



Steering Committee #1

January 20, 2021 (virtual)

Steering Committee

Helen Cameron

Co-owner of Uncommon Ground; Edgewater resident

Michael Cameron

Co-owner of Uncommon Ground; Edgewater resident

Jennifer Clark

Associate VP of Community Engagement, Loyola University Chicago; Rogers Park resident

Gina Caruso

Edgewater property owner; Rogers Park resident

William Huchting

Architect; Edgewater resident

Riley Kelly

Student Ambassador for Loyola University Chicago

Dan Luna

Chief of Staff, 48th Ward

Leslie Perkins

Chief of Staff, 49th Ward

Jack Swenson

Chair of Planning and Development Committee for RPBA; Rogers Park resident

Rick Thompson

Owner of Anytime Fitness locations on Devon and Broadway; Edgewater resident

Staff

Frank Kryzak – Economic Development Manager, ECC

Christina Pfitzinger – Executive Director, ECC

Cindy Plante – Economic Development Manager, RPBA

Sandi Price – Executive Director, RPBA

Cecilia Rodriguez – Director of Community Engagement, Loyola University Chicago
Board Member, ECC; Board Member, ECC

Teska Associates, Inc.

Ali Begazo

Erin Cigliano

Scott Goldstein

Welcome & Introductions

Christina Pfitzinger opened the meeting and led introductions.

Project Overview

Scott Goldstein gave an overview of the Elevate Devon project, including local engagement strategies and plan components.

Local engagement strategies include:

- Interviews
- Four steering committee meetings
- Student Ambassadors
- Two community meetings
- Corridor pop-ups
- Project poll
- Comment map + website

Plan components include:

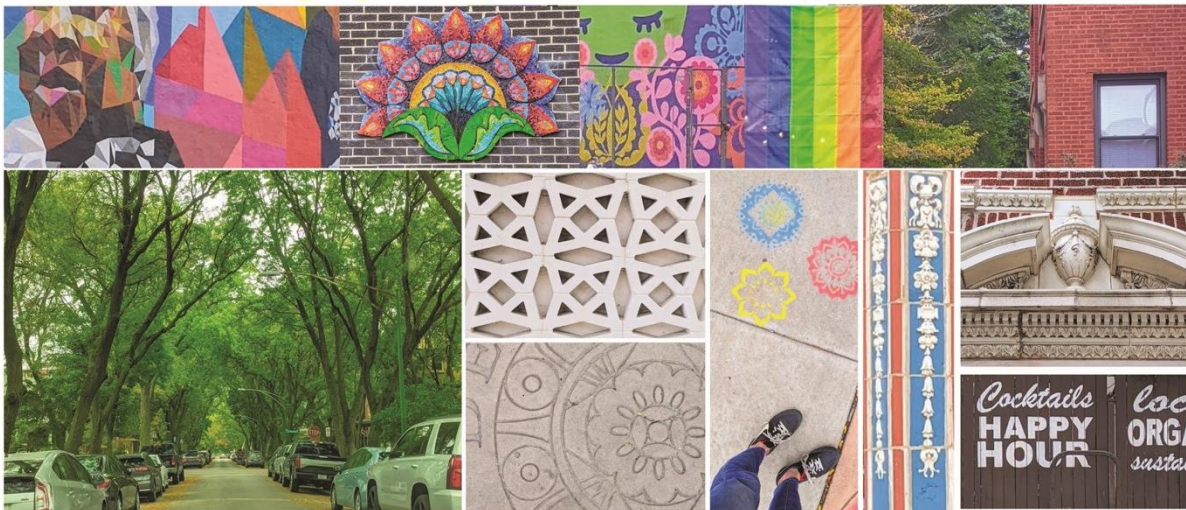
- Programs and services to support existing businesses
- Strategies to attract new businesses & fill vacancies that speak to local needs
- Urban design improvements to elevate Devon, making it more walkable, beautiful, memorable, and a special place to visit, shop, live and work

Identity Design + Marketing

Erin Cigliano led the committee through the identity design process..



Inspiration Imagery





Words

elevate
places
people
possibilities
potential
vibrant
diverse
warm
cool
water
wind
motion
color
culture
connection
religion
diversity
love
learn
live
rejuvenation
opportunity
marketplace



Symbology

DIVERSITY · The Lotus Flower is regarded in many cultures, especially eastern religions, as a symbol of purity, enlightenment, self-regeneration and rebirth. The lotus is already celebrated along Devon Avenue.

VIBRANCY · Peacocks, which showcase a strikingly similar shape to the lotus, are symbolic of re-growth and rejuvenation, beauty, love, and passion. In Hinduism and Buddhism, these birds are considered to be sacred. The peacock celebrates Devon's vibrancy, religious diversity, and LGBTQ+ community.

MOVEMENT · Spiritually, the Koi Fish symbolizes peace, rejuvenation, and opportunities. This aligns with Elevate Devon's driving goal of leveling-up the "power of place", proximity to the lake/water, movement of users along the corridor, local cuisine, and overall focus on fluidity and balance.

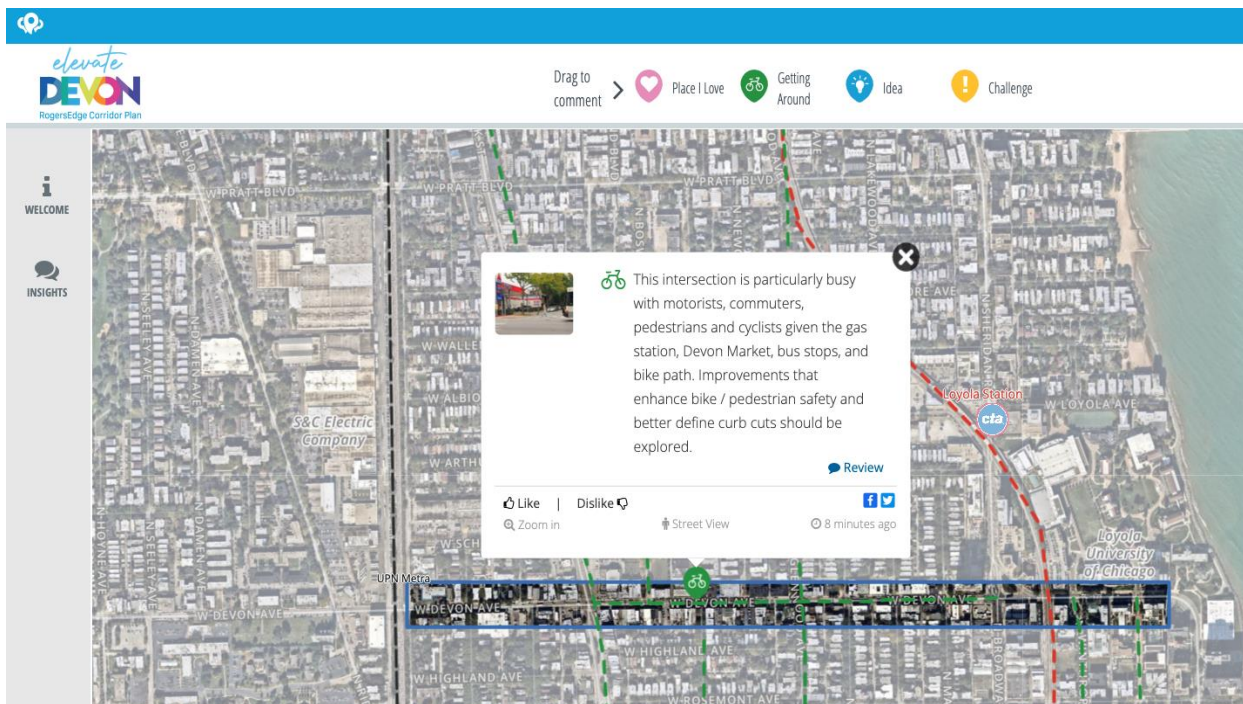
Digital marketing, email marketing, and social media are all important components of reaching the Devon Avenue community, which the project identity will support and reinforce through a unified design and message.

Committee members liked the design and the "elevate" message. Some brought up that when you mention "Devon", many people think of the stretch west of Western Avenue. "Elevating" this portion of Devon as a distinctive part of the city is an important challenge and opportunity. How do we create a connection between both the western and eastern parts of Devon, but also the northern (Rogers Park) and southern (Edgewater) parts? How can we use this space to connect these communities and be a vibrant, distinct destination?

Scott and Erin expanded on the role of the steering committee as that of a leadership team that helps guide the process by sharing oversight at key points and offering their unique perspectives and feedback. They serve as ambassadors to the larger community, helping to promote the project and further awareness and engagement within their networks.

Comment Map

Committee members previewed the comment map. Erin explained how to use the tool and asked committee members to start adding their insights and supporting imagery to such. Once the project website goes live, both the website and comment map will be promoted to the public. At that time, the steering committee will be provided materials to assist with marketing the project and comment map. She also noted to Riley Kelley (student ambassador) that understanding how students traverse and engage with the corridor is extremely valuable for project.



Focus Group & Interview Highlights

Scott provided an overview of feedback received. Interviewees to date include:

Belinda Cunneen, Cunneen's
 John Dale, EGA Block Club
 Amanda Dobron, Golden Hour Acupuncture
 Bruce Iglauer, Alligator Records
 Eric Kugelman, Leather 64TEN
 Michael Salvatore, Resident and Heritage Bikes
 Nancy Schroeder, ENN Block Club
 Chad Stevens, Owl & The Peacock

How would you characterize Devon now?

- "Interesting businesses"; "Better, safer place" than years ago; "Lots of potential, beauty underneath"; "Hard to get people to go west"; lack of cohesiveness – "need a vision" for the corridor"

How can existing businesses be supported?

- "Improve walkability, pedestrian crossings, more people on the street"; "Restaurant walk or art walk"; "Banners, social media"; "Best way to get people involved is to go out and see them"; "Trash collection"; "Planters are well-intentioned but need to be maintained or replaced"

What new businesses could be attracted to Devon?

- "More restaurants" – not enough now; "Health and fitness related studios, foods, restaurants"; "Attract businesses with vacant spaces at affordable rents"; LGBTQ+ market, "businesses and residents priced out" of Andersonville, Lincoln Square, Wicker Park; "Need a vision, identity, lighting" e.g. streetscape along Devon @ Western; "Gifts, home improvement/decor"

What transportation improvements are needed?

- "Make crossings for bikes and pedestrians safer"; "Bike lanes are good," don't separate them; "Improve lighting/safety"; "Add stop signs at cross-streets"

Steering Committee Feedback from Interviews:

There was discussion that separated bike lanes would be safer. It would slow down traffic and give people an opportunity to look at the stores along Devon. There is some skepticism of protected lanes because of how they were rolled out on Clark Street. Some have been hit or seen cyclists hit.

The Sheridan/Devon/Broadway intersection is a "nightmare," especially with the popularity of the Starbucks; it "separates the corridor." Some said they take Greenview/Glenwood/Clark to avoid the intersection. It encourages people to drive fast. "Devon is a gateway to Lakeshore Drive, it's okay to slow that traffic down."

CTA buses don't cross Devon Avenue. If you want to continue on Broadway you need to get off and take the Sheridan bus. Devon acts as a dividing street where two worlds with different energies meet – how do we reconnect these worlds? How do we link these communities?

Filling vacancies would have the biggest impact.

Committee members discussed the results from the mini poll:

What do you like about Devon Avenue?



What could be improved on Devon Avenue?

- Beautify, planters, streetscape, maintenance, declutter, vacancies, density, housing, lighting, events, identity
- "Comfortable places to sit and dine outdoors. Public art that celebrates local culture and identity."
- "Streetwall needs cavities filled."

- *"Too many empty storefronts, It would be nice to have a paper source type store, a children's toy / puzzle store & maybe a boutique like clothing store."*
- *"Hardy urban trees that can stand the salt spray over our snowy winters."*

What would have the biggest impact on making Devon Avenue more inviting, vibrant?

- Filling vacancies (10 votes)
- New, diverse businesses (5 votes)
- Well-maintained greenery, street trees, and plantings (5 votes)
- Comfortable places to sit and dine outdoors (4 votes)
- Community programming and events (2 votes)
- Lighting to enhance sense of place and safety (2 votes)
- Safe pedestrian crossings and bike routes (2 votes)
- Public art that celebrates local culture and identity (1 vote)

The committee then offered thoughts on the following questions:

1. What social media post would you most like to share in 3 years after initial, successful implementation of the plan? What would it read, what image would it show? What hashtags would it use?

- #MyHappyPlace – A place with a name, loyalty, beloved. A place where tourists will go, a hidden gem. A place for people. A place where you can spend your whole day.
- Want increased and intentional foot traffic. We need a diversity of businesses to visit. A balance of restaurants, bars, grocery, gourmet, boutiques, interesting places for clothes, shoes, home décor, candy shop, ice cream... a whole variety of places so that you're not there for just one thing. We need complimentary businesses that lead into one another.
- RogersEdge, #ChicagosBackyard – playing off the success of Uncommon Ground, it could be a place that brings people outside
- #NoVacanciesDevon
- A place for innovation, a place with the energy of the youth and with innovative businesses and art spaces that can drive foot traffic with restaurants
- "A vibrant and busy RogersEdge corridor"
- The diversity of the area is a strength that we should use, we could be a really special place if we nailed that. How can we encourage people from all over the world to open small businesses on Devon?
- We need short and long term plans. Short term, slow traffic down – stop signs, bump outs, etc. Devon is a gateway to Lakeshore Drive and we should be slowing the cars down. Flex streets.
- Brewery – unique challenge on Devon is that at Lakewood it's a dry precinct and neighbors are concerned about a "nightclub" opening.
- We can reimagine what a place with restaurants and bars would look like and appeal to neighbors

2. If money were no object, what would you like to do to improve Devon?

- Brewery!
- Bridge/bikeway/pedway over the Broadway/Sheridan intersection
- A bridge would fit in well with the idea of "elevation" – observation
- Sustainability hub
- Structures or shared lighting. In areas like Lincoln Square, over the holidays they have lights back and forth across the street, and it really feel like you've entered an area. How do you create an entryway where it feels like you're entering an area where things are happening?
- Looking up #vibrantstreet on Instagram – somewhere in Malaysia they have hanging jellyfish above the street. "Things Are Looking Up on Devon" – akin to the zoo lights like you are entering a magical place, especially at night
- Lighting on the corridor and at the entry would make it feel like you are part of something vibrant
- Signs have been very successful in Chicago – 22nd Street, Division Street, Lincoln Square, Argyle, Chinatown; it lets you know that you're somewhere. Less traffic, less parking, more space for people to walk around. Most areas are celebrating a single culture, and Devon is celebrating many.
- A physical structure; if there's going to be a gesture, it should elevate the area, create identity and personality

Visioning Doodles: "Let's create something timeless, transformational, magical..."



Market Findings

The main takeaways from the Market Study are:

- Diversity of people, backgrounds, and languages provides a platform for a range of businesses
- Population has been declining, but number of housing units have been stable
- Transit, walkability, and car access/parking are important drivers of demand
- Predominance of retail trade and service businesses and employees

Two market areas – 5-minute and 10-minute drive times from the corridor – were used to analysis the market surrounding Devon Avenue (see below).

The area is diverse, with 20-23% of the population identifying as Latino or Hispanic, about 54% White Alone, about 15% Black or African American Alone, 16% Asian Alone, and 15% Some Other Race Alone or Two or More Races. 40% of residents speak a language other than English in their household; the most common languages spoken other than English are Spanish and Indo-European languages.

Population has declined over the past 20 years in both market areas. This may reflect shrinking household sizes in the same period. Both market areas had little net change in total housing units since 2000. In the 5-minute area, 60% is renter-occupied, 40% is owner-occupied, and 11% of units are vacant. In the 10-minute area, 57% of units are renter-occupied, 34% are owner-occupied, and 9% are vacant.

Transit ridership fell during the pandemic, but is starting to recover. Loyola University Chicago has increased its total enrollment over the years, and nearly 4,000 students live in the Rogers Park and Edgewater zip codes near Devon.

42% of businesses and 52% of employees in the five-minute area work in Services, and 24% of business and 20% of employees are involved in Retail Trade. Consumers are more likely to spend money on the latest technology and food (groceries, eating at restaurants, and takeout).

Next Steps

The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for February 17th, 2022, at 2:30 PM. Teska Associates will send out the link for the comment map, and steering committee members are encouraged to use their knowledge and eye to share comments and photos.

Share Ideas Via the Comment Map: Local insights, inspirational ideas, and imagery <https://shareinput.org/elevate-devon#/>