



# ONE HOWARD STREET

DRAFT

**Economic Recovery Plan**

DRAFT - November 2023

A welcoming and inviting space greets those descending the CTA platform



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# CORRIDOR IDENTITY

**ESTABLISHING AND REINFORCING** the identity of the Howard Street corridor is both part of the process and a mark of plan success. Despite the community's many assets and passionate residents, there is a perception among Chicagoans and Evanstonians alike that Howard is "unsafe." Corridor Identity recommendations seek to reflect community pride and make positive first impressions on those visiting Howard, better aligning perceptions with the reality of the street.

Corridor identity is cultivated through many factors: physical components like banners, public art, and placemaking; memorable experiences like community events, celebratory dinners at local restaurants, and community service projects; and the stories told about the corridor on third-party platforms like traditional and social media, as well as word-of-mouth.

Corridor Identity recommendations include a unified brand identity for Howard Street, with Evanston adopting the recognizable Howard Street brand used by Chicago's SSA #19. As Evanston moves toward establishing an SSA on the north side of Howard, funds will become available to produce and install updated streetpole banners, fostering cohesion by eliminating one of three visual brands currently present on the corridor.

Public art and painted crosswalks have the added benefit of contributing to Quality of Life by calming traffic and reinforcing that

**Corridor Identity recommendations reflect community pride and make impressions on those visiting Howard, aligning perceptions with the reality**

this is a special place. Creating more opportunities to meet, gather, and celebrate will foster the creative experiences. With many businesses owned by Black and African Caribbean community members, there are opportunities to host events that incubate emerging businesses and align cultural traditions with the greater community.



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Callan Plaza enhances the emerging dining and entertainment district along this stretch of Howard Street.

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# BIG MOVES

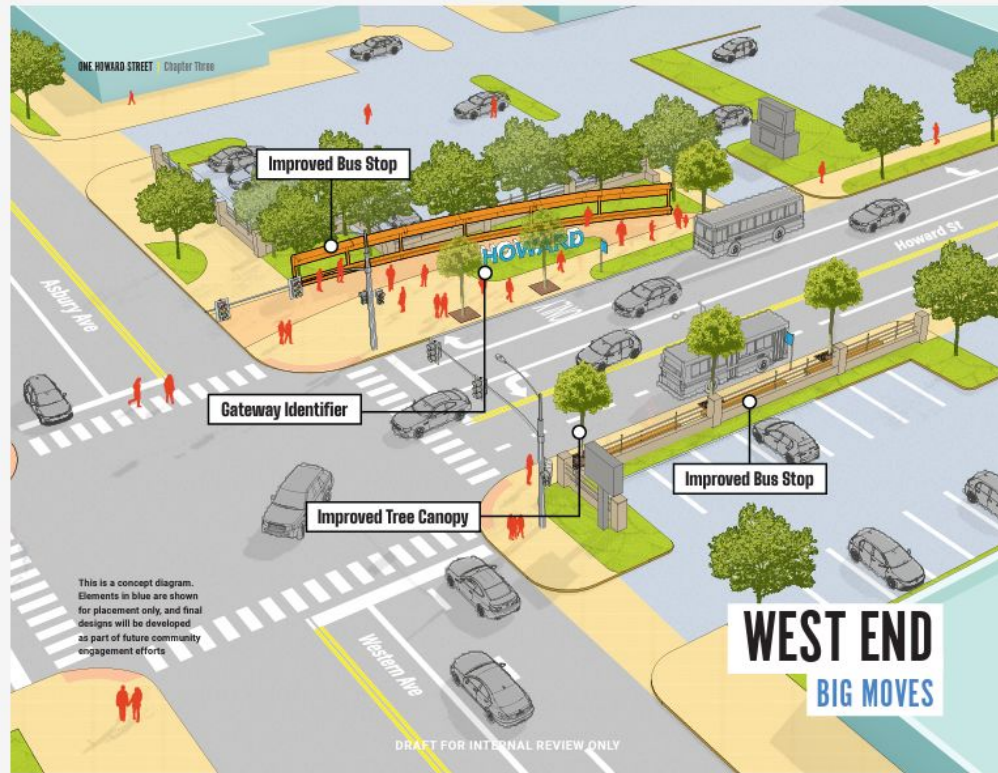
## Howard Street is ready for big and bold actions.

**CONNECTION IS AT** the heart of each Big Move recommendation. Whether reclaiming the street to establish welcoming public spaces or improving multimodal travel along Howard, these recommendations knit the corridor and its people together in meaningful ways. Neighbors naturally gather outside to socialize on Howard Street; Big Moves create comfortable and inspiring spaces to welcome more people into the fold.

Big Moves recommendations right-size the built environment in each subarea, reflecting community desires and needs by leaning into emerging and future-forward trends in urban planning and development. These recommendations integrate key elements from Quality of Life, Corridor Identity, and Rethinking Retail themes, for the greatest possible impact in each subarea.

Recommendations that fall under Big Moves are longer term initiatives that will have a substantial impact on the corridor. These recommendations are the boldest in the One Howard Street plan and will require the most coordination among public and private partners and implementation will likely happen in phases rather than one-and-done actions.

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## WEST END BIG MOVES

**THE BUS STOPS** on both the north and south sides of Howard Street at Western /Asbury are critical connection points to commerce, recreation, and employment opportunities in Chicago, Skokie, and Evanston. The Big Move for West End is a redesign of the bus shelter and landscaping at the northeast corner to incorporate greater shade and seating, along with a more dense tree canopy. Across the street at the southeast corner, bus commuters currently wait unsheltered from weather and traffic, often sitting on the metal guard rail that is part of the Dollar General plaza parking lot. The Big Move calls for more bench seating for bus riders and a new physical barrier between the parking lot and right-of-way at Dollar General.



Existing conditions - southeast corner of Howard and Western

**This recommendation is not only a bold placemaking effort, but an investment in dignity infrastructure.**

Providing comfortable and accessible space to wait for a Pace or CTA bus lets residents and visitors know that Howard Street prioritizes people's well-being. For motorists traveling through or past the corridor, an eye-catching sculpture and modern bus shelter tells a new story about what lies east of Western/Asbury.



Large and interactive placemaking sculpture



Taking inspiration from a park seating area

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## RESTAURANT ROW CORRIDOR IDENTITY

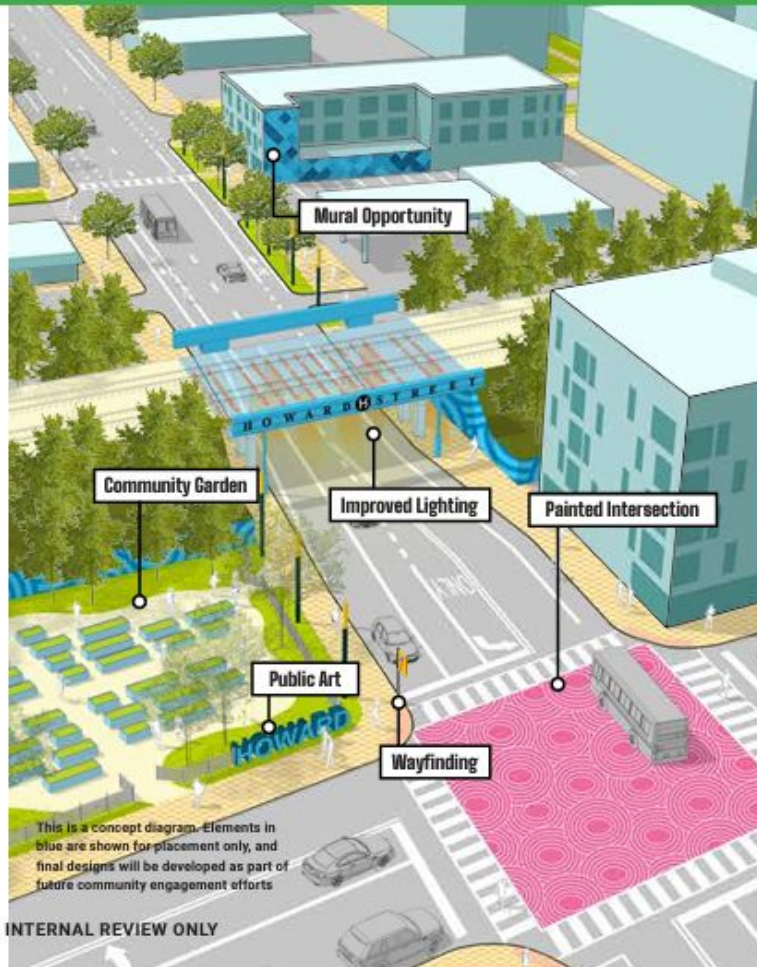
THE BUSTLING INTERSECTION of Damen/Custer and Howard Street is only an eight-minute walk from the CTA Red, Purple, and Yellow line station, but the pedestrian experience along the route is uncomfortable, causing many Restaurant Row patrons to drive or use rideshare to reach their destinations. Thoughtful interventions, like wayfinding, colorful public art, and enhanced lighting can help welcome and encourage pedestrian movement throughout the corridor.

Refreshing the illuminated gateway signs on either side of the Metra tracks west of Clark/Chicago is a cost-efficient option to bring a fresh sense of place to the corridor. In line with a recommendation from the Evanston Thrives plan, updating the look to match existing Howard Street branding will reinforce the cohesion of the district.

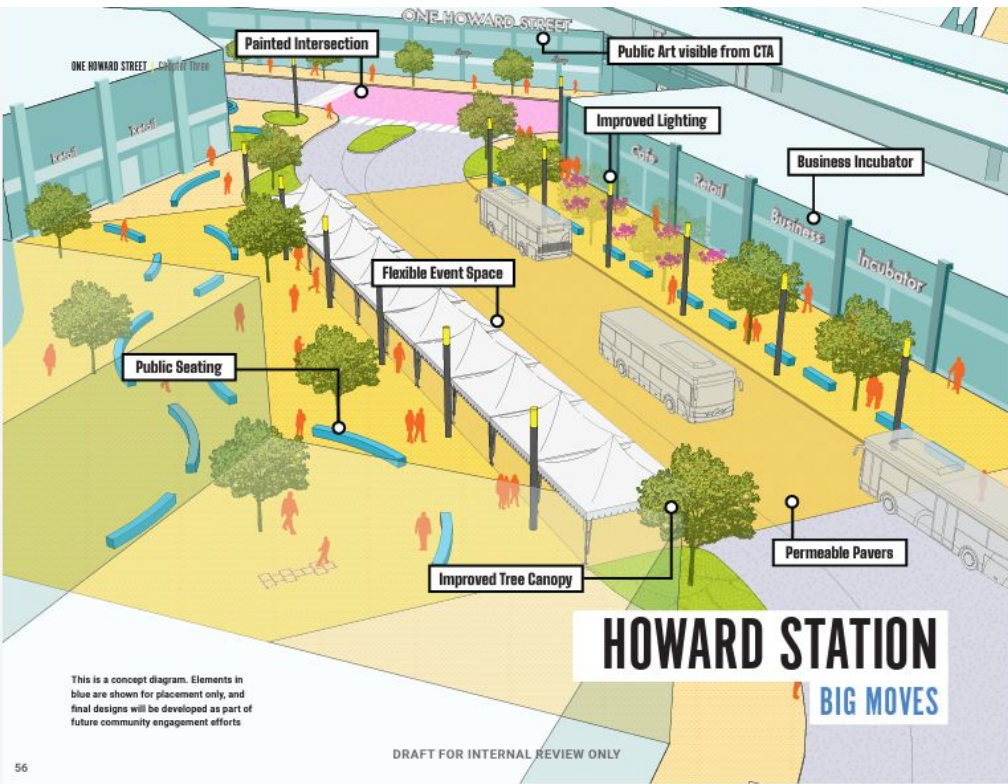
Wayfinding signage that emphasizes walk times to attractions and amenities east and west can help orient visitors to other areas of Howard to explore. These cues foster a sense of pride and serve as a reminder of the many assets within walking distance from home.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Install branded streetpole banners
- Update gateway identifiers at Metra viaduct
- Install pedestrian-oriented wayfinding at Ridge, Custer/Damen, and Clark/Chicago
- Add murals to buildings at Clyde and Seeley
- Install gateway sculpture and community garden at southwest corner of Howard and Clark



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## HOWARD STATION BIG MOVES

**PAULINA PLAZA CONVERTS** space dedicated to auto traffic into a central gathering spot for the community. Underutilized commercial space that faces the plaza can be activated as business incubation space supported by RPBA and City of Evanston programming. This Big Move takes advantage of the high-profile location adjacent to the CTA station and bus terminal, creating a transit-oriented hub for diverse economic opportunities, community cohesion, and celebration of Howard's many cultures.

Physical improvements like expanded sidewalks, improved lighting, and traffic calming will contribute to a safer pedestrian experience for commuters. Pedestrian-oriented wayfinding at Paulina Plaza and throughout the corridor will help visitors navigate to walkable businesses and amenities.

Public investment can make way for private interest in redeveloping an under-maintained and underutilized parking structure at Paulina and Rogers. A dense transit-oriented development can serve as needed housing and better serve as a link between Howard Street and Rogers Avenue for pedestrians.

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We see a need for  
cultural inclusion.

*Steering Committee Member*

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Inspired by the success of Uptown's Argyle Night Market, Paulina Plaza celebrates local cultures and offers opportunities for neighbors to have fun, connect, and grow their small businesses. In its 10th year, Argyle Night Market welcomes an average of 4,000 people every Thursday night in the summer for a free food and culture festival that celebrates the district's pan-Asian community. The event has spurred additional programming on Argyle and has attracted locally owned businesses to fill long-vacant storefronts.

Concept for redevelopment at parking garage



Argyle Night Market - Uptown, Chicago

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