

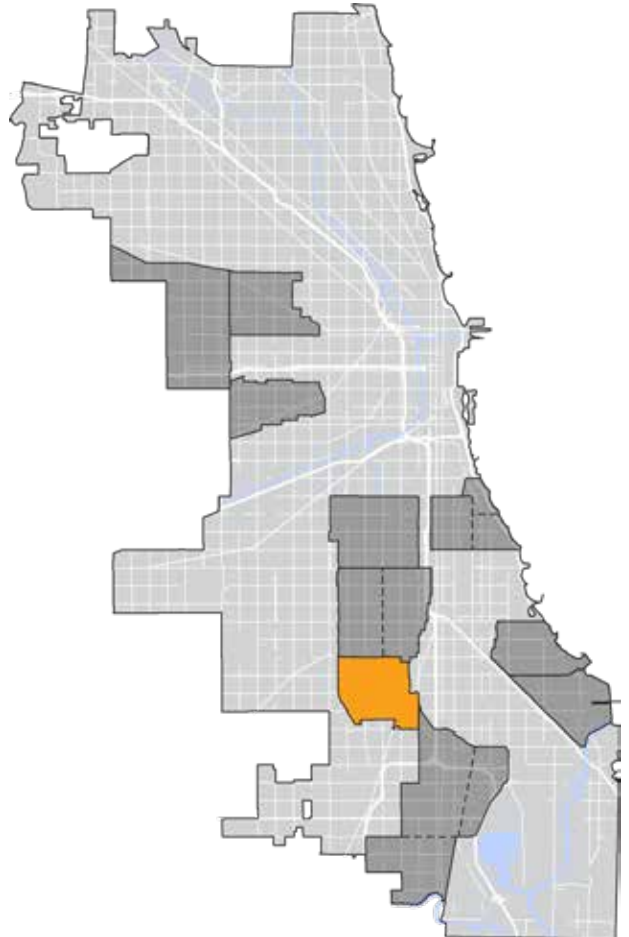
# INVEST SOUTH ★ WEST

Kick-off Summary  
& Next Steps

**AUBURN  
GRESHAM**



Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot





Named for the Auburn Park and Gresham communities that were annexed to the City of Chicago in 1893, Auburn Gresham consists of approximately 46,200 residents within 3.77 square miles.

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[chicago.gov/investsw](http://chicago.gov/investsw)

March 2020

# FORWARD



Greetings,

On behalf of the entire City of Chicago, thank you for your interest in and support of the INVEST South/West corridor improvement initiative.

The viability of these once thriving neighborhoods has been undermined for the past 70 years through substantial population losses, disinvestment, crime and other systemic issues. The City has never before attempted to rebuild these areas like we are doing today through an unprecedented strategic, community-based approach focusing on public and private resources within 10 targeted community areas.

Unlike any prior initiative, INVEST South/West is layering economic development resources and planning tools within specific geographies to spur the development of new public amenities, stores, public services and other quality-of-life amenities, fostering stable environments and additional public and private growth while reinvigorating our entire City.

Implementation efforts are well underway, and this brochure is a Spring 2020 update on the City's progress, highlighting priority blocks, community goals and next steps.

In the coming months, your support and participation will be key in moving your community forward as INVEST South/West continues to build momentum and transform the trajectory of our city. Together, we can reverse the decades of decline and build a better, strong, unified Chicago for every resident.

Sincerely,

Lori E. Lightfoot  
Mayor of the City of Chicago

# IMPROVE OUR CITY

## INVEST South/West

*is an unprecedented community improvement initiative launched by Mayor Lightfoot in fall 2019 to marshal \$750 million in public funding toward 10 neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West sides.*

The goal of INVEST South/West is to re-activate neighborhood cores that have historically served as focal points for pedestrian activity, shopping, services, transportation, public spaces and quality-of-life amenities for local residents. Without exception, these commercial corridors have experienced public and private disinvestment for nearly 75 years, which has led to reduced property values, public safety concerns, and a corresponding increase in abandoned buildings, vacant lots and blight. INVEST South/West is intended to reverse these systemic trends with targeted improvements that benefit existing residents and businesses.

Funding for INVEST South/West includes \$250 million in business incentives made available through City programs involving Tax Increment Financing and the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund. These investments will build on more than \$500 million in planned infrastructure improvements that will provide transportation, housing and quality-of-life enhancements that improve the vitality of private and public properties. This includes ongoing infrastructure projects such as FastTracks improvements to the CTA Green Line, the Auburn Park Metra Station, and a new track and field facility in Pullman.

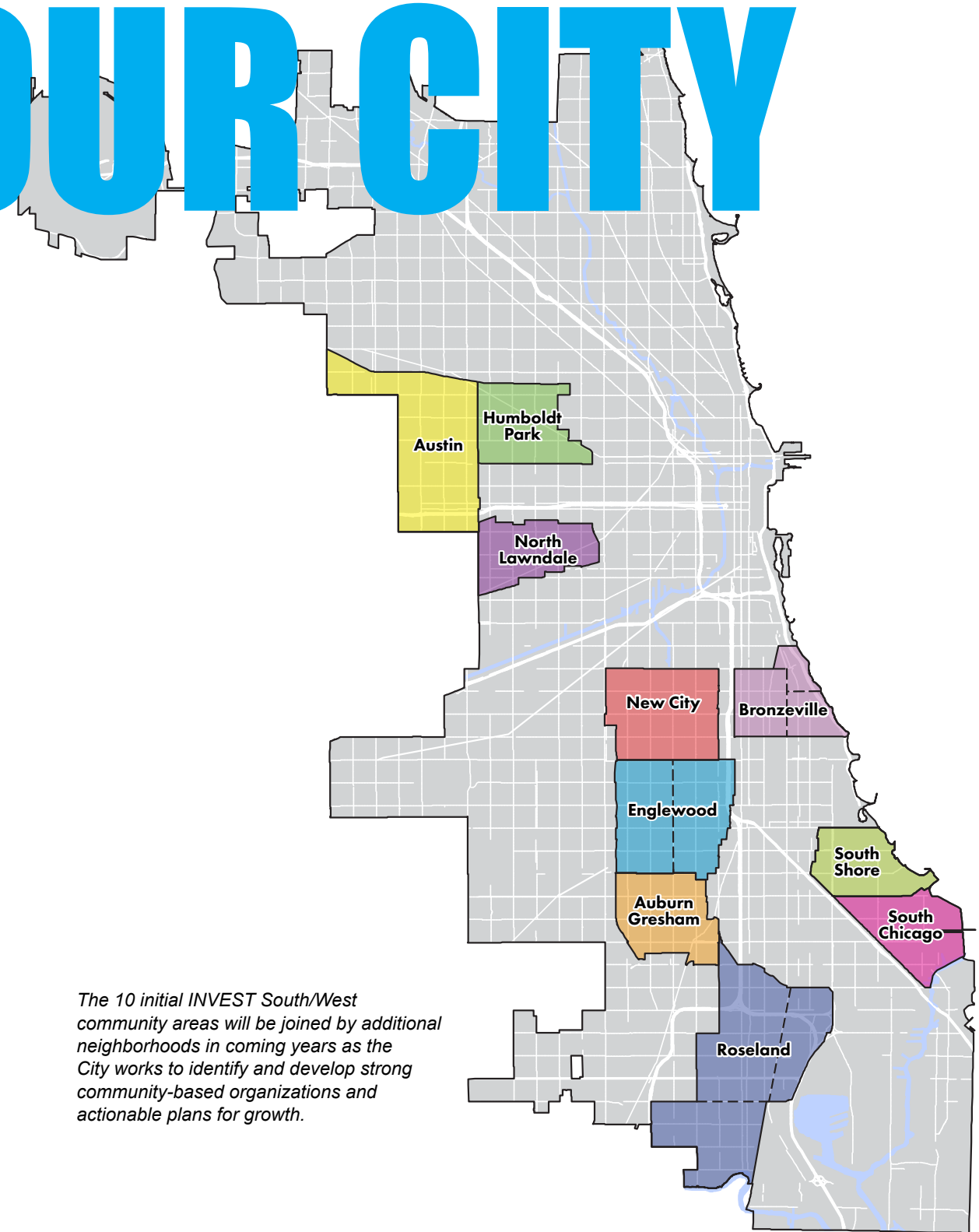
Through the collaboration of multiple public and

private partners, INVEST South/West is engaging community stakeholders throughout the South and West sides to build consensus around neighborhood needs and goals; prioritize specific geographies; identify immediate and long-term needs; and ensure future investments will have a catalytic impact involving future improvements.

### NEIGHBORHOOD METHODOLOGY

The 10 initial neighborhoods were determined in 2019 through a multi-departmental analysis of hundreds of miles of street frontage zoned for commercial or business uses. The analyses included the review of existing business licenses, historic resources, transit services, community plans, demographics, capital investments and other factors. Three dozen potential neighborhoods were subsequently narrowed to 10 by using two primary criteria: the existence of at least one well-developed community plan with a commercial component and the existence of at least one active commercial area at specific nodes.

Leveraging existing plans and local partners, the City's focus on 10 neighborhoods will enable swift investments that create sustainable improvements and foster additional investment on adjacent blocks.



*The 10 initial INVEST South/West community areas will be joined by additional neighborhoods in coming years as the City works to identify and develop strong community-based organizations and actionable plans for growth.*



# ENGAGING AUBURN GRESHAM

Auburn Gresham stakeholders participated in the Dec. 18, 2019, Invest South/West kick-off celebration at Kennedy-King College.

The family-friendly meeting, one of four held this winter to launch the INVEST South/West initiative, included a broad overview of the initiative, performances by local artists, and an open house with youth activities and food from local chefs. More than 500 attendees listened to presentations about the goals and objectives of INVEST South/West, then interfaced with dozens of public agencies about opportunities to improve the community.

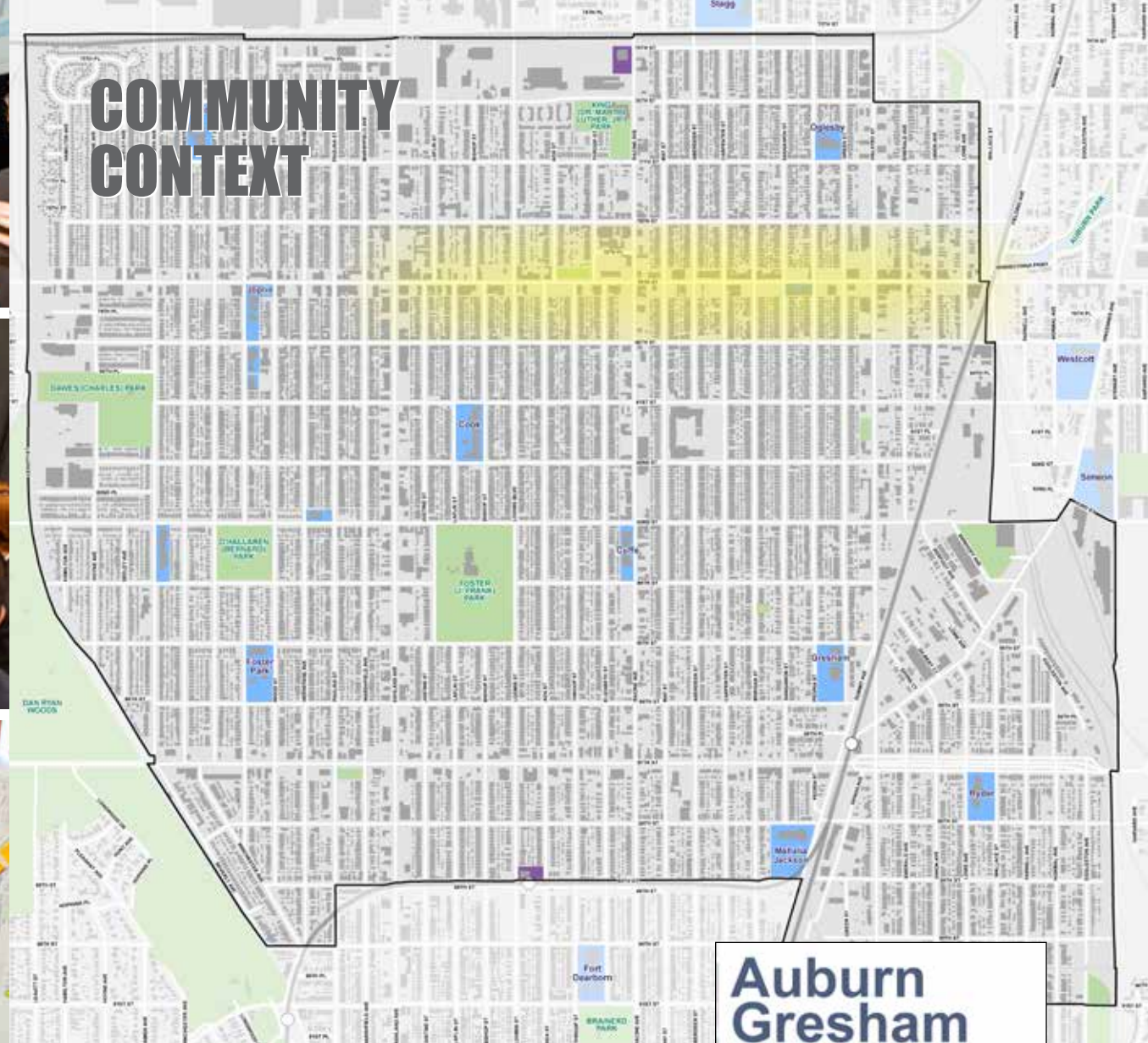
Attendees participated in workshops, reviewed community area maps; identified personal goals for local streets; highlighted opportunity sites; and reviewed existing community plans like the Auburn Gresham mixed-use “Quality of Life Plan” and the “TOD Master Plan” for 79th Street.

The information was also made available online at [www.chicago.gov/investsw](http://www.chicago.gov/investsw), along with an online survey for stakeholders who could not attend the event.

Approximatley 2,000 people paricipated in additional community meetings held in January 2020 in Austin, South Shore and Pullman.



# COMMUNITY CONTEXT



## Auburn Gresham

### Map Legend

- Area Boundary
- Retail Hub
- Building Footprints
- Schools
- Parks
- Libraries
- Non-passenger Rail Lines
- Metra Line & Station

# MAKE IT HAPPEN



# WHAT YOU SAID



## PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY

Written and verbal public comments during the Auburn-Gresham kickoff event reflected multiple perspectives about the economic health of the 79th Street commercial nodes and their roles within the community. Public feedback was reviewed by planning staff and distilled into main categories that include primary needs and goals, as well as concerns and issues. Summary statements are listed below. These priorities will guide community-based policies and decision-making as improvements are strategized and financed in the months ahead.



## BUDGET GOALS

To help determine spending priorities for public realm improvements, planning participants were asked to select up to three types of enhancements from 11 types of examples, such as reusing right-of-ways typically used for cars as spaces for people,

hosting events in parks and other public facilities, and making streets and other thoroughfares safer to cross. The top four selections from the December meeting are reflected below. Additional data is available at [www.chicago.gov/auburngresham](http://www.chicago.gov/auburngresham).

### Primary Needs and Goals

- Retail buildings with residential above
- Sit-down restaurants
- Improved care of vacant buildings and abandoned lots
- More entertainment venues providing expanded options
- New/improved grocery stores and other shopping opportunities
- Community festivals and public art
- Activities for children/young adults

### Main Concerns

- Abundance of liquor stores and bars
- High concentration of cell phone stores/currency exchanges
- Public safety/loitering around vacant lots
- Crime/loitering near abandoned buildings
- Lack of nearby shopping



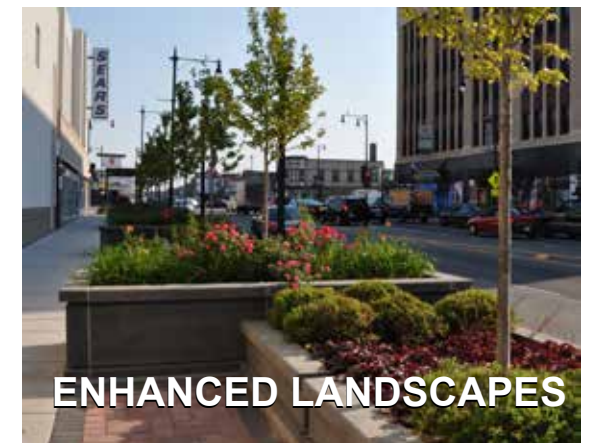
RECLAIMED SPACES



COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY



ENHANCED LANDSCAPES



# 79TH STREET CORRIDOR

Responses to DPD's proposal for 79th Street to be a priority corridor for public and private investments also reflected multiple views. Stretching between Paulina Street and the Metra tracks, the proposed 79th Street focus area is within the service area of the Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corp., which provides community development services, and also includes a Special Services Area in which a special tax levy supports local businesses. Statements that summarize most common responses are indicated at right. Special character buildings that participants noted along the corridor are identified below and below right.



# WHAT YOU SAID



# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The December kick-off meeting was more than a community planning exercise. The event also celebrated the revitalization of the South and West sides with dancers, singers, and family-friendly activities.





# WHAT'S NEXT

Participation by INVEST South/West community stakeholders is critical to the initiative's success. In order to directly reflect community goals, the initiative is coordinating relationships between government, neighborhood groups, ward offices, businesses and residents as work moves forward in 2020.

Starting this spring, the City will work to create "Neighborhood Roundtable" groups for the 10 participating community areas. Consisting of representatives from city agencies, aldermanic offices and neighborhood organizations, each roundtable will help advance local goals through a broad, cross-disciplinary approach that leverages the insights, wisdom, creativity and resources of local stakeholders.

Information on the Auburn Gresham Neighborhood Roundtable will be made available online at [www.chicago.gov/auburngresham](http://www.chicago.gov/auburngresham).

Also starting this spring, DPD will be coordinating with the Chicago office of LISC (Local Initiative Support Corporation) and Main Streets America to provide technical assistance for corridor revitalization initiatives. The coordination will include the designation of commercial corridor project managers that will work with local roundtables, aldermen and businesses to help ensure improvements reflect community needs, including infrastructure upgrades and private investments facilitated through forthcoming Neighborhood Opportunity Fund applications and Requests for Proposals for private and City-owned land.

Additional timeline information is below.



Mixed uses on the 1000 block of West 79th Street.





**DPD**

Department of Planning  
and Development