Park effect” is radiating new investment and redevelopment. Why not west, across the park?

The ingredients for renewal are present. Washington Park itself, designed in 1870 by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, is an under-appreciated jewel on the city’s Emerald Necklace. The Dan Ryan Expressway and Chicago Skyway are nearby. So is Jackson Park and Lake Michigan. And there’s plenty of land for developing: 1,411 vacant lots as of 2000.

St. Edmund’s Redevelopment Corp. (SERC) has laid a foundation for renewal via rehabilitation of eight local housing developments. Founded in 1990, SERC now owns and/or manages over 500 residential units including a formerly troubled 230-unit high-rise at 63rd and Michigan, a 61-unit senior citizens facility and several walk-up apartment buildings near 61st and Michigan.

Though not considered a comprehensive quality-of-life plan, SERC, with the help of planners at Camiros Ltd., has authored an ambitious plan for physical renewal of the neighborhood, where low household incomes, underperforming schools and street crime are among the challenges. Their shared vision: “A diverse and inclusionary neighborhood of mixed-income housing, reborn through the strength of its people and institutions.” SERC will revisit and expand the current plan’s strategi

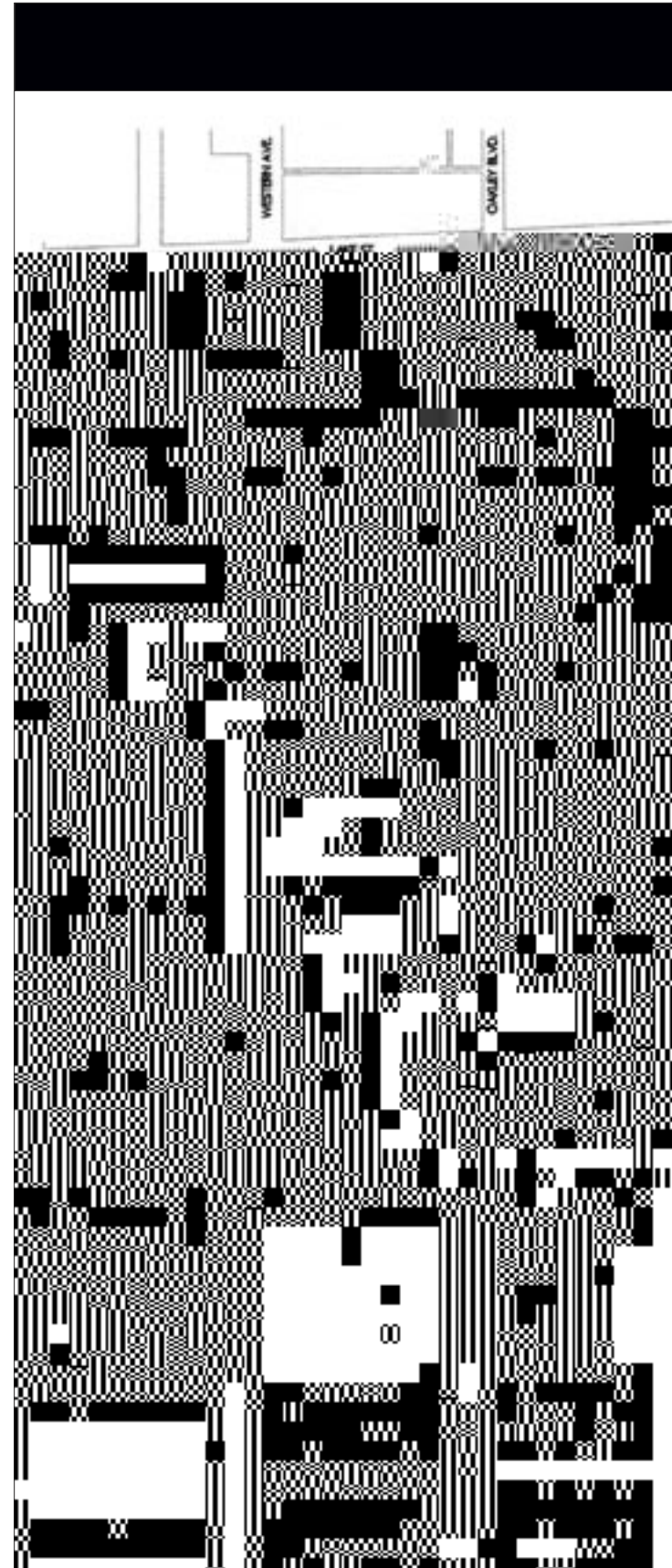
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Located in the morning shadow of downtown skyscrapers, West Haven is experiencing a rapid influx of investment and redevelopment. The groundwork was laid in the 1990s through local organizing and public



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