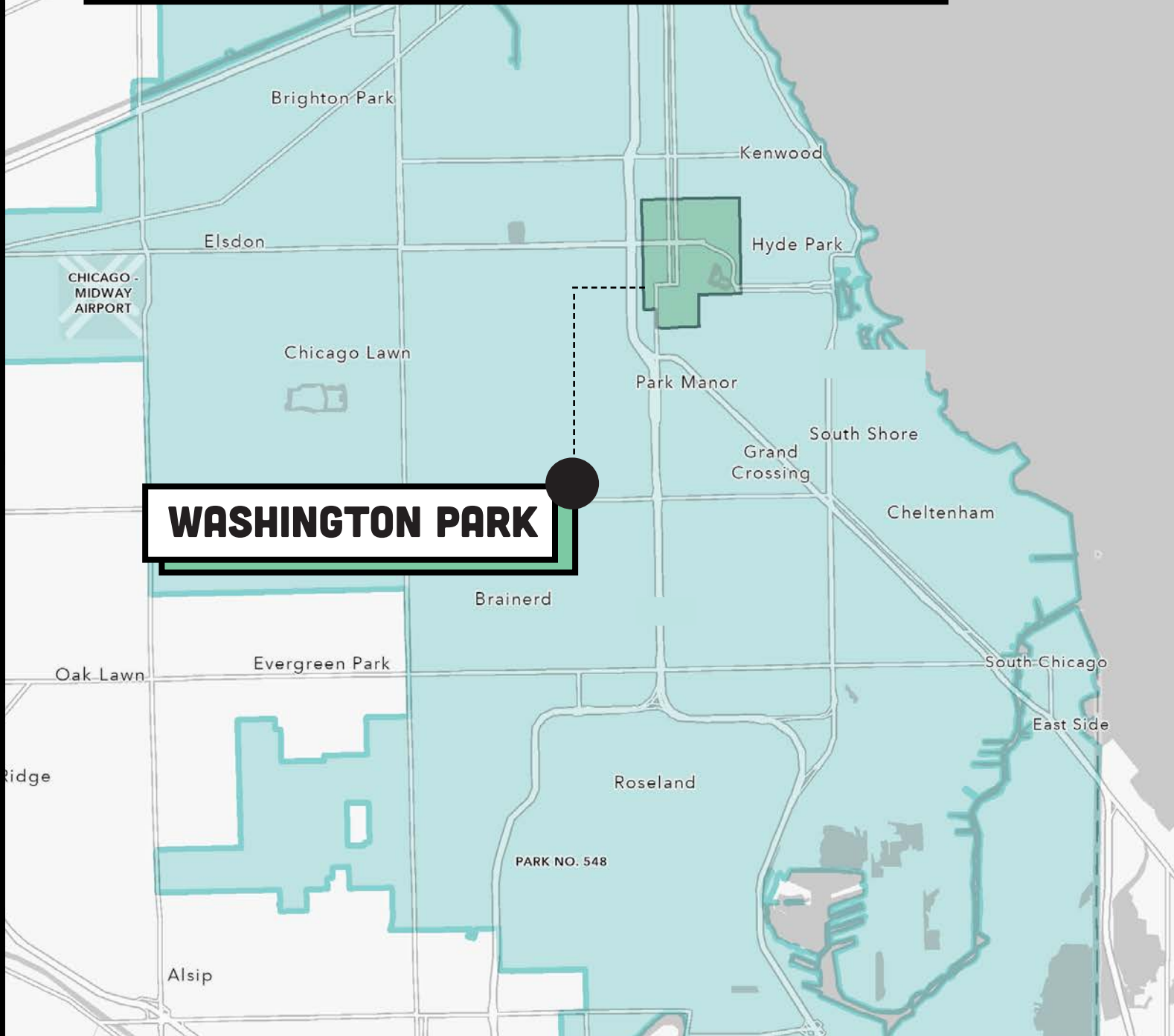


WASHINGTON PARK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION GUIDE



OVERVIEW

Washington Park is a majority Black Chicago neighborhood and a social hot spot and gathering place for the South Side. The neighborhood is known across the city for its vast namesake park, and its special events and sports and recreation amenities draw visitors from across the city and region.

Washington Park's entrepreneurial spirit, transportation access, strong partner and community relationships, available residential and commercial land, and new and established businesses have led to developments in recent years driven by Black-owned and arts-forward businesses. And the neighborhood is ready to continue welcoming vibrant, community-inspired, and resident-led development and growth.

This action guide focuses on aspects of economic growth and ways that residents can participate in driving the neighborhood's development and recognition. It offers steps that may lead to development and increase awareness of the neighborhood and its assets, and ways to hold leaders and others accountable. This action guide also presents different ideas for how residents themselves can play a role in achieving those things, especially in the face of new developments in Washington Park's surrounding neighborhoods.

The City of Chicago and many Chicagoans have long overlooked Washington Park, but residents know it's the place to be and are ready to welcome others to see it through their eyes.

VERNON AV
Eborhart Ave
Miles Ave
Rhodes Ave
Best Dr
St Lawrence Ave
Champlain Ave

Year	Population	Area (sq. mi.)	Density (per sq. mi.)
2010	1,100	0.1	11,000
2020	1,200	0.1	12,000

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EVELYN'S FOOD LOVE

"WASHINGTON PARK CAN BE ONE OF CHICAGO'S POPULAR NEIGHBORHOODS TO SHOP AND DINE. IT ALREADY HAS A GREAT FOUNDATION."

In 2015, Washington Park resident and longtime health-care professional Jacqueline Boyd was seeing the obstacles marginalized communities faced in accessing health care while aging and experiencing health challenges.

She stepped out on faith, launching the Care Plan in her home to help individuals and families navigate planning around health or aging, with an emphasis on the LGBTQ+ community.

Thanks to the Care Plan, seniors and their families are armed with the tools to advocate for themselves, hire caregivers, and navigate hospitalizations and housing.

In addition to providing patient advocacy and health-care services, the company works alongside others to offer training, facilitation, and consulting to enhance organizations' culture of wellness.

The 14-member team relocated to the South Loop a few years ago. But for Washington Park, Boyd says she sees the potential for more growth with grant funding geared explicitly toward emerging Washington Park businesses: "Grants would be beneficial for small businesses starting in Washington Park, and those are the folks that need it."



FEATHERFIST

"I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN WASHINGTON PARK, SO I LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT IT. IT HAS CHANGED IN SOME WAYS NATURALLY, BUT MY MEMORY OF GOOD TIMES AT THE POOL AND THE PARADE, AND THE 63RD STREET BEACH, ALL OF IT, MAKES ME FEEL AT HOME WHEN I AM THERE."

WASHINGTON PARK: IN BUSINESS OWNERS' WORDS

After 20 years in the corporate world, Evelyn Shelton embarked on a lifelong dream: becoming a chef and restaurant owner. It was essential to her that she operate her business in an underserved community. "You can throw a brick and not miss a fast food joint or a liquor store, but very few places where somebody has the choice or option to say, 'No, I don't want fast food today. I want a good meal cooked from scratch from my neighborhood,'" she says.

She found that there weren't many options for fresh, home-cooked meals in Washington Park and sought to change that narrative. Shelton opened Evelyn's Food Love in 2017.

At Evelyn's Food Love, American comfort food, Black American Southern classics, and international flavors come together. All the dishes are made from scratch. The restaurant is especially known for its crawfish shrimp and grits, fried lobster tails, and catfish po'boys.

THE CARE PLAN

"SO MANY COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN HERE THEIR WHOLE LIVES AND JUST NEED THE ABILITY TO START A BUSINESS AND ALL THE CAPITAL THAT IT TAKES TO DO THAT."



Melanie Anewishki founded Featherfist in 1984. For over three decades, the social service agency has worked to eliminate homelessness in Chicago. The organization works with people at risk of homelessness and connects them to education, stable housing, and employment. The Washington Park location opened in 2000.

The neighborhood holds a special place in Anewishki's heart. She was born and raised in Washington Park. "[Some] residents and children have no idea what it was like back in the day. You could sleep in the park and BBQ on

Garfield mid-street greenery. There were lovers on park benches, old folks sleeping under a tree or eating PB&J sandwiches."

Since the 2000 opening, Anewishki has seen small businesses emerge. Still, she added that more significant development projects owned and operated by minority business owners aren't possible without major funding. In terms of support for small businesses and community residents, Anewishki suggests access to affordable housing and quality daycare and facilities for senior citizens.