

ULI Chicago 9th Annual Vision Awards
July 11, 2024



Project Finalist: Chatham Discover Customer Care Center and Shine Bright® Community Center | DL3 Realty Advisors

Project Team:

Developer/Owner: DL3 Realty Advisors, LLC

Architecture Firm: Gensler

Tenant/Main User: Discover Financial Services

Project Description: This project transformed a vacant big-box retail store in Chicago's Chatham neighborhood into a 1,000 seat call center for Discover Financial Services with more than 80% of employees from a 5-mile radius and with dedicated community space. Visionary in its approach, the project went beyond simply filling empty space. It aimed to revitalize the surrounding community by creating a new economic anchor, fostering job opportunities, and empowering local businesses. Repurposing a Retail Big Box - The former Target store, with its expansive footprint of 127,000 square feet, presented a unique opportunity. Instead of demolition, the project embraced adaptive reuse. The interior layout was reconfigured to accommodate Discover's customer service needs, including call centers, office spaces, and training areas, create community space, and bring natural light into the interior. This innovative approach preserved the existing structure, minimizing environmental impact and construction costs. Building on Local Strengths - Recognizing the importance of community engagement, the project prioritized awarding redevelopment contracts to minority-owned and local businesses. This fostered economic inclusion and ensured local expertise played a key role in the project's success. This commitment extended beyond construction. Discover actively sought opportunities to procure goods and services from local vendors, further strengthening the neighborhood's economic ecosystem. Empowering the Community - The project envisioned Discover as more than just a tenant; it aimed to be a catalyst for community development. A significant portion of the redeveloped space was dedicated to a Shine Bright Community Center. This space, provided free of charge to local organizations and stakeholders, serves as a platform for meetings, events, and programs. This fosters collaboration, strengthens social connections, and empowers local initiatives. Technology Hub for Career Advancement - The project recognized the importance of career development within the community. Discover established a dedicated Technology Hub within the center. This space provides employees with access to resources and programs that enhance their digital skills and open doors to advancement opportunities within the financial services industry. This commitment to workforce development empowers individuals and strengthens the community's future employment landscape. A Model for Sustainable Growth - The Discover Financial Services Customer Service Center in Chatham stands as a testament to the power of visionary redevelopment. It demonstrates how repurposing existing structures can create economic opportunities, foster community engagement, and empower local businesses. By prioritizing local participation and creating a platform for community development, this project serves as a model for sustainable growth that benefits both businesses and neighborhoods. Project Impact - This project has had and continues to have a significant positive impact on the Chatham neighborhood. The creation of 1,000 jobs at the customer service center provides much-needed

employment opportunities for residents. Local businesses benefit from contracts awarded during construction and ongoing procurement of goods and services. The community center fosters social connections and empowers local initiatives. The Discover Financial Services Customer Service Center is more than just a place of business; it's a catalyst for a brighter future for the Chatham neighborhood.