

Lathrop Homes Revitalization

Summary of Community Input and Moving Forward

CHA and Lathrop Community Partners (LCP) hosted two Open Houses in November at New Life Community Church to solicit input from the Lathrop community on three initial revitalization concepts.

A total of 366 people participated in the open houses, viewing four different videos and talking to CHA and LCP team members. Attendees turned in a total of 258 surveys, a 70% response rate, while a follow-up online survey added an additional 54 responses.

A brief summary of community input by category, prepared by LCP, is below.

Overall Revitalization Program

Historic Preservation/Building Reuse

- Survey results suggest that a majority of respondents favor site-plan concepts that either **restore** or **reuse** a critical mass of buildings.
- The preservation-focused concept, “Riverworks,” scored the highest on this issue at 3.03 out of 5, slightly higher than “Gateways” at 2.84/5 and “Greenscapes” at 2.71/5.
- Written and verbal comments support the use of historic tax credits to finance the revitalization and leverage public investment in the project.
- Verbal comments raised concerns about how an all-demolition concept would fare in the Section 106 process, which allows for a broad spectrum of options from restoration to demolition.

Building Height

- A majority of the input suggests a strong sensitivity to varying building heights.
- The Greenscapes concept, featuring overall lower-height development comparable to the Lathrop Elderly building, scored 3.51/5, significantly higher than the 1.67/5 for Riverworks (two towers) and 1.96/5 for Gateways (one tower).
- Written comments and open house conversations favored lower-height development along Clybourn adjacent to the existing neighborhood, and were more accepting of a taller building at the far southern end of the site.

Density

- Resistance was voiced to a density of 1,600 units on the Lathrop site.
- Comments typically focused on the vehicular traffic that 1,600 homes could bring to the area, and raised many questions about the existing traffic conditions at the Damen/Clybourn/Diversey intersection.
- A limited number of survey results expressed consideration for density as a necessity in achieving other desired amenities.
- “Providing options for transit and reduced auto dependency” achieved a 4.09/5, the highest score on the second page of the survey.

Income Mix

- The opinions expressed in response to the suggested income mix of 50% market rate, 25% affordable and 25% public housing, ranged from “no market rate housing” to “no public housing”. In general, the feedback supported the proposed percentages.
- Many respondents also commented that they needed more information to adequately respond to this question.
- Other comments raised questions on how the income mix might affect schools, safety, crime and property values in the surrounding community.
- Many respondents also raised questions about the successes of other mixed-income communities in Chicago or the country.
- Other comments raised questions on what the mix of home ownership units would be relative to rental apartments.

Detailed Design Considerations

Diversey Parkway

- The ideas regarding improvement and greening Diversey Parkway were well received, with suggestions that no changes should slow traffic.

Community Facilities and the Chicago River

- The preferred location of community facilities was along the Chicago River.
- Concepts that improved the river’s edge south of Diversey received positive reaction.
- “Improving the river’s edge south of Diversey Parkway” received the second highest score on page two of the survey, 3.94/5.

Retail and Parking

- Some respondents inquired about the need for additional retail in the area and raised questions regarding the associated traffic it might bring.
- The survey showed a preference for neighborhood-focused retail (Main Street received 3.31/5 and town square received 2.96/5) with parking on top of or inside of buildings (3.31/5 versus 2.63/5 for parking lots and 2.26/5 for on-street).
- Automobile-focused retail scored the lowest of the concepts presented (2.28/5).

New Streets

- General feedback regarding the new streets proposed in all three concepts was positive, with one new street onto Clybourn Avenue north of Diversey Parkway (2.84/5) and two new streets onto Damen Avenue south of Diversey Parkway (2.95/5) receiving the highest scores.
- In addition, “creating new pedestrian and bicycle connections” got the third highest score 3.92/5 on page 2 of the survey.