

Elevated Chicago at the Kedzie Corridor: A Workplan for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

January 2019

Opportunities & Challenges

"Every person, no matter who you are, wants a nice place to live, and a safe place to live," says Kevin Sutton, Executive Director of the Foundation for Homan Square. The communities of East Garfield Park, Homan Square, and North Lawndale have long had the potential to become such a place. "Take someone who has lived here for 20 years. I think we need to talk about what makes people stay here," says LaShone Kelly, a Housing Specialist at Garfield Park Community Council. These neighborhoods have a great deal to offer — including engaged residents, green space, anchor institutions (such as the Garfield Park Conservatory), an emerging arts and culture scene, and what Sutton calls a "rich tapestry" of education and social service organizations. These include the amenities surrounding the Homan Square development, which houses a park district, gymnasium, pool, schools, arts programs, a health clinic, dentistry, day care, and other services, as well as networks of concerned, committed residents who are regularly brought together by the Foundation for Homan Square and Garfield Park Community Council.

As members of Elevated Chicago's Steering Committee, Foundation for Homan Square and Garfield Park Community Council have collaborated with IFF, a local community development financial institution, on implementing a number of priorities in two equitable hubs, or eHubs: the ½ mile radius circles surrounding the Kedzie-Lake and the Kedzie-Homan stops of the Chicago Transit Authority Green and Blue lines, respectively. One example is the Spellcasting for Peace project, through which Safer Foundation and BKE Design developed and installed community-inspired woodwork art featuring uplifting quotes from Black leaders at or near the stations. Local partners have also supported the Oaks of North Lawndale project, led by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, which aims to plant thousands of trees in the area to strengthen climate resiliency and spur workforce development and the creation of green jobs.

Along with ICNC and Accion, Elevated Chicago are also supporting launch and community engagement efforts around The Hatchery, a \$30 million food business incubator located off the Kedzie-Lake station scheduled to open its doors in 2019, and are actively working on a number of efforts to redevelop vacant land and buildings into green infrastructure, affordable housing, and retail space.

Both Garfield Park and North Lawndale are being featured in local media as emerging real estate markets, located just 5 miles from downtown, and just a few trains stops from key regional anchors like the Illinois Medical District, the University of Illinois at Chicago campus, and the booming West Loop area. The Garfield Park and Homan Square eHubs also include some of the best-funded Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts in the city, having accrued a combined \$500M plus in the past 20 years. A recent mapping project sponsored by Elevated Chicago and the Chicago Department of Public Health, and led by local youth through MAPSCorps, identified numerous opportunities for forthcoming development to build on existing community assets, including family-owned businesses and local entrepreneurs.



Theron Hawk, Garfield Park Community Council organizer, and Brian Ellison, BKE Design, at the Spellcasting for Peace project launch, promoting peace, unity, and pride in East Garfield Park.

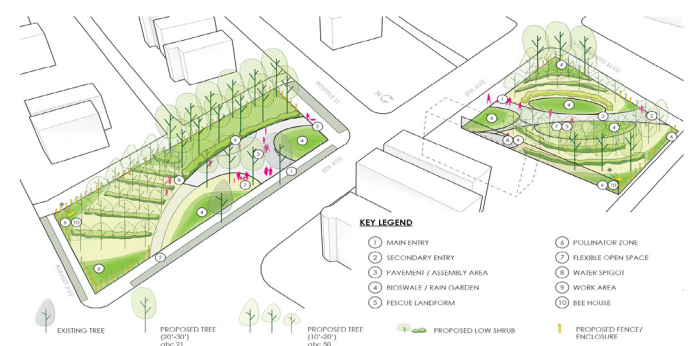
Yet these communities face considerable challenges. Infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks, transit stations and public buildings has been allowed to deteriorate, and the area has faced population loss, as residents relocate due to a lack of opportunities, concerns regarding safety and violence, and related issues. Sutton estimates that North Lawndale's population has dropped from 125,000 at its peak to fewer than 35,000 now. This echoes patterns throughout the Chicago region, which, according to Census data, has shown the greatest exodus of Black residents of any metropolitan region in the country. Health and climate resiliency indicators in these majority Black communities are significantly lower than in majority white communities. And in both eHubs local residents are at high risk of displacement due both to long-term disinvestment and rising rents and property taxes, according to a recent study completed by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University.

Displacement of people of color is one of the Chicago region's most urgent problems. This includes displacement triggered by a lack of investment, like what has occurred in portions of East Garfield Park, Homan Square and North Lawndale over the past decades, as well as displacement triggered by gentrification in real estate markets that are beginning to be seen as more desirable. While the latter may not appear to be an urgent issue in these neighborhoods, their proximity to downtown and the booming West Loop leaves their eastern portions especially vulnerable to the kind of development that does not benefit the area's current residents. "Developers are just sitting on lots," says Mike Tomas, Executive Director of the Garfield Park Community Council, "So they can flip them one day as development moves west." Disinvestment, gentrification, and displacement are not random occurrences, but the result of a century of intentional, racially motivated planning and development practices. Residents still endure the legacy of these decisions, as well as exclusion from various decisions that affect the future of their neighborhood.

Elevated Chicago

Elevated Chicago is an innovative collaboration of community leaders and organizations, regional nonprofits and planning agencies, funders, public officials, and others, who have come together to create a more racially equitable city and region. Its goals include preventing further resident and business displacement by helping to develop more prosperous, healthy, and resilient communities. The initiative also aims to transform the power dynamics that determine how neighborhoods are built in Chicago. To accomplish this, we are using an approach called Equitable Transit Oriented Development, or eTOD. The City of Chicago's Transit Oriented Development ordinance and policy make areas surrounding transit stops especially attractive for development: eTOD helps ensure that these new assets and wealth will be enjoyed equitably by the area's existing and longtime residents.

Elevated Chicago has started its work around seven CTA stations. Elevated Chicago partners invest resources in programs and projects within the ½ mile radius circle around each station to advance racial equity in health, climate, and cultural indicators. These transit-rich circles are called equitable hubs, or eHubs. Community-based organizations represented in Elevated Chicago's Steering Committee serve as bridges and connectors to each eHub and lead our neighborhood-based work in collaboration with other partners and residents.



Rendering of the proposed Eco Orchard, a sustainable fruit orchard to be grown in Garfield Park.

Elevated Chicago is supporting efforts around two CTA stations in Garfield Park and Homan Square: the Kedzie-Lake station of the Green Line and Kedzie-Homan station of the Blue Line. Work in these eHubs is led by the Garfield Park Community Council and the Foundation for Homan Square, respectively, with IFF coordinating some community engagement efforts along the Kedzie Corridor across both sites. Other collaborators include the North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The Kedzie Corridor is one of four community sites established near seven stations citywide. The others—which include Green Line South, Pink Line California, and Logan Square Blue Line—share with the Kedzie Corridor visionary resident leaders, strong recent community plans developed by local stakeholders, and catalytic projects led by trusted community-based organizations. All communities' leaders also share concerns regarding the threat of displacement, and the desire to see the region and its decision makers focus on increasing economic, health, and climate resilience indicators; investing equitably in their surrounding neighborhood; and better appreciating the communities' histories, assets, resident voices and rich cultures.



In partnership with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Elevated Chicago supported “Guns into Shovels” at the Kedzie-Homan eHub, as part of the Climate and Culture Resilience project. During the event, participants recycled weapon waste into shovels for tree-planting, in connection to the Oaks of North Lawndale project.

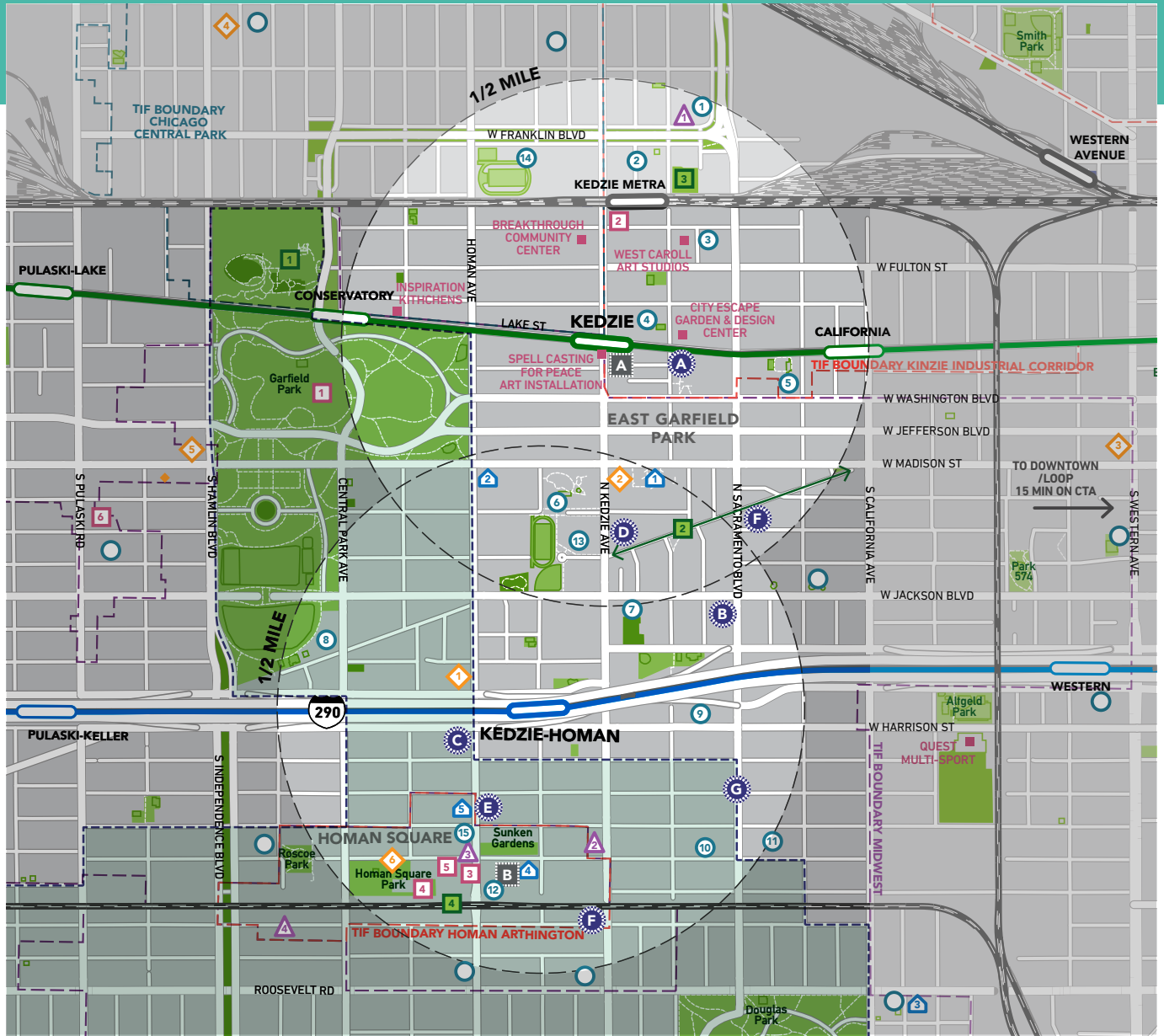
Making Our Workplan Happen in the Kedzie Corridor eHubs

The Workplan for the Kedzie Corridor eHubs emphasizes resident ownership of land, businesses, and other assets. Says Kevin Sutton, “Ownership is where you begin to feel like you are now a part of something. You are now shaping your own destiny and helping to rebuild your community.” Mike Tomas agrees, asking, “How does the longstanding local community have a stake in new development that is coming into the neighborhood? Owning some of it, being able to see some return on owning it, some of the wealth creation — those are topics that resonate really well with residents.”

This includes entrepreneurship and local food-focused projects such as The Hatchery, and incoming investments by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, City of Chicago and others to reduce these neighborhoods' vulnerability to climate change through green space and sustainable, affordable housing. The Elevated Chicago partners in these eHubs are working to enable meaningful community engagement in a number of potential undertakings, including additional affordable housing and mixed-use developments, arts and cultural programming, and green infrastructure.

Along with Elevated Chicago partners from other sites, East Garfield Park, Homan Square, and North Lawndale's local leaders are working to ensure that future development is not just informed by residents' visions, but also enables resident participation in design, construction, and ongoing ownership of “bricks and mortar” development. Says Mike Tomas, “A clear pathway should be provided for local residents and organizations to be part of the design team, the contracted team.” Dynamic resident leadership is one of these neighborhood's greatest strengths, one upon which Elevated Chicago intends to build. “Residents are savvy,” says Tomas. “They’ve done their research.”

Kedzie Corridor eHub Asset Map



Community, Arts + Culture

1. Garfield Park Field House
2. 345 Arts Gallery
3. Nichols Tower: Foundation for Homan Square, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Free Spirit Media, Neighborhood Housing Services
4. Homan Square Community Center
5. YMCA
6. Chicago Public Library – Legler
- Community, Arts + Culture Organization/Project

Health-related

1. RML Specialty Hospital
2. Bobbie E Wright Behavioral Health Center
3. Access Warren Health Center
4. Erie Westside Health Center
5. Access Madison Health Center
6. Lawndale Christian Health Clinic
- ◆ Grocery Store

Green Space + Climate Resilient Infrastructure

1. Garfield Park Conservatory
2. 5th Avenue Resilience Corridor (Planned)
3. Chicago FarmWorks / Heartland Farm
4. Homan Rails Farm
- Community Garden

Education

1. YCCS West Town Academy
2. Morton Elementary
3. Learn Charter School
4. Beidler Elementary
5. Cather Elementary
6. Paraday Elementary
7. Locke Elementary
8. Ericson Elementary
9. Jensen Elementary
10. Kellman Elementary
11. Manley HS
12. Noble – DRW College Prep
13. Marshall HS
14. Westinhouse HS
15. Holy Family School

Economic Development + Workforce

1. Greater West Town Training Partnership
2. Crossroads ATC / Safer Foundation
3. North Lawndale Employment Network
4. UCAN

Affordable + Social Housing

1. Madison Terrace Apartments
2. Switching Station Artists Lofts
3. Douglas Park Apartments
4. Lofts on Arlington
5. Homan Square Apartments



Elevated Chicago – Projects in Capital Pipeline

- A. Food-based Business Concept
- B. Health + Housing Project
- C. Homan + Harrison Mixed-Use Project
- D. Healthy, Green + Affordable Housing (C40 Challenge)
- E. Polk Street Affordable Housing
- F. Boombox Pop-up

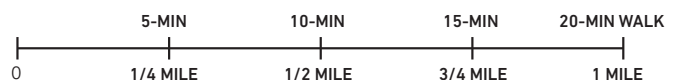
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- F. Garfield Community Eco Orchard
- G. Oaks of North Lawndale
- H. Walkability + Streetscaping Improvements (Location TBD)



Other Catalytic Projects / Investment

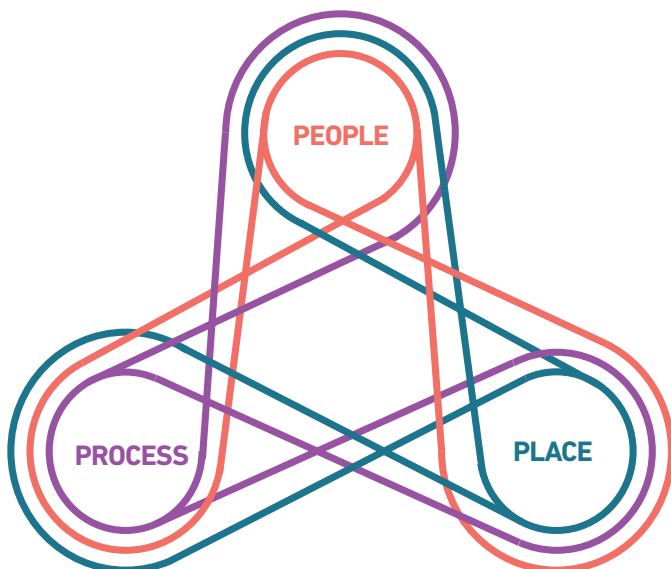
- A. The Hatchery
- B. Historic Former Sears Headquarters



Priorities

Across Elevated Chicago's eHubs, residents have already participated in multiple planning efforts for which there was little implementation. Elevated Chicago has identified priorities that build on those prior efforts and conversations. When selecting those priorities, we avoided making promises upon which we cannot deliver, and focused on projects that are feasible with resources that are currently available, or can be realistically supported by reaching out to Elevated Chicago's broader network.

These priorities represent projects taking place within the ½ mile radius around the Kedzie Corridor eHub, as well as cross-site initiatives that aim to transform how decisions about neighborhood development are made in Chicago. They are organized into three themes: Those that engage and develop the community's **people**, projects that improve the neighborhood as a **place**, and goals for changing the **process** for how decisions get made. This list should not be interpreted as comprehensive and final, but as an invitation for further resident participation and ownership.



People — Programs that Engage Residents & Build Community Leadership & Ownership

- **Business Coaching**

Accion Chicago provides three full-time business coaches to support existing business owners, home-based businesses, and other entrepreneurs in the neighborhood — a resource Garfield Park Community Council helps promote.

- **Community-based Initiatives to Address Violence**

Building upon successful efforts led by Garfield Park Community Council since 2012, partners will develop strategies and community partnerships that directly target violence along commercial corridors, including strengthening of neighborhood block clubs.

- **Hearts & Minds Anti-Displacement Campaign**

A campaign developed in the Logan Square eHub, will be extended and customized to other sites and aims to demonstrate that affordable housing is necessary and matters in all communities. The campaign intends to strengthen relationships between established residents and newcomers, and build diverse resident support to combat further displacement.

- **Random Acts of Kindness Campaign**

Youth (and potentially adult residents) will write positive messages with sidewalk chalk, and/or design, create and circulate postcards carrying positive messages, asking residents to “share the love” and “pass it on,” paired with social media documentation.

“I think we need to talk about what makes people stay here.”

—LaShone Kelly, Garfield Park Community Council

- **Resident Leadership in Elevated Chicago Advocacy Agenda**

Elevated Chicago will seek opportunities for resident leadership in its policy platform and other advocacy efforts, including a comprehensive retention-focused policy agenda, enhanced community engagement in neighborhood development, and the creation of policies that ensure diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the real estate and infrastructure development process (from early visioning and planning to long-term operations and ownership).

The Hatchery Chicago, a 67,000 sq. ft. non-profit food and beverage business incubator opened in December 2018 at the heart of the Kedzie/Lake eHub. Accion Chicago, the area's largest microlender, and ICNC, which runs one of the largest business incubators in the country, are some of the partners.



Place — Projects that Affect the “Built Environment” (e.g. Housing, Transit, Green Space)

- **Oaks of North Lawndale**

This project seeks to foster climate resilience and beautification by planting trees in North Lawndale, supported by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

- **Affordable Housing**

Supported by IFF, community leaders have identified sites for potential future affordable housing projects, including vacant lots on Polk Street in Homan Square. These projects are currently in the conceptual stage.

- **Boombox Pop-Up**

Located in a climate-controlled shipping containers on various lots on Kedzie Avenue, this pop up art and business market will showcase local entrepreneurs and incorporate arts programming.

- **C40 Housing Development(s)**

The C40 competition plans to construct affordable multifamily, green housing on two lots at the corner of 5TH Avenue and Kedzie Avenue in East Garfield Park. This is led by the City of Chicago as part of the C40 Climate Leadership group, a global effort of 90 cities to address climate change. The team that develops the lot — one of two C40 sites in Chicago — will be selected through a competitive process, with Preservation of Affordable Housing (an Elevated Chicago partner), Heartland Housing, and Evergreen Real Estate Group currently representing the three shortlisted teams, from which one will be selected by the City in early 2019. Elevated Chicago's partners in East Garfield Park are working to ensure that this process will benefit longtime residents, and incorporate meaningful community engagement, to the full extent that may be possible within the parameters of this international competition.

- **Eco Orchard**

A sustainable fruit orchard will be installed in Garfield Park along a City-owned stretch of land on Fifth Avenue between Kedzie Avenue and Mozart Streets. The Orchard will contribute to stormwater management, and is supported by the City's Department of Planning and Development, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, and the Garfield Park Community Council.

- **Mixed-Use Business Concept**

In early stages of exploration is a development concept for a food-related or other commercial project located on a block adjacent to The Hatchery site.

- **Walkability & Streetscaping Improvements**

Working with the Chicago Department of Transportation, the Alderman, and other City officials, these are infrastructure investments to improve neighborhood sidewalks, lighting, safety features and green infrastructure and to improve pedestrian safety, including bump outs, timers, and painted walk islands.

Process — Goals for Transforming How Decisions About Neighborhood Development Get Made

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Framework**

Elevated Chicago partners are working together to build a common DEI framework for government agencies, developers and other organizations working in neighborhoods to ensure that their leaders, staff and contractors are representative of the community, and that their practices reflect the views and needs of people of color.

- **Partnerships Between Anchor Institutions & Community**

The Garfield Park Community Council is working with Westside United and the Illinois Medical District to ensure greater local investment opportunities and partnerships between the nearby hospitals and the community, including more inclusive and equitable employment and procurement practices that offer job opportunities to local residents and contracts to small businesses.



Led by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, the Metropolitan Planning Council and the Garfield Park Community Council, the Corridor Development Initiative engaged residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the Kedzie Corridor to decide collaboratively the design and future plans for the Eco Orchard.

- **Participatory Planning Models & Information Sharing**

Local partners are advocating for increased transparency and streamlining of planning and development processes to promote authentic and inclusive community engagement in RFPs, land use plans, capital allocations, community benefit agreements, etc. Examples include the Corridor Development Initiative (CDI) model, which has been used at Elevated Chicago's Logan Square Blue Line and Cottage Grove Green Line eHubs to engage community residents and other stakeholders in development, and is being used to guide the design of the Eco Orchard planned for East Garfield Park. As of the writing of this document, three community meetings, resident surveys and other forms of outreach have helped guide the design and programming of the orchard, with participation from 100+ residents and several Elevated Chicago partners providing technical assistance.

- **Principles for Meaningful Community Engagement & Ownership**

Elevated Chicago is advancing a set of principles and recommendations for City and regional agencies, as well as private and civic sector developers and investors, drawn from a review of "best" and innovative practices locally and nationally. A recent study sponsored by Enterprise Community Partners has identified opportunities for community ownership in current and future developments in the eHubs.

Informed by the Foundation for Homan Square, Garfield Park Community Council, and other community-based partners. Photographs were provided by Sara Pooley, Raquel Venado Bolaños, Kimberley Rudd, Metropolitan Planning Council, and the Garfield Park Community Council. Graphic image support was provided by Cathy Lange and design by Foresight Design Initiative.

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—Kevin Sutton, Foundation for Homan Square



CONNECTING PEOPLE,
BUILDING EQUITY

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