

GUIDE TO  
THE GOOD LIFE  
CHICAGO

# THE South Side Drive

SPECIAL REPORT  
JANUARY 2023



The X Change  
is coming to  
South Shore



*By Yvette Moyo*

**W**elcome to 2023. For years we've been your Guide to the Good Life on the South Side of Chicago. The good news is the Good Life is literally coming to change the face of our communities, one development at a time.

We'll be looking at those changes throughout the year as they occur and as they are planned, and we'll keep you informed. We may inform you through an article in a regular monthly edition of the South Side Drive. However, some changes that are happening on our side of town may be so big, so important, so innovative, so needed – that they require a Special Report.

The innovative development projects, designed to drastically alter the cultural, educational, economic, and housing landscape of the South Side community of South Shore have been on the minds and on the drawing boards of developers and activist community residents for a long time. Perhaps Mayor Lori Lightfoot's INVEST South/West initiative was the spark that was needed to put the pedal to the metal and get things really going. Many of you read about the Thrive Exchange Project in the August

## Publisher's Message

Special Edition of the South Side Drive. There are no more hard copies of that issue, but if you didn't read it the entire issue is accessible at <https://southsidedrivemag.com/investment-returns-to-south-shore/>. That's one development project to look forward to. This Special Report is about another.

In fact, throughout this year of change, we will be publishing special reports, not only on the developments coming to the South Side, but also on other special topics our readers want to know about.

In this Special Report, we're excited to tell you about a group of highly accomplished real estate professionals, a team who happens to be from the community, and highly respected and engaged South Shore residents who saw a need in South Shore for more housing, more jobs, more . . . well, you'll see.

As you will read, the XChange Project was born out of the same vision, and solutions outliend in the Quality-of-Life Plan for South Shore. You will read about the QLP in this issue and we've added a link to the plan to read for yourself. You can also be one of the residents, like me, committed to assist in the speedy implementation of this long-awaited plan if you are in one of our three South Shore Wards.

We look forward to a new year and more opportunities to share the Guide to the Good Life of the South Side of Chicago in 2023.



The M.O.T. team

# The XChange is coming to South Shore

“Dynamic!” “Sustainable!” “Robust!” and most of all “Transformational!” These are just a few of the ways in which the South Shore Quality of Life Plan is described.

South Shore, once a thriving and vibrant community, like so many underserved Chicago communities, has endured years of disinvestment and felt the wrath of gang violence, drugs, and crime. However, South Shore residents refuse to allow these negative factors to define the future of the community they love. Being the change they want to see,

vested residents and business owners of South Shore came together to form “South Shore Strong,” a cross-generational coalition committed to preserving, revitalizing, and protecting South Shore.

It is rare when groups who are diverse in age, philosophy, experiences, and lifestyles can overcome challenges associated with those differences and come together on one accord. Yet, due to the exceptional leadership of South Shore resident activists, such as Carol Adams, of South Shore Works; Tonya Trice of South Shore Chamber of Commerce; and Val Free, of Neighborhood Network Alliance, overcoming these types of group dynamics and coming together for the greater good of South Shore has proven to be impactful and effective.

The South Shore Quality-of-Life Plan is a comprehensive community planning effort supported in partnership with Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC Chicago) the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, The

Neighborhood Network Alliance and South Shore Works. They convened to facilitate a Quality-of-Life Plan (QLP) along with South Shore residents, business owners and youth to identify priorities for better education, housing, job opportunities, safer streets, new economic opportunities and stronger personal finances.

The Quality-of-Life Planning Committee (QLP) and the Local Initiatives Investment Corporation (LISC) contributed valuable and needed resources to this phenomenal endeavor which culminated in an impeccable plan to transition South Shore Community to a walkable, workable, livable community beyond what it ever was, even in its rich, historic past. Although the Quality-of-Life Project has not yet been officially released, the Plan is complete and information on the full launch and direction

for residents and stakeholders who want to get involved will be forthcoming sometime in the first quarter of 2023. Take a look:

<https://tinyurl.com/southshore2022>

The Quality-of-Life Plan is broken down into eight areas: Resident Engagement, Economic Development, Education, Housing, Community Stewardship and Beautification, Public Safety, Health and Welfare and Arts, Culture & Entertainment.

Each section of the QLP is crucial to the success of the overall plan, speaking to the many and varied needs of the South Shore community. Implementation of the Quality-of-Life Plan, especially through the Economic Development and Housing, will help set the stage for new opportunities within the South Shore Community



*Tonya Trice, South Shore Chamber of Commerce, Carol Adams, South Shore Works and Val Free, Neighborhood Network Alliance with Gerald Williams and Mark Buford of M.O.T. photo by Eli Williamson*

The Economic Development and Housing sections do not offer boilerplate solutions created to work for just any community. They contain carefully thought-out strategies geared toward the unique economic and housing conditions of South Shore, a community that has more subsidized rent vouchers than any other community in Chicago. The incomes of South Shore residents range from poverty-level to extremely wealthy, and that diversity in income is matched by a diverse housing stock. South Shore attracts all sorts of attention based on its unique assets; in addition to the architectural wonder, known as the South Shore Cultural Center, the South Shore community is also home to the Jackson Park Golf Course, picturesque condominiums along South Shore Drive, and the fabulous home and mansions in the area known as The Jackson Park Highlands. The state-of-the-art South Shore International College prep., more park land than most Chicago communities, close proximity to Chicago's Hyde Park and downtown areas, as well as easy access to the Metra and CTA transportation, make South Shore an inviting community. The community is comprised of millennials, Gen X's, and Baby Boomers, consisting of professionals, entrepreneurs, laborers and retirees. the diversity of South Shore's population makes it an ideal location for families, individuals and businesses.

Another unique, yet troubling aspect of this community is that each year \$200 million in resident spending leaves the South Shore area. This revenue leakage presents many possibilities for retail opportunities, and corporate involvement.

The Plan's Economic Development section puts forth strategies to stop this leakage and create a sustainable economy for South Shore. The Housing section addresses the rental and home ownership needs and opportunities. After hearing what the South Shore community

wants and needs, an experienced group of real estate professionals came together and formed Model Of Transformation Design & Development (M.O.T-DD) and conceptualized The XChange Project. The XChange Project addresses some of the strategies and vision of The Economic Development and Housing sections within the plan.

M.O.T-DD would like to first say thank you to The South Shore Chamber of Commerce, Neighborhood Network Alliance, and South Shore Works along with the QLP committee for the outstanding work of delivering an action plan to revitalize South Shore. "Your leadership, sacrifice and vision make our job as real estate developers easy. Additionally, we would like to thank Alderman Greg Mitchell for his support, and vision for the ward."

Gerald Williams, Vice President of Acquisitions for M.O.T-DD says "We've always known that the dollars were in South Shore anecdotally. But The QLP allows us to now speak qualitatively and quantitatively. The numbers tell the story. We are armed with data that justifies financial investment in South Shore. This is an excellent time for corporations, small businesses, and new residents looking for growth to come to South Shore."

Envisioned as a state-of-the-art commercial high rise, mixed-use real estate development with 15,000-22,000 square feet of retail space and featuring beautifully designed apartments boasting full amenities like those found downtown, west loop, and nearby Hyde Park such as a rooftop deck, bar and restaurant. M.O.T-DD is confident that this development project "promises to inspire current, and past residents, while attracting new ones. It will elevate what investment development looks like in South Shore." We will offer not only the finest of amenities, but also wellness features integrating design features that evoke the rich South Shore culture while ensuring sustainability."

## PRAGMATIC! BOLD! AUDACIOUS!

According to MOT-DD. “The XChange Development Project will rise on the long vacant land that was once home to the Food Exchange Supermarket at 71st and Exchange Avenue. This state-of-the-art development promises to elevate what investment development looks like in South Shore. Powered by best-in-class technology and built with sustainability in mind, The XChange design meets the community's demand for contemporary residential units, parking, and retail space.

It is one thing to have a perfect plan – but still another to have the perfect team to implement the plan, and the residents of South Shore have the opportunity to be blessed with both.

M.O.T. Design & Development Group describe themselves as “an organically grown, dynamic team of professionals specializing in commercial and residential real estate development.”

No one knows the ins and outs of South Shore like this group of men whose unique backgrounds are rooted in boots-on-the-ground experiences in Chicago.

President Johnny Mullins is a unique individual with a very accomplished background in commercial, and residential real estate. He has experience building high rises around the world. As the President of M.O.T-DD Johnny leads the strategic investment, and operating functions throughout each part of the development process. Johnny is responsible for all the intricate details of design and development, including research, site selection, negotiations, zoning, local ordinances, bid selection, scheduling, and site management. Plus, his digital expertise modernizes and elevates the pre-construction experience, identifies and solves design challenges, and makes the best use of project time and resources.

“My motivation and vision for this high-rise development, the Xchange project, is to create an inclusive community that provides a safe, affordable, and sustainable living environment to those who are underserved in the Chicago



South Shore area. This project will bring together people of different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs to foster collaboration, creativity, and innovation. We strive to empower and uplift our community while also addressing some of the most pressing concerns in the area.”

Gerald Williams has lived in South Shore for over 50 years. He is an active general contractor, and investor in addition to being a former appraiser, and real estate broker. His motivation is to help “transform South Shore into a world class community with beautiful real estate, businesses, and a place where we will get tremendous pride from for generations to come. In addition, the time is now for people that look like us to be the change that we want to see in our communities. We have to save ourselves from living 2nd class lifestyles.”

He emphasizes the importance of the project, “It is important because we are losing our ability to attract younger professionals to South Shore. If you want to attract something you have to become something attractive. The XChange doesn't bring all that is needed to complete the transformation; however, it will be catalytic. Finally, our young folks need to see and believe that we can transform our communities when we come together. We must stop waiting for others to do it for us. This is for us to do.”

Jemal King, who is a retired Chicago police officer of 20 years, also has a wealth of real estate experience including having rehabbed over three hundred residential and commercial properties on the south side of Chicago over the past twenty years. Jemal leads numerous multi-million-dollar organizations and teaches real estate fundamentals to diverse audiences throughout the world. Jemal focuses on building relationships with residents, business owners, and government officials. He collects public input throughout the development life cycle to ensure all voices are heard.

Mark Buford is experienced in institutional and private lending. He has originated several hundreds of millions in commercial real estate transactions since 2016. As a national lending professional, Mark's efforts have created an expansive network of real estate investors and developers throughout the country. In this role with MOT-DD, he oversees all aspects of financing, debt, and equity partner relationships. He also works closely with lenders and investors to find optimal capital structures. Mark says that “we currently have equity and debt interest but are still definitely seeking other financing options. “It's an interesting time considering the looming recession, and interest rate environment, not to mention rising labor, and material costs.” Creative financing solutions, and strong lending partners will be needed. “

Attorney Damon Stewart's primary responsibilities include drafting, interpreting, and finalizing forms and contracts, managing legal due diligence, structuring joint partnerships, and much more. Damon also currently serves as a Chicago violent crimes detective who knows firsthand the harsh realities of the streets of Chicago. His motivation is “to break barriers and save lives.” “I see The XChange project as an opportunity to accomplish something significant that will outlive me,” he says.

## Collaborations

M.O.T-DD is grateful to Allstate for accepting the

call to action! “They are an example of a



responsible corporate citizen who gets it,” said Mark Buford, Vice President of M.O.T-DD, “Allstate showed up with an army of executive level employees and literally rolled up their sleeves helping to clean our vacant lot, and then sat down with community members, and our team for a sincere, and open dialogue brainstorming potential solutions for the South Shore community at Majani vegan restaurant.” “No promises have been made. “Buford continued, “but whether it is contributing directly to our capital stack or providing other resources that can assist with financing solutions we are grateful for the relationship, and continued dialogue with their real estate executives, and team.

Damon Stewart says “It's inspiring that a

corporation the size and influence of Allstate is philosophically aligned to make a difference in underserved communities.

We know that we are literally “in good hands”, and that this type of initiative or effort must come from the top.” We want to thank Thomas J. Wilson, the CEO of Allstate and solicit for others to join the movement.

One of the fears of many urban communities is that of displacement once a plan of revitalization is put into action. Being of and from the community, the M.O.T. Design & Development Group recognizes this fear and firmly believes in growth without displacement as well as value without compromise. Of utmost importance to the Group is developing solutions that unveil each neighborhood's greatest potential. This is where collaborative efforts from all stakeholders intersect: We hope to continue to work with the, Alderman and other organizations to address housing and other needs outlined within the QLP.

They further explain, “We confidently identify opportunities ahead of market trends in partnership with residents, government officials, businesses, and investors. Then we use our expertise to efficiently transform blueprints into developments that will elevate communities for generations to come.”

Re-energizing communities and redefining real estate development is what they do best.

MOT-DD recognizes the need for collaborative efforts when revitalizing depressed or underserved areas. “Regardless of the plan, the project must be feasible, and make financial sense if it's going to be realized. The challenges in South Shore are multilayered thus requiring the solutions to be multipronged as well. Together with other stakeholders we are prepared and ready to execute our part. Our intention is to provide economic opportunities to small Black and Brown owned companies via contracts for professional services on the XChange Development Project once we're through zoning.

Who would be better to carry out XChange Development Project for the South Shore Community than this full-service real estate firm with urban market expertise. Collectively, they have years of experience in innovating, developing, building, and various property types, such as the property type that will be the nucleus of The XChange Development Project.

The proclaimed mission of M.O.T-DD is to “transform and elevate communities through commercial and residential real estate development – regardless of any economic, political, social, psychological complexities or barriers.” The groups' individual and collective experience in urban development, as well as their unique backgrounds coming from within the communities they serve, provides them with a perspective that no group coming from the outside would have in perceiving, understanding, and dealing with the complexities and barriers, puts them in a winning position from the start.

Jemal King describes the vision as “Transforming vision into value and establishing communities where new and existing residents, business owners and investors have limitless opportunities to thrive. Rooted in meaningful innovation and integrity, our development projects will bring about positive change and unleash the vitality of neighborhoods across the Chicago.”

M.O.T-DD's commitment to excellence, their dedication to their mission statement, their extraordinary vision, and their lived and unique first-hand experiences in South Shore and other communities work together to make them the absolute dream team for helping to implement South Shore's Quality of Life plan through The XChange Development. Powered by best-in-class technology and built with sustainability in mind, The XChange Project will meet the unmet demand for high-end contemporary residential units, amenities, parking, and retail space.

Make no mistake, South Shore is one of Chicago's most in-demand submarkets for investment, and M.O.T. understands that. They understand that it is a prime location, ready for





investment being located on Chicago's lakefront, and sitting two neighborhoods over from the Obama Presidential Center that is under construction in Hyde Park. M.O.T.DD understands that.

They understand that residents want quality, exclusivity, amenities, and safety features such as door attendants and covered parking, with rental market data showing a substantial quantity of renovated vintage product that is priced at a premium.

They understand that there is an unmet demand for contemporary apartment products along the lakefront, which is a result of little to no residential or multi-family construction in South Shore over many years.

They understand that today's renter desires uniqueness and quality, and they desire designs that will feature the most efficient use of their space and value for their dollar. Thus, the property will offer a mixture of one, two, and three-bedroom units, with the three bedrooms perhaps on the top floors.

The XChange will offer all the most in-demand amenities a contemporary building would have, such as fitness gym/fitness spa; resident lounge, entertainment room; cinema room;

chef's kitchen; resident library; resident co-working space; dog wash; swimming pool; pool deck with BBQ grills and cabanas; trash and recycling chutes on each floor; designated storage units; 24-hour doorman/concierge; laundry and dry-cleaning pick-up; 24 hour maintenance; electric car charging stations; bike storage and next thermostats.

The building will also have 20 percent of the units set aside to meet the City of Chicago's Affordable Housing Ordinance. Rental rates for the units will be comparable to Hyde Park, and downtown. They expect units to lease quickly as excitement grows for the unmet demand. The West Loop was not "The West Loop" fifteen years ago. It took vision, and investment. We believe in South Shore, and we believe in the people of South Shore. If you want to be considered for a unit, or Commercial space please contact us via our website to be added to our list to receive additional information.

With the expertise of M.O.T. the XChange Development Project will bring the contemporary design and convenience that will spur activation and investment in Chicago's historic South Shore neighborhood, bringing with it a restoration and revitalization of South

Shore's quality of life.

The XChange mixed-use development project not only fits perfectly with the QLP, it also meets the objectives of Mayor Lightfoot's impactful Invest South/West initiative even though it's a private investment by a local, emerging, minority/veteran owned real estate development company. M.O.T-DD is quick to point out that they have self-funded one hundred percent all costs to date but are open to opportunities that can assist in accomplishing the goal.

INVEST South/West is an unprecedented, intentional, community development initiative designed to ensure economic opportunities happen for Black and Brown residents in the target areas. If you aren't aware of it or understand how it's impacting the city, please look it up. This type of initiative has never been done before in the City of Chicago. No other administration in the history of this city has intentionally focused on addressing underserved areas, underserved real estate developers, and underserved residents to this extent. While there are many layers to the challenges that exist in our wonderful city, economic investment is the most critical component of revitalizing, and transforming lives, and neighborhoods.

"We think that the Invest South/West initiative is transformative! You have to give Mayor Lightfoot credit for executing her vision and keeping a campaign promise. It's inspiring and motivating to see fellow developers like Phil Beckham of P3 Markets, AJ Patton with 548 Capital, Leon Walker of DL3 Realty, and many others. Congratulations to them all! They are real tangible outcomes directly from intentional efforts. The XChange project is teed up and M.O.T-DD is ready to help transform our city also. Ideally, we'd like to be in the ground by Spring/Summer 2023."

One high rise offering all the amenities that Hyde Park residents enjoy will be a beacon of change, seeming to shout from the rooftops that South Shore disinvestment is over, equity is present and current residents and business

people matter.

Since we recognize that The XChange Project is a huge undertaking, especially during the current economic climate. We will need all hands-on deck to bring resources that will help make our plan a reality. Status quo efforts will not get it done. We need a transformational approach to how we look at revitalizing underserved areas. The city of Chicago, the state of Illinois, local and national corporations, residents, nonprofits, and financial institutions.

The proposed project is currently under review with zoning, and the Department of Planning and we anxiously await the green light on the needed zoning variance to create the "Miracle on 72nd and Exchange."

To fully understand and embrace the XChange Project, one must know and appreciate M.O.T., who they are and what they're all about. Mark Buford explains:

"Individually we are a model of Transformation in our own uniqueness of how we have grown as human beings navigating the reality of being Black men in America. We have beaten the odds, and achieved a level of success in business, and personal evolution, and each are philosophically aligned understanding "I Am Because We Are, and We Are Because I Am." Together we are MOT-DD, The Model Of Transformation Design & Development, Inc. We trust in each other's individual strengths, and equal value as key components in accomplishing goals that benefit not only us but others. we are all Generation X which I call the generation of "Go Get"; Go get your education, got get your house, car, and material things, but with no strategic focus on legacy contributions to our culture. It is time for that to change. And so, we present to you MOT-DD, and The XChange project.

The Revolution will happen at the intersection of XChange and Transformation Ave.

Meet us there

Just south of the shore

Where the winds of change blow to the east.

To the east my brothers and sisters, to the east."

“This pivotal development will be transformational for a high-traffic area that has been devalued by the unsightly vacant lots that are the result of decades of disinvestment. Adjacent to one of South Shore's gateway intersections, the XChange project will be a game-changer. It can't happen soon enough!”

**Carol L. Adams, Ph.D.,**

*Founder,  
South Shore Works*

“The XChange project continues the momentum happening in South Shore by local residents and local developers. We are creating the change we want to see in South Shore. Along with new development housing and retail, the XChange project will bring long and short term jobs to the community and anchor the Exchange corridor. We're in full support of this project.”

**Tonya Trice**

*Executive Director  
South Shore Chamber CDC*

“XChange Development is an overdue vibe for South Shore. It has been decades since we have had a luxury development. I am looking forward to the Change.”

**Val Free**

*Lead Steward  
The Neighborhood Network Alliance.*

“I am excited to work with the M.O.T. team to bring another high-level investment to the South Shore Community. As Alderman in South Shore alone, I have invested over \$60 million in Capital and infrastructure improvements, closed problematic businesses and taken many steps to address the vacant and abandoned property problem, all of which makes South Shore more attractive to investors. The XChange Development will be a significant economic boost to the Exchange Avenue corridor and is the perfect complement to the \$100 million Thrive Exchange development, coming to the corner of 79th and Exchange. South Shore residents will experience a renewed sense of economic vitality to a vital corridor. The future of the 7th Ward is under construction.”

**Alderman Gregory Mitchell**

*7th Ward  
Chicago City Council*



## OUR MISSION

We transform and elevate communities through commercial and residential real estate development, regardless of any economic, political, social, or psychological complexities and barriers.

## OUR VISION

We transform vision into value and establish communities where new and existing residents, business owners, and investors have limitless opportunities to thrive. Rooted in meaningful innovation and integrity, our development projects will bring about positive change and unleash the vitality of neighborhoods across the globe.

## OUR VALUES

- ✓ We prioritize the well-being of each community we serve.
- ✓ We believe collaboration leads to collective success for all stakeholders.
- ✓ We operate with integrity throughout each step of the development process.
- ✓ We take our responsibility to our community, investors, and stakeholders seriously.
- ✓ We look at each project as a contribution to the community and seek ways to add value.
- ✓ We take pride in being bold, because we believe greatness lives outside of comfort zones.

For more information about M.O.T. visit their website at [www.mot-dd.com](http://www.mot-dd.com)  
For information on commercial space contact [info@mot-dd.com](mailto:info@mot-dd.com)