

City of Allen Park

Our Vision,

Our Future

A Strategic Plan For The Community of Allen Park

Thank you to the many citizens, business stakeholders and community leaders that shared their dreams and ideas for building a vibrant future for Allen Park which have now been developed into this Strategic Plan.

Presented to:
Allen Park Mayor and Council

Presented by:
Allen Park Advisory Committee

July 23, 2014

Thank You To Our Generous Community Partners!



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OUR VISION, OUR FUTURE

In March, 2014 a Community Meeting was held in conjunction with the Strategic Planning Process to discuss the future of Allen Park – “**Our Vision, Our Future**”. Over 120 Allen Park residents, business representatives, city administrators/staff, and elected officials attended and participated in the day long discussions. Participants were asked to share their thoughts and ideas on “What would we like our city to look like in 1 – 5 years?” and “What would you Keep, Change, Create?”

The data/feedback collected at the March 2014 Community Meeting was compiled into Topics in an effort to facilitate further discussions for the next phase of the process. The next step of the Strategic Planning Process took place with a Community Meeting in April, where Citizen Work Groups were formed to focus on specific goals/recommendations where citizen involvement and action, along with appropriate city departments and/or commissions, would result in changes and implementation. Participants attending the April session were asked to sit with the Work Group in which they had the greatest interest. The Work Group Topics included the following:

- Arts, Culture and Community Life
- Business and Economic Development
- Education
- Government Excellence
- Neighborhoods and Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Safety

This document contains the Work Group Topics and Goals which resulted from these Community Meetings and discussions. Goals have been compiled and ‘Lead Organizations’ identified, consisting of key commissions, city officials and other groups/parties, for the purpose of evaluating, prioritizing and implementing.

It is recognized that although the feedback and input gathered at the Community Meetings is valuable, it is essential that we concentrate our efforts on those “visions” which can be influenced or controlled by volunteers, commissions and those who govern our City now and in the future.

RECOMMENDATION TO MAYOR and COUNCIL

This “**Our Vision, Our Future**” document is a compilation of feedback and input obtained from discussions with Allen Park residents, business representatives, city administrators/staff, and elected officials and is recommended to the Mayor and City Council for approval. Specific approval request is as follows:

- Approve and adopt the “**Our Vision, Our Future**” Strategic Plan through a formal council resolution

SUPPORT BY MAYOR and COUNCIL

1. Drive the strategic plan process toward implementation of goals
 - Empower Commissions/Committees to adopt the goals and objectives that pertain to their function.
 - Secure ‘Buy-In’ from Lead Organizations/individuals
 - Establish a regular City Council Agenda Item for ‘report out’ from Lead Organization/individuals regarding results/goal implementation.
 - Assist in removing roadblocks and/or obstacles to reaching goals
2. Empower Lead Organization/individuals

WORK GROUP TOPIC & RECOMMENDED POINT PERSON

A ‘Point Person’ has been recommended for each Work Group Topic. This person has agreed to initiate kick-off.

WORK GROUP TOPICS	POINT PERSON
• Arts, Culture and Community Life	To be determined
• Business and Economic Development	Andre Tirado
• Education	Doug Pretty & Bob Turner
• Government Excellence	Karen Folks
• Parks and Recreation	Richard Huebler
• Public Safety	Karen Folks

SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Identified 'Lead Organizations' include, but may not be limited to key commissions, city officials and other groups/parties including the following:

- Festivities Committee
- Beautification Commission
- Garden Club
- Allen Parkers
- Environmental Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Community Center
- Historical Commission
- Allen Park Advisory Committee
- Downtown Development Authority
- Chamber of Commerce
- Brownfield Development Authority
- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Public Safety Commission
- Civic Volunteers
- City of Allen Park
- Elected / Appointed Officials

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS FOR LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

These Lead Organizations/Individuals would:

1. Evaluate goals (see section titled 'WORK GROUP GOALS')
2. Prioritize goals
3. Determine "low hanging fruit"
4. Initiate contact with other groups/organizations for assistance in completing goals, (e.g., volunteers, commissions, neighboring cities etc.).
5. Initiate implementation of goals
 - Seek assistance in removing obstacles and/or roadblocks which may interfere with achieving goals
6. Communicate progress to Public, Mayor and Council

WORK GROUP TOPIC - GOALS

Arts, Culture and Community Life. The City of Allen Park has a rich history of supporting arts, culture and community activities. These activities not only enrich the community but contribute to the city's economic vitality. Recognizing this, the participants generated a number of ideas for strengthening and enhancing community life.

ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY LIFE GOALS (Point Person = To Be Determined)	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
Goal 1. Bring together the various groups responsible for community events and festivals to coordinate program planning, expand events, and create a balanced calendar of events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivities Committee
Goal 2. Sponsor, in cooperation with the Down River Runners Club, a 5K run through Allen Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivities Committee
Goal 3. In cooperation with community groups develop and promote an annual ethnic festival celebrating the city's rich diversity of cultures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivities Committee
Goal 4. Bring together arts and cultural organizations to develop an Arts and Culture Strategic Plan to increase art and cultural activities in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivities Committee • Proposed Arts and Culture Committee
Goal 5. Partner with schools, the Allen Park Library, the Community Center, and other organizations to increase extra-curricular arts programs, particularly programs for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Arts and Culture Committee
Goal 6. Facilitate increased public art such as murals, concerts in the parks, and art fairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Arts and Culture Committee
Goal 7. Partner with neighborhoods and community organizations to develop and maintain community gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification Commission • Garden Club • Allen Parkers
Goal 8. Develop an annual garden walk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification Commission • Garden Club • Allen Parkers
Goal 9. Partner with Detroit Edison to offer training for energy efficient systems and practices for private residences and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Commission • City of Allen Park
Goal 10. Continue and expand the city-wide garage sale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 11. Establish and seek funding for a "Volunteer Coordinator" to support volunteer activities and identify grants and other sources of support for volunteer work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed City of Allen Park Non-profit organization

Business and Economic Development. Visioning participants emphasized the importance of a strong economic base for the city and its future. This included a strong focus on a healthy business environment. A primary focus was on ways to make Allen Park a destination with an increasing variety of businesses, improved streetscapes, and more entertainment and events.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS (Point Person = Andre Tirado)	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
Goal 1. Diversify downtown businesses to include entertainment, restaurants, art galleries, specialty shops, and other businesses that keep people downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA • Chamber of Commerce
Goal 2. Encourage improved facades and the overall condition of buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA • Chamber of Commerce
Goal 3. Encourage businesses to have more flexible or longer hours of operation in coordination with downtown events and activities at the Community Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA • Community Center • Chamber of Commerce
Goal 4. Review and improve directional signage to the downtown and signs indicating routes to parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA • Chamber of Commerce
Goal 5. Develop information kiosks downtown for easy access to business/public locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA • Chamber of Commerce
Goal 6. Establish a work group to develop and implement a strategic plan for downtown development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA • Chamber of Commerce
Goal 7. Develop and distribute an Allen Park Business Directory and map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Allen Park • DDA • Chamber of Commerce • Brownfield Development Authority
Goal 8. Develop a consistent logo and signage design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Allen Park • DDA • Chamber of Commerce • Brownfield Development
Goal 9. Conduct a market analysis and identify opportunities for cross marketing Allen Park as a destination with its easy access via three freeways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Allen Park • DDA • Chamber of Commerce • Brownfield Development
Goal 10. Establish a “Welcome to Allen Park” orientation program and materials for new residents to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA • Chamber of Commerce

Education. A strong educational system is the foundation of a strong community. Allen Park’s public, private and post secondary schools make the community a desirable place to live, and play an important role in its economic development.

<p align="center">EDUCATION GOALS (Point Persons = Doug Pretty & Bob Turner)</p>	<p align="center">SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS</p>
<p>Goal 1. Continue to identify opportunities for collaboration within Allen Park to connect community resources (mentoring, tutoring, job shadowing, entrepreneurship, etc.) with our schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Volunteer Coordinator in cooperation with the private and public schools serving the community, including Post Secondary Education.
<p>Goal 2. Continue collaboration among our public and private schools to more effectively leverage our resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Volunteer Coordinator in cooperation with the public and private schools serving the community, including Post Secondary Education
<p>Goal 3. Launch a campaign to educate citizens on the educational resources available to them and establish a one-stop shop portal on the city website with links to the educational resources in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Volunteer Coordinator in cooperation with the public and private schools serving the community, including Post Secondary Education
<p>Goal 4. Explore opportunities for shared communication with the City (newsletter, website, etc.) about educational programs and resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Allen Park in cooperation with the private and public schools serving the community, including Post Secondary Education
<p>Goal 5. Assist Allen Park Public Schools in marketing the Allen Park Center for the Arts as a community resource and source of revenue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Allen Park in cooperation with the private and public schools serving the community, including Post Secondary Education
<p>Goal 6. Identify additional ways to collaborate with other organizations to increase utilization of school resources such as pools and sport fields.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks and Recreation Commission in cooperation with the private and public schools serving the community, including Post Secondary Education
<p>Goal 7. Increase public awareness of computer literacy and other adult education opportunities, particularly for seniors, available in the city and nearby communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Allen Park in cooperation with the Allen Park private and public schools, including Post Secondary Education
<p>Goal 8. Establish regular meetings with School Board/Officials and City Council Representatives from all Allen Park Schools (including Melvindale, Southgate, private e.g. Cabrini, Inner City etc.) and Post Secondary Education should be asked to participate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Allen Park in cooperation with the Allen Park private and public schools, including Post Secondary Education

Government Excellence. For the visioning participants government excellence means a comprehensive approach to citizen engagement, fiscal policy, local services, communication and transparency, collaboration with partners, and high quality customer service that will enable Allen Park to remain a community of choice for future generations.

GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE GOALS (Point Person = Karen Folks)	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
Goal 1. Replace the current city hall with a new facility which will facilitate the efficient delivery of services.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 2. Establish a robust website to facilitate communication, information sharing and web-based delivery of services.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 3. Explore the application of social media to improve communication and information sharing with citizens.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 4. Develop an asset map of the community to provide comprehensive information on community assets and guide future planning.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 5. Revise and update the city's master plan.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 6. Review the city charter and city ordinances to insure their clarity and effectiveness.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 7. Review and revise building codes and ordinances to insure they are responsive to development needs and trends.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 8. Review and revise building codes and city practices to improve environmental sustainability (energy efficiency, recycling, etc.).	• City of Allen Park
Goal 9. Develop a city property disposition program to insure the effective use of city property.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 10. Review city boards and commissions to assess their current functioning, clarify roles and responsibilities, and determine if additional boards and commissions are warranted.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 11. Create and promote a clearinghouse of information to enable individuals to understand and pursue opportunities to serve on appointed bodies.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 12. Develop and implement a street maintenance and resurfacing plan.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 13. Secure CDGB funds to increase handicap access within the city.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 14. Explore alternative approaches to service delivery that can enhance service delivery such as in-sourcing, outsourcing, and collaborations or mergers across local jurisdictions.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 15. Establish a stand alone Non-Profit Organization 501(c3) to secure funding for community initiatives.	• City of Allen Park Advisory Committee
Goal 16. Explore the need to establish a Business Advisory Council to enhance communication, coordination and policies to strengthen business development.	• City of Allen Park • Chamber of Commerce • DDA
Goal 17. Explore the feasibility of publishing a quarterly newsletter which would provide comprehensive information on city, school and community events. An electronic version would also be available of the city's website.	• Allen Park Community Center
Goal 18. Provide information to city residents about grants and incentives for historic preservation, energy conservation assistance, etc.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 19. Develop a systematic recognition program for individuals and organization contributing to civic life.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 20. Ensure that all sidewalks are maintained and ADA compliant.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 21. Review and update zoning ordinances and code enforcement provisions to encourage neighborhood preservation and property maintenance, and inform the public on how to report violations.	• City of Allen Park
Goal 22. Create a plan to identify and preserve historic buildings throughout the city, including those in residential neighborhoods.	• Historical Commission
Goal 23. Provide assistance to preserve the Allen Park historical home.	• Historical Commission

GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE GOALS (Point Person = Karen Folks)	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
<p>Goal 24. Establish a new commission - <u>Arts, Culture and Community Life</u> which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee Festivities Committee • Coordinate activities with Parks and Recreation Commission • Allocate/utilize proceeds from activities – use proceeds to fund additional arts & culture activities which will contribute to the city's vitality • Include representatives from all Allen Park public and private schools (including Post Secondary Education) and senior citizen participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Allen Park

Parks and Recreation. Recreational facilities and programs were viewed by the participants as a key component of a successful and healthy community. There was broad agreement on the value of the Allen Park Community Center and a clear desire to see it returned to its previous role as a vital community asset. The participants also identified a variety of ways to expand recreational activities for all citizens. Building on the ideas from the visioning process, the Parks and Recreation Commission will develop a Parks and Recreation Plan.

PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS (Point Person = Richard Huebler)	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
Goal 1. With the return of the management of the Community Center to the city, participants focused on the revitalization of the Center. These included the development of additional programming and aggressive marketing of the Center and its programs and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 2. Develop a multi-use pathway system linking parks, schools, community facilities and neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 3. Continue to maintain and update park equipment and facilities as needed with the assistance of an increased "adopt a park" program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 4. Explore the development of additional recreational facilities such as community gardens, dog parks, and spray parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 5. In cooperation with the schools and non-profits, expand or develop programs related to teens, seniors, and those with special needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 6: Revisit the linear park concept and develop additional neighborhood parks where opportunities are available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 7: Conduct annual meet your neighbors city-wide picnics in city parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 8: Designate fitness walking areas indicating 1, 2, and 3 mile lengths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission
Goal 9: Support the creation of neighborhood organizations (block clubs, neighborhood watch, etc.) to strengthen citizen engagement and public safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Commission • Proposed Volunteer Coordinator
Goal 10. In cooperation with the public and private schools serving the community, develop a "Youth Council" to better understand the issues of younger people and engage them in community life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Volunteer Coordinator
Goal 11. In cooperation with community organizations develop a senior citizen council to guide the development of comprehensive and coordinated services for Allen Park seniors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Volunteer Coordinator
Goal 12. Provide information on existing volunteer programs and create more opportunities to volunteer with the city and local community organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Volunteer Coordinator
Goal 13. Establish 'Volunteer Coordinator' position which will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure resources to support civic improvement activities • Coordinate efforts of resident and business involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation Director

Public Safety. Participants were generally satisfied with the city’s public safety and recognized the constraints of current staffing levels. There were, however, a number of suggestions for improving public safety which relied on better communication with citizens and greater use of volunteers.

PUBLIC SAFETY GOALS (Point Person = Karen Folks)	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
Goal 1. Utilize the city’s new website and other communication channels to keep citizens informed about public safety programs and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Allen Park
Goal 2. Develop the capacity to issue text alerts to citizen about public safety issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Department
Goal 3. Create a partnership with other police departments and area mental health agencies to improve responses to calls involving residents with mental illnesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Department
Goal 4. Seek ways to support increased outreach education on issues such as such as alcohol abuse, date rape, fire safety, and crimes targeting seniors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police and Fire Departments in cooperation with community schools and agencies
Goal 5. Identify a community group to sponsor a “Safety Town” program for the city’s children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Department
Goal 6. Improve ordinance enforcement by educating residents and businesses on city ordinances and providing contact information for the individuals in City departments responsible for enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Allen Park
Goal 7. Expand the Neighborhood Watch program across the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Department

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Allen Park Advisory Committee would like to thank the many citizens, business stakeholders and community leaders who provided valuable input and participated in developing the Allen Park Strategic Plan - Our Vision, Our Future. In addition to the time and energy put forth to complete the Allen Park Strategic Plan, the following individuals and businesses financially supported the planning process:

Thank You To Our Generous Community Partners!



... and an additional thank you to the many others who provided a monetary gift, donated food, provided meeting facilities, and contributed other services.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The members of the Allen Park Advisory Committee include the following:

- Kris Barann
- Dave Boomer
- Pat Bossio, Chaplain
- Karen Folks
- Kip Horvath
- Richard Huebler
- John Kozuh
- Kenneth Lieber
- Gail McLeod
- Kurt Mazag
- Kathy Milberg
- Joyce Parker
- Doug Pretty
- *Jerry Richards (Chair) (*Donor)
- Kevin Rourke (*past member*)
- *Linda Shovak (*past member*) (*Donor)
- Cheryl Stan
- Dr. John Sturock (*past member*)
- Andre Tirado

- Bob Turner
- Mary Wallace

Hal Stack (Strategic Plan Facilitator)