



## WORKING GROUP STRATEGY GUIDE

### Transportation and Economic Development

#### *Priority Outcomes*

- Residents can easily access jobs, commercial services and other community amenities.
- The Downtown/East Side Choice Neighborhood attracts private investment.
- Chicago Heights becomes a place homeowners and businesses want to invest in.

#### *Framing the Challenge*

- How can we **leverage our transportation assets** to create a neighborhood of choice?
  - Effective transportation can help distinguish Chicago Heights from other communities.
  - Good transportation can help attract industries and jobs.
  - Personal transportation has been revolutionized through ride share and other digital enhancements. How can Chicago Heights capitalize on this trend?
  - Is there a way to mitigate high property tax rates, particularly for new investment?

## **What Neighborhood Residents Have Told Us**

- Desire for business development that strengthens the tax base and brings jobs to Chicago Heights, especially jobs that match the skills of current East Side residents.
- Bring vibrancy back to the Downtown with new retail and other commercial uses that serve the neighborhood and the entire community. Desired retail uses included laundromat, smoothie shop, grocery store, restaurants, dollar stores, gas station, and Walmart. Residents also expressed the view that existing businesses needed to be supported.
- Link transportation improvements with new development. Sidewalk conditions need to be improved and additional walking path provided to enhance pedestrian transportation amenities, especially for students going to and from school. As new development happens, make sure that the transportation needs of residents are considered.
- Pace bus service generally gets people without cars where they need to go. However, expanded service would be helpful in getting residents to and from evening classes at Prairie State, for example.

## **Assets**

- Pace transfer station
- Regional road connections (Lincoln Highway, Chicago Road, Halsted Street)
- Industrial employers with well-paying jobs
- Robust freight rail network

## **Challenges**

- High property tax rates may hinder industrial investment & job creation
- Not enough people/income base to support new commercial investment
- Liquor stores and other deleterious commercial uses in prominent locations create a negative visual image and may deter other more positive commercial investment