

## Golden Gate: One of Chicago's Forgotten Neighborhoods...

(c) by Marcie Hill

**Golden Gate**, a small community that extends from 130th to 134th Street and from Vernon to St. Lawrence, is one of Chicago's many forgotten neighborhoods. Bordered by **Concordia, Riverside Village and Altgeld**, three other small, forgotten low and mixed-income communities; it is plagued by the same ills experienced by communities today: high poverty and unemployment, food deserts and poor health. Even worse, the identities of all of these communities have been clouded by the more popular community of Altgeld and are often considered part of the city of Riverdale.

Golden Gate resident and dedicated community activist **Deloris Lucas** is on a mission to reclaim her community's identity and get the recognition and respect it deserves. She's also fighting to get safe and accessible transportation for her community. "People don't know about Golden Gate because they are stuck on Altgeld. We are small and haven't done anything outstanding," explains Lucas.

When this sub-division was established in the mid-1960s, it consisted of newly-constructed single family homes. All of the residents were homeowners, as they are today. However, the neighborhood is currently experiencing foreclosures, board-ups and poorly maintained bank-owned properties.

"We need some help," Lucas told the BULLETIN, while noting that resources, benefits and money stop at 127th and Michigan Street. "Everything is happening around the community, but not here. No economic development is going on now, and has not been for years" she points out, referring to the recent naming of Pullman as a Historic National Park and recent developments in the Roseland community.

She states that sidewalks and transit options are two of the community's biggest needs. People have to walk to Rosebud Farm Store on 130th Street, the only full-line grocery store in the community. "There is no sidewalk...you have to walk in streets in the mud. That's not safe and that's not fair." Golden Gate reportedly has no walking trails, no biking trails "and does not link up to anything related to wellness."

According to Lucas, Ninth Ward **Alderman Anthony Beale** is not helping the community to get any sidewalks. She claims that in 2009, concerned residents submitted a petition of signatures and nothing has been done to date. When residents inquired about the sidewalks at a community meeting, Alderman Beale alleged that they didn't have any money for them and apparently blew the issue over.

Not satisfied with that response, Lucas took matters into her own hands: She worked with **Active Transportation Alliance** to conduct a walkability audit to identify problems in 2009. Two years ago she started **Safety & Transit Action Council**, a community watchdog group to monitor safety issues in the community and try to fix things for pedestrians.

Currently, she's working on a multimodal transit plan with the Chicago Department of Transportation to install sidewalks along 130th street primarily because "we need more pedestrian safety tools and better transit options," adding that this project is being funded in part by the **Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning**.

In 2010, Lucas started **We Keep You Rollin'**, a bike and wellness group. Members ride from community to community and to work. Although riding bikes is not safe because "some areas don't have sidewalks, bike trails or shortcuts", it's one of the viable transportation options.

**We Keep You Rolling** will be holding a walk, roll, bike community wellness event during spring break, April 18 - 22, 2016. They are seeking sponsors, partners and participants for this event. Interested people should contact Deloris Lucas at [deelucas2002@yahoo.com](mailto:deelucas2002@yahoo.com).

In addition to helping this small organization increase community wellness, supporters and participants will help boost the name and recognition of Golden Gate, one of Chicago's forgotten neighborhoods.



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Ms. Cheryl Heads, senior program officer for the Lead Foundation, participated in the convening and provided feedback to the participants on their presentation "pitches" that may potentially become requests for funding, submitted which may be able to be used with any foundation.

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Mission Statement:  
The Monroe Foundation is a publicly supported not-for-profit organization that works to educate, link, and fund community development projects benefiting low-income communities in the State of Illinois.  
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