



Smart Communities  
CHICAGO DIGITAL EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE


# Connecting Our Communities

**HUMBOLDT PARK  
SMART COMMUNITIES PLAN**

MARCH 2010





A photograph of a city street scene. On the left, a woman in a white shirt and jeans stands near a blue storefront. In the foreground, a woman in a red shirt is walking two dogs on a leash. The street is lined with trees and parked cars. A sign in the top right corner reads: "NO PARKING 7AM - 9AM TUESDAYS APRIL 1 - OCT 31 TOW ZONE".

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**"IF YOU DON'T HAVE ACCESS, YOU DON'T HAVE OPPORTUNITIES; YOU DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION."**

**JOY ARUGUETE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BICKERDIKE REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**



# One More Tool

Humboldt Park is a proud community with a history of advocating for its residents, building locally-led institutions, and innovating in the fields of affordable housing, youth development and community health. It is also an expansive community, stretching from Western Avenue — and the dramatic 40-foot-high steel Puerto Rican flag that marks the starting of the thriving *Paseo Boricua* — to Cicero Avenue where small businesses are just beginning to benefit from new programs and investment. And it is a diverse community with a mixture of recent immigrants and long-time residents; African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans; and young and old of all income levels.



So how can greater access to broadband technology and digital tools add value to such a place? This was the question posed to local leaders as part of a new opportunity to join the Smart Communities Program in Chicago. Humboldt Park, having recently launched its second quality-of-life plan in 2008, had identified a number of strategies that would benefit from the use of technology and expanded digital infrastructure. And it was this plan, “Humboldt Park: Staking Our Claim, Raising the Stakes,” that served as the foundation for Smart Communities planning.

Throughout the process, local leaders agreed that technology is a tool to enhance communication and community goals. Greater access to broadband and digital tools could better connect the community, both its residents and its institutions, and create a positive “culture of technology” that places a high value on improving the quality of life of Humboldt Park

residents. Additionally, technology can be an innovation driver that enables Humboldt Park leaders to better “connect the dots” between efforts to provide coordinated services, control local development and attract new industries and jobs.

The strategies and projects identified in this document, and the chapter numbers associated with them, build upon Humboldt Park’s updated quality-of-life plan, which is available at <http://www.newcommunities.org/cmadoocs/HumboldtPark2008QOL.pdf>

# A Path to Digital Excellence

Humboldt Park is one of five Smart Communities in Chicago — a pilot program that aspires to enable full participation in meaningful digital activities by households, businesses and institutions to increase local knowledge, expand economic and educational opportunities, and enhance connections among residents and businesses. The program is a part of the City of Chicago’s Digital Excellence Initiative and is administered by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago.

The Smart Communities program serves five digitally underserved communities: Humboldt Park, Pilsen and the Southwest Partners comprising Auburn Gresham, Chicago Lawn and Englewood. Each community has its own assets and challenges, but they all share a history of working together through the New Communities Program, a long-term initiative by LISC/Chicago to support comprehensive community development in 16 Chicago neighborhoods. Smart Communities provides a new opportunity to link our neighborhoods through the use of technology, build solutions that work in different settings, and design and implement technology solutions to foster communication and collaboration.

Smart Communities responds to a major recommendation of the Mayor’s Advisory Council on Closing the Digital Divide, whose work culminated in the 2007 report, [The City that NetWorks](#). The Advisory Council’s vision is that Internet access, hardware, software, education, and mind-set changes will lead to digital transformation. Smart Communities will develop a series of pilot

projects to “test how best to convert digital excellence into personal and community transformation.” The projects will reflect five “drivers of digital excellence,” identified by the Advisory Council, that allow full participation in the information revolution:

- **Raised awareness and evolving mindsets** that value learning, connecting and communicating through technology, and that recognize the personal and economic opportunities of Internet participation.
- **Effective Internet access** that is high-speed, affordable and available everywhere.
- **Affordable hardware** that can run the full range of Internet resources and includes **suitable software** that meets the needs of individuals, families, businesses and communities.
- **Digital education** that provides the training and technical support for users to become comfortable and proficient with technology.
- **Digital programming, skills and content** that makes technology relevant and useful to a broad array of users and improves information flows into and out of neighborhoods.

The projects in this plan provide the structure and momentum to create these drivers over the next two to five years. As the pilot Smart Communities achieve digital excellence — i.e., universal, meaningful participation in technology — they will show the way for all Chicago communities to pursue the same opportunities.

For Humboldt Park, innovation and technology applications are not only important to bring economic competitiveness to the neighborhoods and opportunities to our residents. Better connected residents can overcome geographic, age, and social barriers. We see technology as a means to further our community development goals for Humboldt Park and improve communication and understanding across the entire neighborhood.



### HUMBOLDT PARK SMART COMMUNITIES PLANNING PROCESS

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation (BRC) serves as the NCP lead agency for Humboldt Park. The organization has been an anchor institution in Humboldt Park for more than 40 years. Bickerdike's mission is "the redevelopment of the West Town, Humboldt Park, Logan Square and Hermosa communities for the benefit of and control by the lower- and moderate-income residents of these areas." Recognized nationally as a leader in community development, BRC has developed more than 1,000 units of quality affordable housing including owner-occupied, rental and cooperative housing.

Formed in 2003, the Humboldt Park NCP Task Force enjoys the participation of more than 60 neighborhood organizations. It also engages

residents representing block clubs, community-based organizations, housing and economic development agencies, settlement houses, healthcare providers, police district representatives, City agencies and aldermen. The Humboldt Park NCP Task Force recently completed a new quality-of-life plan in 2008, and the strategies and projects that evolved from this community planning process formed the basis for developing this Smart Communities plan.

A Smart Communities steering committee was formed to represent a comprehensive cross-section of the organizations within the Task Force poised to take advantage of expanded digital infrastructure. The City of Chicago and LISC/Chicago supplied resources, a framework and opportunities for financial support to bring the ideas born of this process to life. The steering

committee met for two half-day workshops to establish a vision for the Smart Communities plan, develop related goals, and revisit each strategy and project identified in the 2008 plan to determine the potential for technology programming and/or expanded digital infrastructure to enhance the delivery of the project. In addition, a few cross-cutting technology-related projects were proposed that could provide a platform for improved communication and service delivery across many areas of the 2008 plan.

# Humboldt Park: Moving Forward

Humboldt Park is home to 62,600 residents and is anchored by the 207-acre green space of Humboldt Park. Always an entry point for immigrants, the community today has a large Puerto Rican population to the east, a sizable African-American community to the west, and a growing influx of Mexicans. Recent years have seen commercial and residential development along the Division Street Paseo Boricua (Puerto Rican Way) and new revitalization strategies for the Chicago Avenue redevelopment district.

Since the 2008 update of our quality-of-life plan, the issues of youth violence, foreclosure, and unemployment have only increased the need for community collaboration and communication. Given the 2009 study, [\*Digital Excellence in Chicago\*](#), which found that only 4 out of 10 Humboldt Park residents use broadband Internet, it is even more critical for us to advocate on behalf of our community to be connected to the full range of resources and tools needed to move forward.

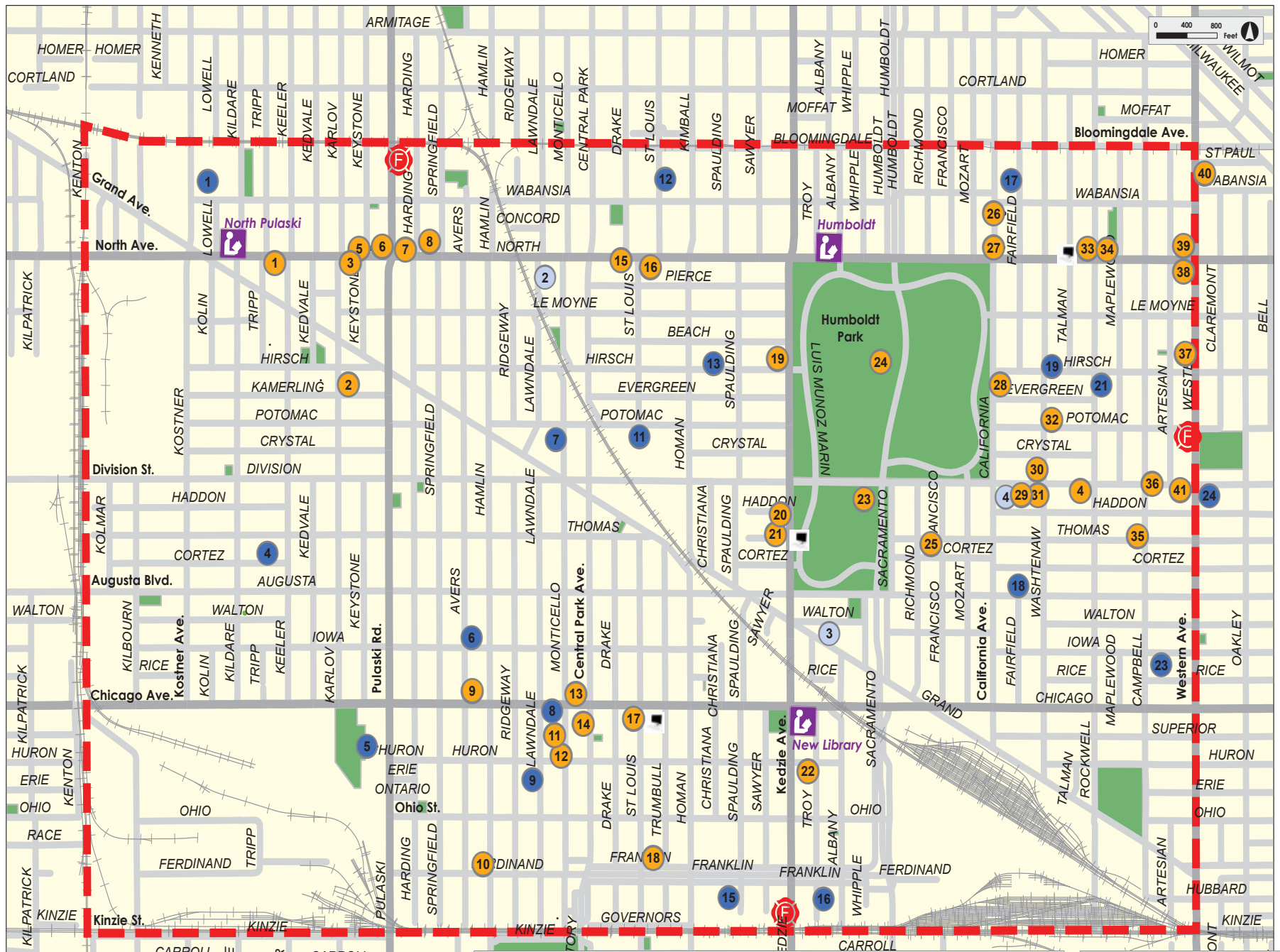
For Humboldt Park, technology can be a tool to tackle racial, cultural and socio-economic barriers, overcoming geographic obstacles and building community across all of Humboldt Park—both geographically and across populations. Local organizations are leaders in the field of community redevelopment and have seen major victories on a wide variety of programs. With appropriate training, non-profit staff can use technology to become more effective, communicate in real-time and reach out to the community with additional tools at their disposal. This will require a mindset change in how services are

Community	Population 2000	Current Broadband Usage	Residents Without Broadband	Reason: Cost	Reason: No Interest	Reason: Difficult to Use
AUBURN GRESHAM	55,928	38%	34,675	49%	41%	35%
CHICAGO LAWN	61,412	51%	30,092	50%	39%	32%
ENGLEWOOD	40,222	56%	17,698	35%	39%	18%
HUMBOLDT PARK	65,836	43%	37,527	53%	33%	29%
PILSEN	44,031	38%	27,299	62%	39%	41%

**TABLE 1: WHY RESIDENTS DON'T USE BROADBAND INTERNET**

delivered, how records are kept, and how to combine good, old-fashioned outreach and organizing with new technology tools.





### 9 Public Schools

- |                      |                            |                             |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 North-Grand HS     | 10 Ward, L                 | 20 Von Humboldt             |
| 2 West Park          | 11 Casals                  | 21 Von Humboldt CPC         |
| 3 Nobel              | 12 Stowe                   | 22 Erie Charter             |
| 4 Piccolo            | 13 Lowell                  | 23 Chopin                   |
| 5 Aasta HS/Excel HS/ | 14 Polaris Charter Academy | 24 Roberto Clemente HS      |
| Orr Campus/Vines HS  | 15 Westinghouse HS         | 25 Jose Diego Community     |
| 6 Galapagos Charter  | 16 Morton                  | Academy                     |
| 7 Cameron            | 17 Moos                    | 26 Humboldt Park Vocational |
| 8 Noble              | 18 Lafayette               | Educational Center          |
| 9 Ryerson            | 19 De Duprey               |                             |

### 9 Private Schools

- |                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| 1 Holy Family Lutheran School      |
| 2 Maternity B V M School           |
| 3 Uhlich Academy                   |
| 4 Puerto Rican HS - Pedro A Campos |
| 5 El Cuarto Ano                    |

### 1 Community Assets

- |                                 |                                |   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 PrimeCare                     | 11 Chicago Commons             | 20 Community Wellness                         |
| 2 Nobel Neighbors               | 12 Nio Center                  | 21 Association House, WTLU                    |
| 3 Spanish Coalition for Housing | 13 WHPC/CLT                    | 22 K.A.F.T. 4 Unity Block Club                |
| 4 Bailey Urbano                 | 14 NHS                         | 23 Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture |
| 5 GNDPC                         | 15 Lucha                       | 24 Puerto Rican Arts Alliance                 |
| 6 Block Club Federation         | 16 La Casa Norte               | 25 Norwegian American Hospital                |
| 7 Youth Service Project         | 17 Chicago Commons             | 26 H.P. Vocational Education Center           |
| 8 Blocks Together               | 18 Interfaith House            | 27 Erie Family Health Center                  |
| 9 Kelly Hall YMCA               | 19 Hispanic Housing Dev. Corp. | 28 Casa Central                               |
| 10 Hartgrove Hospital           |                                | 29 Puerto Rican Cultural Center               |
|                                 |                                | 30 Centro Sin Fronteras                       |
|                                 |                                | 31 Co-op H.P. Vida/Sida                       |
|                                 |                                | 32 Growing Pride                              |
|                                 |                                | 33 Hispanic Housing Dev. Corp.                |
|                                 |                                | 34 Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp.             |
|                                 |                                | 35 Centro San Bonifacio                       |
|                                 |                                | 36 DSBA                                       |
|                                 |                                | 37 PrimeCare                                  |
|                                 |                                | 38 ALSO                                       |
|                                 |                                | 39 NNNH/HPEP                                  |
|                                 |                                | 40 Near Northwest Arts Council                |
|                                 |                                | 41 West Town N'hood Health Center             |

### Computer Training Center

- Fire Station  
 Library  
 Humboldt Park Digital Planning District Boundary

# Strategy and Projects

While we have a comprehensive vision reflected in our 2008 plan for the community, we saw this planning process as an opportunity to further that vision. As such, we determined that the vision of our Smart Communities Plan would be to *provide widespread, advanced technology to expand opportunities, collaboration, and knowledge of community resources for all residents, non-profits and businesses in Humboldt Park*. The seven strategies from our 2008 quality-of-life plan emphasize expanding opportunities for our community in education; employment; the arts; programs for youth, seniors and persons with disabilities; health and wellness; public safety and community beautification; and physical resources. These seven strategies are amended and expanded here for the purposes of our Smart Communities Plan.

## STRATEGY 1

### Engage youth in the community in productive ways

Providing training, support, and independence to youth is one of the most important strategies in Humboldt Park. We can use technology to capture the talents and dreams of Humboldt Park youth and leverage these assets for other generations.

#### 1.1 YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Youth can serve a pivotal role in making Humboldt Park a connected community on a variety of levels. First, transforming youth from simple consumers of content to actual content creators will empower them to want to learn more. In the process, they will become an integral part of the process of rebuilding and reinvesting in Humboldt Park. The ability to use technology tools is a tangible skill that enhances both personal growth and workforce preparedness; youth can market their technical skills to help prove their fitness for jobs or volunteer opportunities. Finally, technology can overcome geographic and social barriers, including those around gang boundaries, potentially improving personal and public safety in Humboldt Park.

Humboldt Park will enhance or expand existing youth mentoring and leadership-development programs to include technology as a core component. We will also look to other communities, who have cultivated youth as “tech ambassadors” to seniors, for example, to teach and share technology.

#### 1.2 AFTER-SCHOOL & SUMMER PROGRAMS

Humboldt Park had several organizations engaged in the City’s 2009 Summer Youth Ready Chicago program. We believe these programs should be expanded. They provide a valuable opportunity for youth to learn technology skills such as online applications, word processing and Internet job searches. We will work to align the aims of our



Smart Communities program with those of the Youth Ready Chicago program to help place youth into jobs in technology-related fields.

To enhance and expand after-school programming, we will work with local organizations and tap into the experience of the University of Chicago's Urban Education Initiative and Digital Youth Network to engage youth in digital media, providing both access and skills training. Local after-school programs would benefit from more instructors and mentors working with our youth on spoken word, written, video, multimedia and social networking content, and access to the latest software or techniques to showcase student work in a variety of online venues.

### 1.3 SKILL EXPLORATION PROGRAMMING

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center's (PRCC) barrio arts program engages youth in content creation. Its Internet-based radio station teaches youth how to manage the station and create media content. Expanding the program to include broadband, and augmenting the users' digital skills, will benefit PRCC's programs and enhance the radio station's effectiveness as a learning tool to reach more listeners throughout Humboldt Park and beyond. Youth Service Project has a recording studio that provides an additional opportunity for youth to learn and create digital content on the western edge of our community.

West Humboldt Park's Spoken Word Academy of Chicago provides a very different tool to reach area youth, but also sparks individuality and original expression. The program provides an outlet for both youth and adults to express themselves through spoken-word poetry drawn from personal and cultural experience. And the

Westside Writing Project provides youth with opportunities to learn neighborhood journalism and a love of writing. Both programs can provide rich content for the Humboldt Park community portal, once it has been launched.

A youth social networking site will be created as a part of, or as a linkage to, a new Humboldt Park community portal. The youth network can serve as a tool to allow youth to interact across the community, and also link East and West Humboldt Park across turf boundaries. Youth who meet each other at a sports tournament, for example, would be able to stay in touch easily and potentially break down social, geographic, racial and ethnic barriers.

### 1.4 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Building on the after-school program model, and our communities' experience providing summer youth employment, we will work with local youth-serving organizations, the City of Chicago and business partners to develop an eight-week paid summer job that exposes youth from the Digital Youth Network to employment opportunities in the technology industry and builds their resume and skill set. La Casa Norte and Association House, for example, were successful partners on the 2009 Youth Ready Chicago program, and could lead a similar venture for Digital Youth Jobs.

## STRATEGY 2

### Create a community of wellness where health is a dimension of community improvement

Greater Humboldt Park's Community of Wellness fosters connections between public-health coalition members and the public at large. Its existing website can be expanded to not only provide authoritative and accurate resources to residents, but also to augment the existing points of connectivity between each of the member organizations to enhance efficiency, communication, and program delivery.

### 2.3 HEALTH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The current Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness website is a resource for coalition members with a stake in health-care provision. The ultimate goal, however, is to make it a resource for all community residents to learn about local health/wellness options, such as smoking cessation programs, low-cost treatment opportunities, exercise classes, locally scheduled health events, etc. While general health information already resides on the Internet, a trusted, accurate, local and culturally sensitive resource, particularly one connected to a new community portal, would bolster the relevance to Humboldt Park's residents, increasing the likelihood of our residents taking advantage of available resources. The website then becomes yet another tool in the Community of Wellness's preventative health

arsenal as it works to overcome documented health disparities throughout Humboldt Park (see Project 6.1).

### STRATEGY 3

## Provide resources to sustain healthy individuals and families

From cultural awareness to senior programs to financial literacy, technology will be used to enhance opportunities in the community. Rather than target particular populations, the goal will be to improve communication and access among everyone, including such vulnerable populations as monolingual families, seniors and the formerly incarcerated. We can do this by increasing access to information through online and offline resources. Our own experience as well as recent research dramatizes the importance of creating a positive culture of technology where our most disconnected residents become connected with the aid of the Internet. This includes accessing the education and tools they need to engage in public life and be their own advocates for the services they need.

### 3.8 DIGITIZE PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER LIBRARY

Humboldt Park is fortunate to have a network of local community-based and public libraries that provide access to the Internet and information. In addition to supporting the expansion of the YouMedia program into neighborhood libraries,

our community also supports additional investment of hardware, software, and staffing to expand the information resources of public libraries in our communities.

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center already has the largest collection of books on the developing world available within the Humboldt Park community. The facility is in the process of creating a digital card catalog to make the collection searchable. The next step will be to make the collection searchable from residential homes, like the Chicago Public Library's collection. But the ultimate goal is to develop a plan to scan the collection so it is electronically accessible not only from Humboldt Park, but from anywhere in the world. Delivery of these texts through the community portal will help people see Humboldt Park as a resource for culture and living history far beyond its physical borders.

Divorcing libraries and their services from physical collections can be seen as a serious challenge to their viability. Libraries need to provide access to materials that they don't own and control, while assuring that their communities will be able to access that material far into the future. They must also be able to add the content of their unique collections to the broader arena of access to information and knowledge. This problem is particularly acute with World Wide Web resources. We believe that by expanding local library programming and resident technology training, we can ensure that Humboldt Park residents take greater advantage of the physical and virtual collections available through our community and public libraries.

### 3.12 ONLINE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT OFFLINE PROGRAMS

From foreclosure counseling to recreational activities to energy efficiency, Humboldt Park has developed programs and tools to help residents connect with the resources they need. Enhanced technology will help us coordinate these resources, identify and fill service gaps, and, where applicable, convert materials into online resources that can be delivered to the public through our community portal, or among our own organizational websites through their intranets. For program participants to benefit from enhanced online resources, however, they will need more public access, hardware and software compatible with the latest online advances, and basic technology training (see Project 4.6).

We will also use the Civic 2.0 classes (see Project 4.6) and combine them with our networks of block clubs and other community organizing efforts to help make online resources support offline leadership development in our community. In doing so, we will respond to the challenge raised by the Pew Internet & American Life Project's recent report that concluded that "traditional political activities remain the domain of those with high levels of income and education" and that the Internet's vast potential to support political engagement has not reached those who could benefit from it the most in our communities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Internet and Civic Engagement," September 2009. <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/15-The-Internet-and-Civic-Engagement.aspx>

## STRATEGY 4

# Provide jobs through training and local business development

Humboldt Park has a range of public access points, from Community Technology Centers to public libraries to computer training programs at the Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center (HPVEC) of Wright College. More can be done to expand access and training so technology meets the everyday needs of our community and supports workforce and business development. Two ideas developed across the Smart Communities are 1) to expand access to technology training and employment through new FamilyNet Centers connected to Centers for Working Families, and 2) to create Business Resource Centers to provide training to small- and mid-size businesses. Both concepts are ideally suited to Humboldt Park because they build upon existing organizational strategies.

## 4.2 CAREER PREPARATION AND BRIDGES

Based on the needs of local residents and market demand of specific skill-sets, specialized certifications such as CompTIA CTT+, Certified Microsoft Application Specialist Instructor and Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) should be offered in the community at FamilyNet Centers and added or expanded at local City Colleges such as Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center. For example, HPVEC and Batelle have provided A+ and Network + Certification programs and will soon be offering

a Certified Wireless Network Administrator program. Additional technical training certifications in the broadband industry, such as Broadband Premises Installer, Broadband Premises Technician, and Broadband Communications Engineer, should be added to prepare our residents to install, service and maintain fiber-optic infrastructure.

Similarly, the HPVEC can build on its health careers partnership (see Project 4.1 in quality-of-life plan) by expanding medical billing/coding training and providing training in electronic medical records management building on the proposed federal stimulus-related investment to move the health care industry towards digital records management.

## 4.4 JOB FAIRS

We will bring our community job fairs into the 21st century by integrating technology as a job search tool and elevating technology careers into our offerings. For example, we will emphasize office technology as one of our career ladders; in addition we will offer breakout sessions on navigating online job searches and the electronic application process. We also will set up “tech centers,” where participants can access the Internet for up to 30 minutes at a time in order to establish an email account, search a job bank, or simply familiarize themselves with computer usage.

## 4.6 JOB READINESS AND BASIC SKILLS TRAINING

**FamilyNet Centers** — FamilyNet Centers should be created to provide all residents — regardless of age or experience — with the opportunity to

learn about technology in an atmosphere that is family-friendly and adaptable to a wide range of users: a parent who wants to take adult-education workshops but needs child care, a senior who is just learning about computers, a teen who needs to type a term paper.

FamilyNet Centers would be linked to the Centers for Working Families (CWF) at Association House in Humboldt Park and elsewhere throughout the city. CWFs provide one-on-one coaching for the financial well-being of working families, including employment training, financial counseling, tax preparation assistance and public-benefits screening. Centers for Working Families offer an established site, familiar to many residents, and a track record of success in the community.

Two opportunities are recommended for FamilyNet Centers: 1) expanding Association House’s CWF and computer lab to create a new FamilyNet Center, and 2) creating an additional FamilyNet Center focused on the west Humboldt Park area at Chicago Commons, which would closely coordinate with the CWF services at Association House. FamilyNet centers will have new computers, staffing and training resources and expanded hours.

**Expand Capacity of Community Technology Centers** — Our communities are currently served by an array of community technology centers (CTCs) operated by non-profits, local churches, and other community-based organizations. CTCs in Humboldt Park are part of larger, multi-service organizations including Casa Central (California and Evergreen Avenue), Chicago Commons (Central Park and Chicago Avenue), Association House (coordinated with the Centers for Working



Families at Division and Kedzie), the Kelly Hall YMCA (on Hamlin, just north of Chicago Avenue) and Hispanic Housing (North Avenue, west of Western). Public access computers are available at the Humboldt Park and North Pulaski Chicago Public Libraries, and the planned West Humboldt Park Library.

While a variety of services from youth programs to employment skills are available at the CTCs, we will better coordinate these services and expand access to advanced certifications so that youth and adults cultivate the skills they need to compete in the workforce.

While there are certain certifications available online (e.g. Chicago Commons offers GED), additional video-based programming over the Internet will allow for more personal interaction, sharing of resources, trainings across CTCs and better connections with public facilities. New offerings might include the GED and college-level courses throughout the larger community. Leaders have found that combining online courses done from home with personal interaction at a local center provides the best blend of educational value, convenience and support to local residents.

**Everyday Digital and Civic 2.0**—Basic tech skills are needed for all residents of Humboldt Park. Everyday Digital is the curricula that Smart Communities will develop to teach basic skills, including online bill pay, Internet security, Google docs applications, and Skype. Civic 2.0 curricula will teach community leaders useful skills and provide them access to civic tools they can share with their constituents. Residents will

learn to access, for example, CTA BusTracker; CLEARpath, the Chicago Police Department's interactive tool for residents; and Chicago Public Schools resources and other government-related sites. This will help them gain access to public information they can use to advocate for public safety, better transportation, school improvements and other issues.

Our youth and adults will benefit greatly from the technology skills development from Digital Youth Network, Everyday Digital and Civic 2.0. Learning basic computer skills, software applications, and writing and editing skills that come from creating content will enhance our strategies of providing job readiness and basic skills training.

#### 4.7 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Two Business Resource Centers will be created to serve Humboldt Park and West Humboldt Park. The Resource Centers would provide technology-related resources tailored to small and mid-size businesses in the area. Services should include technology assessments and technology business plans—clearly defining the payback for time and resources needed to improve business practice. Expanded business resource centers will make available new computer and presentation hardware and software, as well as training to provide both on-site and off-site coaching to local businesses.

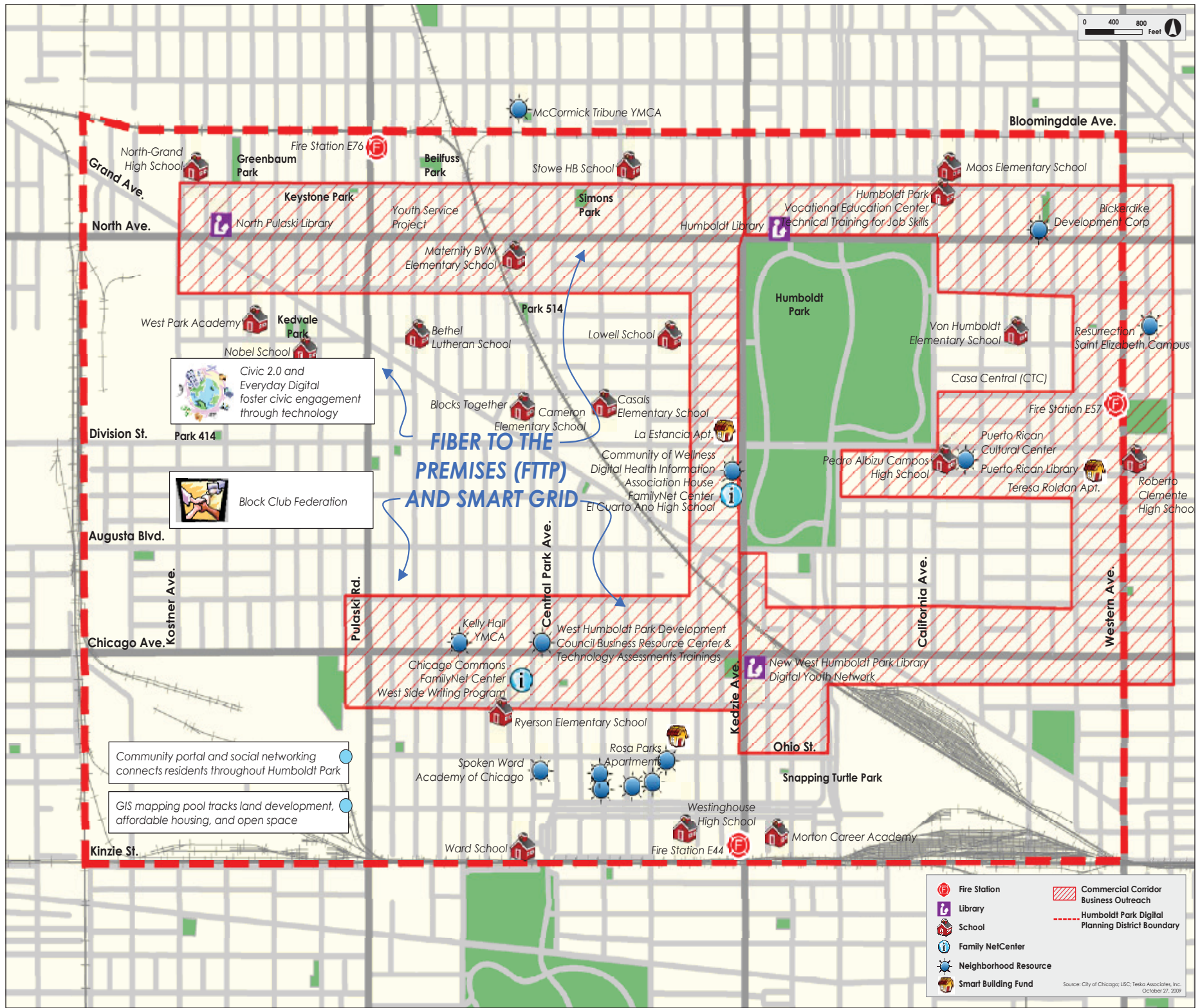
## STRATEGY 5

### Improve local schools using a community-based and culturally sensitive approach

We can use technology to improve our local schools by working with parents to increase awareness of various educational models and options for children; encouraging schools to use culturally sensitive curricula; enhancing online GED offerings coupled with in-person support at local non-profits; and tapping into digital media curricula and resources.

#### 5.2 ENHANCED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Humboldt Park's planning for digital youth education is built around existing partnerships, but we are open to learning about new proven models that integrate digital media and learning, such as the Urban School Improvement program and digital media labs of the University of Chicago Digital Youth Network (see Project 1.2). These programs have demonstrated a commitment to excellence, a willingness to innovate, and an investment in technology within the schools. Humboldt Park will target partnerships with local schools to enhance our educational programming to ensure that students are digitally prepared.



## STRATEGY 6

# Improve physical, economic and social infrastructure through marketing, communications, beautification and safety

Humboldt Park leaders are strong advocates for the community and rightly proud of our rich community murals, parks and cultural attractions. We will use technology to advance our work on community branding, create a new web-based community portal, and develop Wi-Fi access along commercial corridors.

### 6.1 COMMUNITY WEB-BASED RESOURCE GUIDE

Humboldt Park will create an interactive, dynamic community portal that will be the go-to website for local news and information, including an “electronic billboard” of events, programs, and activities throughout the community. Our site will include local reporting, video, and photography, directories of community events and institutions, and web page hosting for area businesses and non-profits. Second-phase plans include ensuring that the site is smart phone accessible, allowing for the widest possible readership.

The portal will also link to community social networking sites throughout the Web that have been seeded for use by residents. Based on

findings of usage patterns and interest from the community assessment, we will expand and enhance community sections of sites such as Facebook to create networks for Humboldt Park based on sports and other interests to connect youth and adults across geographic barriers. Together, the new community portal and a variety of seeded social networking sites will give residents and institutions a wide selection of opportunities to communicate with each other and the outside world.

### 6.6 SMART COMMUNITY BRANDING

We have long discussed the need for a positive community branding campaign to celebrate the unique achievements of the cultures of the community, to tie all of Humboldt Park together, and to cast a positive image of Humboldt Park across Chicago and beyond to encourage people to visit, support local stores, and appreciate the community. Through technology, we can better link East and West Humboldt Park, as well as youth and families across schools, parks and other programs.

Technology can be used for all three needs, showcasing our community assets, fostering communication across boundaries (whether real or imagined), and “packaging” the community as a site of artistic, cultural, historical, recreational, commercial, and culinary interest. Technology can be a tool to help us reach across, and even beyond, our community to encourage investment and shape our image as a thriving, diverse community. Part of our community “brand” can be our designation as a Smart Community, which may bring greater broadband infrastructure investment, Wi-Fi along our business corridors (see Project 7.9), and a more skilled and connected workforce.

### 6.13 BUILD LOCAL NON-PROFIT TECHNOLOGY CAPACITY

Central to building Humboldt Park’s infrastructure in order to advance a digital agenda, is building the capacity of our own non-profit organizations to carry out this plan’s work and programs through the advanced use of new technology. This means a significant investment in new computers, servers, presentation equipment, software, training and new databases and other web-based applications to better manage the work between our organizations.

One new tool would be the creation of a community extranet or content management system to enhance the effectiveness of community programs throughout the area. The extranet would be a password-protected site that would be used by Humboldt Park non-profit organizations to improve communication and information flow. It would be designed to be very easy-to-use and require very little training. The extranet would perform at least two important services: 1) Provide an additional mechanism for communication and coordination to supplement regular meetings; and 2) Improve service delivery, having more accurate and up-to-date information on programs, services, and individuals.

For example, registration for a program could be kept online so that a variety of organizations can check availability. Privacy concerns can be built into the system, but there can also be a way to share information in which multiple organizations are serving the same individual or family, providing a more holistic approach. Whether it is after-school programming, curriculum coordination across CTCs or bolstering the network of the Community of Wellness, a well-designed extranet would be an efficient approach to



further the effectiveness of programs in Humboldt Park, as well as take advantage of new investments in broadband infrastructure.

## STRATEGY 7

# Increase community control over use of physical resources

Increased access to broadband technology and more advanced hardware, software and training will enable us to better advance our strategy to increase community control over local resources. We will develop an online database to monitor land development, affordable rental housing, affordable home ownership, special needs housing, open space, and community gardens. We can then use this database to enhance information and community participation in land-use decisions. We will also support the planned investment of broadband infrastructure that the City is targeting to Humboldt Park and seek to include areas of our community that would most benefit from this major investment.

## 7.2 DEVELOPMENT MONITORING

We advocate for community input into land-use decisions to promote sustainable opportunities for housing and business, and to preserve and provide affordable, quality housing for residents. While Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation and other organizations have long monitored zoning and development proposals, an online database would provide a real-time tool to more

efficiently provide this service and allow residents to weigh in on new proposals. A Geographic Information System (GIS) map will provide both visual maps and a database of information on the following Humboldt Park projects: development monitoring (7.2), affordable rental housing (7.3), affordable homeownership (7.4), special needs housing (7.5), fair housing (7.6), open space coalition (7.8), community facilities development (7.9), and community gardens (7.10).

While GIS mapping has been used in the past, the community needs to own the content and have the capacity to keep the information up-to-date. Since the costs of hardware and software have come down, the key impediment is training and time. Resources are needed to support local capacity building to create a Humboldt Park GIS system, and integrate the mapping into the community portal and non-profit extranet.

## 7.9 COMMUNITY FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

The projects that constitute this plan will only be possible, and ultimately successful, through Humboldt Park's expanded use of affordable high-speed Internet access. A three-stage plan is envisioned to 1) bring fiber-optic broadband Internet access to key public locations in the community, 2) provide affordable or free Wi-Fi access, and 3) run secure, high-speed broadband fiber connections to small and mid-size businesses and residents that need a very-high speed, secure line.

**Backbone Fiber Network** — Humboldt Park will encourage and support the City of Chicago's efforts to increase very high-speed fiber-optic connectivity with public-sector institutions

serving as hubs, including firehouses, police stations, libraries, park field houses, community colleges and many CPS schools. Fiber is needed to provide advanced services, video, and virtually unlimited data capability. Current Internet capacity in our community limits the applications needed to spark community renewal in Humboldt Park. As part of the Smart Communities planning process our team recommended locations that could make a particularly high-impact with advanced broadband:

### Schools:

- Orr Community Academy  
730 N. Pulaski Road
- Roberto Clemente Community Academy  
1147 N. Western Avenue
- Polaris Elementary Charter Academy  
630 N. Sawyer Avenue
- Ryersen Elementary  
646 N. Lawndale Avenue
- Piccolo Elementary Specialty School  
1040 N. Keeler Avenue
- Von Humboldt Elementary  
2620 W. Hirsch Street
- Moos Elementary School  
1711 N. California Avenue
- Pedro Albizu Campos High School  
2739 W. Division Street
- Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center  
1645 N. California Avenue
- El Cuatro Año High School  
1116 N. Kedzie Avenue

### Public Libraries:

- Humboldt Park branch: 1605 N. Troy
- West Humboldt Library branch  
(forthcoming, 2010): Kedzie and Chicago

### Parks:

- Humboldt Park Field House

**Fiber to the Premises (FTTP)** — Fiber to the Premises would provide broadband to each home, business, or non-profit organization within a targeted area of Humboldt Park. FTTP would push the envelope of advanced technology, allowing residents, small businesses, and

non-profits within this reviving community to have equal access to the most connected locations in the world, from Singapore to Tokyo to Amsterdam. A network would be built that would provide direct, fiber connections to each home, non-profit, and business in the area at an

affordable rate. If the resources are secured, FTTP would be unrivaled in terms of capacity and speed. Why is this important? A historically under-resourced neighborhood such as Humboldt Park, in obtaining this infrastructure first, will have a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Businesses or residents that want or need this level of service will see Humboldt Park as the place to be. Commercial corridors along Division Street, Chicago Avenue and North Avenue should have fiber available to them at an affordable level both to grow existing businesses and to attract new employers (graphic designers, architects, engineers, call centers, etc.) intent on moving large amounts of electronic information. Finally, existing local providers of technology services would see their sales bolstered and their long-term viability secured.

**Wi-Fi Network** — Using the key public-sector fiber hubs, we recommend adding Wi-Fi transmitters at the public sites. Wi-Fi will enable basic public access to everyone from customers in local stores along Division Street or Chicago Avenue to residents taking a stroll through Humboldt Park. Wi-Fi and other wireless strategies can be key components to expanding access to businesses and homes in Humboldt Park. The benefits of Wi-Fi will allow businesses to better serve their customers and attract new demand as people will visit cafes, bookstores, restaurants, and other small businesses to catch up on their schoolwork, read their e-mail, or connect to their office.



# Next: Launch Projects to Reach Goals

Humboldt Park will achieve digital excellence when residents, businesses and institutions in our community have high-speed Internet access, up-to-date hardware and software, a need or interest that is met by technology, and familiarity with and knowledge of technology. The projects outlined above are a roadmap to reach that interrelated set of goals.

This plan is ambitious, but it also very much designed to be implemented. All of the projects in this plan are consistent with the years of planning and implementation that have taken place in our community through the New Communities Program.

We are appreciative of the support from The Chicago Community Trust, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the City of Chicago and LISC/Chicago for the resources and technical assistance to develop this plan. We see the Smart Communities program as an opportunity to enhance our local quality-of-life plan through the projects outlined above.



# Leadership

## HUMBOLDT PARK SMART COMMUNITIES STEERING COMMITTEE

- Joy Aruguete, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation
- Juana Ballesteros, Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness
- Raul Echeverria, Puerto Rican Cultural Center
- Katie Ediger, Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness
- Carolina Gaete, Blocks Together
- Bill Howard, West Humboldt Park Development Council
- Frank Latin, Westside Writing Project
- Alejandro Molina, Puerto Rican Cultural Center
- Kenny Martin Ocasio, Youth Service Project
- Tom Otto, West Humboldt Park Development Council
- Miguel Palacio, Association House of Chicago
- Christy Prah, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation
- Stephanie Sommers, Association House of Chicago
- Dan Valliere, Chicago Commons

## LISC/CHICAGO

- Susana Vasquez, Director, New Communities Program
- Gordon Walek, Communications Manager

## CITY OF CHICAGO

- Hardik Bhatt, Chief Information Officer, Department of Innovation and Technology
- Danielle DuMerer, Project Manager, Department of Innovation and Technology
- Matthew Guilford, Program Manager, Digital Excellence and Innovation, Department of Innovation & Technology
- Mayor's Office

## THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

- Diana Derige, The Chicago Community Trust

## TESKA ASSOCIATES, INC.

- Scott Goldstein, Teska Associates, Facilitator and Planner
- Mario Ortega, Teska Associates, GIS Mapping

## PROGRAM AND PLANNING SUPPORT

- The Chicago Community Trust
- City of Chicago
- Illinois Department of Commerce
- LISC/Chicago
- Microsoft Corporation
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

## ABOUT THE NEW COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The New Communities Program (NCP) is a long-term initiative by LISC/Chicago to support comprehensive community development in 16 Chicago neighborhoods.

The nation's largest demonstration of comprehensive community development, NCP has delivered substantial and visible neighborhood improvements across the city thanks to a 10-year funding commitment from the MacArthur Foundation. LISC/Chicago has invested more than \$50 million in grants and loans in the NCP neighborhoods, supporting more than 500 different projects ranging from healthy-lifestyle initiatives and youth sports leagues to retail and affordable housing development. Thousands of residents and hundreds of community organizations have been involved through NCP.

The NCP model is that each effort be led by a neighborhood-based lead agency that coordinates programs among other local organizations and citywide support groups. Lead agencies are encouraged to forge partnerships with other non-profit groups, businesses, government and residents to address issues such as affordable housing, prisoner re-entry, cultural programming, education reform, community marketing and open space.

Smart Communities builds upon the NCP platform and on the quality-of-life plans prepared by each community. The plans have been steered by local lead agencies that have a resume of "getting it done" and grassroots connections to the communities they serve. It incorporates project ideas from those plans and identifies new tools and techniques to implement long-standing community development goals.

## ABOUT THE DIGITAL EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

The Digital Excellence Initiative aims to make Chicago a global leader in the application of technology to increasing economic competitiveness, strengthening communities and improving lives. Guided by the work of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Closing the Digital Divide, the initiative fosters deployment of broadband infrastructure, public access to technology and new insights into digital participation and needs. The initiative is managed by the City of Chicago Department of Innovation and Technology and is supported by a range of private sector, non-profit and governmental partners.

The 2007 *City That Networks* report and the 2009 *Digital Excellence in Chicago* study are available at [www.cityofchicago.org/digitalexcellence](http://www.cityofchicago.org/digitalexcellence)

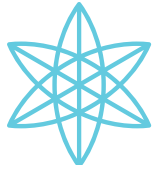
## HUMBOLDT PARK SMART COMMUNITIES PLAN CREDITS

**Copy:** Susana Vasquez, Scott Goldstein

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**Design:** Tuan Do Graphic Design

**Chicago Digital Excellence Logo:** Adelheid Mers, Associate Professor, The Art Institute of Chicago



# Smart Communities

CHICAGO DIGITAL EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

LISC Chicago

1 N. LaSalle St., 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60602  
312.360.0800

[www.lisc-chicago.org](http://www.lisc-chicago.org)  
[www.newcommunities.org](http://www.newcommunities.org)



City of Chicago  
50 W. Washington St., Suite 2700  
Chicago, IL 60602  
[www.cityofchicago.org/digitalexcellence](http://www.cityofchicago.org/digitalexcellence)