



## The Homan Square diagram

The **Foundation for Homan Square** oversees the Homan Square redevelopment plan. It is also responsible for the future redevelopment of the original Sears Tower, now known as the Homan Square Tower, which will become a multiuse non-profit arts/social service facility.

After Kristin Dean, President of the Foundation for Homan Square, invited the **School of the Art Institute of Chicago** to consider becoming a tenant and program partner in the tower, SAIC commissioned artist and Arts Administration and Policy department faculty member and chair **Adelheid Mers** in 2013 to conduct conversations with arts and culture leaders in the North Lawndale neighborhood, to help explore existing cultural assets and imagine modes of engagement. Most of those approached were associated with arts and culture related organizations. Mers led these conversations through May 2014, along with graduate students in the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's Graduate Program in Arts Administration and Policy. Student participation was facilitated through the Management Studio course, taught by Kate Dumbleton.

The diagram created following this process sums up specific conversations and includes a recommendation how SAIC might initially engage with existing interests and initiatives around Arts and Culture. The diagram takes the form of a Fractal 3-Line Matrix, a multi-dimensional visual thinking tool. This is how it is used: In any given discourse, 3 prevalent categories are broadly determined, and an axis is assigned to each. Then the outlying positions are named and entered at the end points of the axes. Within the field thus sketched out, other pertinent points are placed.

The three main axes of the Homan Square diagram are determined by the terms **Cultural Facility (self-representation)**, **Infrastructure (use + leverage)** and **Arts Engagement (education)**.

Each node represents one key conversation. While this is not an exhaustive selection, the participants know each other professionally and have histories of strong mutual support in creating and leveraging organizations to improve their neighborhood. They made sure to include many other local actors and activities.

### Left Center - Charles Leeks

As the longtime Director of Neighborhood Housing Services for Lawndale and a dedicated mentor to those he encounters, Charles Leeks is highly conversant with professional and academic urban planning and policy discourses. He leads and mediates historic preservation projects and seeks a rebranding of North Lawndale by leveraging the built environment and its history, in part by including the arts.

### Right Center - Tracie Worthy

The New Communities Program Manager at the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, Tracie Worthy has become highly aware of the impact arts engagement has as part of her work in urban development. For her, one main function of art projects in public space is to mark territory, leading not only to beautification, but to the taking of responsibility and ownership of the environment, rendering it safer.

### Right Bottom - Jeff McCarter

Founder and Executive Director of Free Spirit Youth Media, Jeff McCarter promotes youth self-representation through teaching video production. Invited to consider participation in the activation of the Homan Square Tower, he is in the long term interested in expanding his non-profit, for example through social entrepreneurship.

### Right Top - Ife Williams

Driven by deeply perceived concerns for Public Health, Ife Williams, in her role as Founder and Executive Director of Art Forward, facilitates community improvement from the ground up, by organizing community based art projects. Art Forward is also a candidate for inclusion in Homan Square Tower activities.

### Left Top - Blanche Suggs-Killingsworth

Chairperson of the North Lawndale Historical and Cultural Society, Blanche Suggs Killingsworth emphasizes the need to counteract the media bias and misrepresentation that have created a mirage of North Lawndale. As a tool she promotes oral histories, urging immediate action as an older generation is slipping away.

### Left Bottom - SAIC through Kristin Dean

SAIC sees its role as a catalyst, supporting and promoting community health through the arts in all ways at its disposal, in keeping with its core values.

### Engagement through the Arts - yellow overlays

Examples of projects already underway and in planning and fundraising stages are: buildings dedicated to arts programming (also in conjunction with external organizations), street level programming with residents and artist collaborators, urban garden design and youth media productions.

### Engagement through Scholarship - orange overlays

What is addressed as desirable but lacking, both explicitly and tangentially, are additional opportunities for self-representation as a community, intersecting with values of ownership, responsibility, cohesion and safety.

### The Recommendation - green overlay and red circles

The exhortation to commence collection of oral histories under the aegis of the North Lawndale Historical and Cultural Society addresses the lack of opportunities for self-representation above. **Thus, the recommendation is to support a framework for oral history collection.** This allows for cooperation with existing efforts - for example Free Spirit Youth Media's engagement and Ife William's deep community connections. SAIC will bring in expertise from various departments, including Sound, New Media, Arts Education and Arts Administration and Policy, while continuing to learn about North Lawndale and developing future approaches based on arising community encounters.