

# RECONNECTING Neighborhoods



Near North



Mid South



Near West

## Final Recommendations Report

Adopted by Chicago Plan Commission July 15, 2009



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL



**HNTB**

In association with:  
MKC ASSOCIATES



# RECONNECTING FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS Neighborhoods

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For more information visit:

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# RECONNECTING Neighborhoods

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Preparation of this document was financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, and the Regional Transportation Authority. The contents of the document do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, or the Illinois Department of Transportation.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Reconnecting Neighborhoods is part of the City of Chicago's ongoing efforts to transform how public and affordable housing are integrated into their neighborhoods. Recognizing that successful integration of both new and renovated housing developments requires looking beyond the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) Plan for Transformation sites to the surrounding blocks and nearby commercial and employment centers, the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development initiated the Reconnecting Neighborhoods study. The Reconnecting Neighborhoods study is funded through the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Community Planning Program (formerly known as the Regional Transportation Assistance Program, or RTAP). The Community Planning Program provides funding and planning assistance to communities for planning projects that benefit both local communities and the RTA transit system. To this end, the goal of the Reconnecting Neighborhoods study is to make recommendations on how the three selected study areas can be 'reconnected' to the City through improved access to public transportation, commercial services and an improved pedestrian environment. This project draws upon past planning efforts addressing each study area. Completed plans in each of the Reconnecting Neighborhoods study areas were reviewed as preparation for this study, and the principles and strategies presented in this report build upon these previous recommendations. The specific documents reviewed are listed here.

Technical analyses and recommendations for the study were prepared by HNTB Corporation with assistance from MKC Associates. The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) coordinated and facilitated community outreach efforts for the study including the convening of an Expert Panel in late October 2008 which reviewed and refined the Reconnecting Neighborhoods recommendations with particular focus on feasible implementation strategies, including public-private partnerships, the full text of the Panel's recommendations is available under separate cover from MPC. This report summarizes the

## RELEVANT PLANNING REPORTS

### Mid South

- City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, *Master Plan for the Cottage Grove Avenue Corridor*, 2006.
- Quad Communities Development Corporation and LISC/Chicago's New Communities Program, Quality-of-Life Plan, *Quad Communities: Connecting Past, Present and Future*, May 2005.
- City of Chicago, *Near South Community Plan*, August 2003.
- Mid-South Planning Group, *Mid-South Strategic Development Plan*, 1993.
- City of Chicago and Community Development Commission, *The North Kenwood – Oakland Conservation Plan*, July 30, 1992.

### Near West

- Near West Side Community Development Corp. and LISC Metro Edge, *Westhaven Market Study*, November 2007.
- Near West Side Community Development Corp. and LISC/Chicago's New Communities Program, Quality-of-Life Plan, *West Haven: Rising Like the Phoenix*, October 2007.
- The Near West Side Community Development Corporation and LISC/ Chicago's New Communities Initiative, *More Than Bricks and Mortar: A Quality of Life Plan for West Haven*, Spring 2002.
- City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, *Transit Oriented Development Plans at Selected Green Line Stations*, November 1998.
- City of Chicago, *Green Line Station Location Study*, February 2002.
- City of Chicago, *Lake Street Enhancement Program*, November 1998.

### Near North

- City of Chicago Department of Transportation and Department of Planning and Development, *Halsted Triangle Plan*, October 2007.
- City of Chicago, *Near North Redevelopment Initiative*, Land Use Plan Map, 2006.



final recommendations for each of the three study areas. Further information and interim reports prepared during the study process can be found at: [www.ReconnectingNeighborhoods.org](http://www.ReconnectingNeighborhoods.org).

Numerous discussions are occurring at various levels of government – regional, state, and federal- that link transportation, energy independence and green technology, and housing initiatives together. As such, the Reconnecting Neighborhoods recommendations and subsequent efforts have the opportunity to be more competitive in the future for these funding opportunities. Moving forward, the project and subsequent initiatives should be framed in the natural context of:

- **Equity:** Ensuring that residents of mixed-income communities, particularly low- and moderate-income residents, have access to adequate retail and job opportunities, safe and reliable public transportation.
- **Affordable Housing:** Maximizing the significant investment in the Plan for Transformation by ensuring the creation of “complete” communities that reduce the cost of both housing and transportation for residents.
- **Green House Gas Reduction:** Providing alternative transportation choices to residents in neighborhoods that are ideally located near the Chicago Central Business District.
- **Transportation Cost Reduction:** Creating low-cost transportation



options that provide an alternative to the personal automobile and its related, rising, fuel costs.

It is recommended that a community-based stakeholder group, similar in composition to the Inter-Governmental Advisory Committee (IGAC), will continue to undertake the implementation of these recommendations, while also encouraging and facilitating transit-supportive development throughout the City.

*“Reconnecting Neighborhoods is a participatory initiative that bring[s] together long-time community residents, residents of the new mixed-income sites, community leaders, neighborhood institutions, developers, and existing and potential businesses and employers in three areas to analyze current conditions; propose plans for improving transportation infrastructure, transit service and commercial options; and make recommendations [which] bring the plans to fruition.”*

— Metropolitan Planning Council

## STUDY AREA DESCRIPTIONS

### Mid South:

The Mid South area lies between the South Loop and McCormick Place to the north and Hyde Park and the University of Chicago campus to the south. The study area is bounded by 35th Street, Lake Shore Drive, Martin Luther King Drive, and 43rd Street. While adjacent to Burnham Park on the lakefront, the Mid South neighborhood lacks regular and convenient connections to the Lake Michigan beaches and Lake Shore Drive. Rail transit service is also nearby, with Red and Green CTA Lines to the west, and Metra Electric Line tracks to the east, but much of the neighborhood is beyond the ideal walking distance to stations. With a majority of residential land uses, the study area lacks easy access to daily goods and services. Plan for Transformation mixed-income housing developments, along with private large-scale infill and redevelopment projects in the center of the study area, offer a significant opportunity to address a number of neighborhood transportation and access issues, to reconnect the neighborhood to the rest of the South Side and other destinations.

### Near West:

The Near West study area is situated between the Kinzie Industrial Corridor, the United Center and Eisenhower Expressway, Union Park and Western Avenue; and is bounded by Lake Street, Ashland Avenue, Monroe Street, and Western Avenue. Redevelopment of the nearby West Loop neighborhood continues to spread west down Madison and adjacent streets, bringing new investment up to the eastern edge of the Near West study area. However, Ashland, Ogden, and the United Center create barriers to connecting the Near West and West Loop areas. Westhaven Park, a Plan for Transformation development site, is a success in creating its own revitalization momentum for the Near West area. Capitalizing on this, a new elevated CTA station on the Green Line at Damen and improved retail opportunities and amenities targeted at the neighborhood scale will work to reconnect residents of the Near West area to the city as a whole.

### Near North:

The Near North study area sits between Lincoln Park, the Gold Coast, and River North; it is bounded by North Avenue, Orleans Street, Chicago Avenue, and Halsted Street. At present, this area remains “at the edge” between more recognizable neighborhoods and due to rapid and recent change, lacks its own identity. One new housing development in the study area takes its name, SoNo, from its location south of North Avenue, others from Old Town (Old Town Village I and II), and new high end developments continue to extend up the North Branch of the Chicago River from the River North area. As the Chicago Housing Authority’s Plan for Transformation progresses, the Near North’s process of making physical connections to these adjacent neighborhoods where existing Brown and Red Line CTA stations are located must overcome social distancing greater than the physical spaces that separate it. New mixed income housing developments will go a long way to bridging the gaps the legacy of public housing has left behind, as new residents seek out nearby shopping, dining, and employment opportunities. A new elevated CTA station at the heart of the area, coupled with other improvements to the public realm, will help a new community to emerge—a well connected, vibrant and livable neighborhood.



New housing developments in the Mid South (top), a historic church and a new mixed use building in the Near West (center), and a newer commercial center in the Near North (bottom).



## COMMUNITY INPUT

Gathering of community input has been integral to crafting transit, access and urban design, and commercial development recommendations. The project began with an official kick-off meeting in November of 2007, where local issues and opportunities for each of the three study areas were identified and discussed.

### IGAC and Task Force Meetings

Next, the Inter-Governmental Advisory Committee (IGAC), and three area-specific community Task Forces were convened by MPC to discuss the overall objectives and work plans for the project. The IGAC is composed of government agencies, elected officials, and the chairs of each area's Task Force. The Task Forces are composed of local community stakeholders.

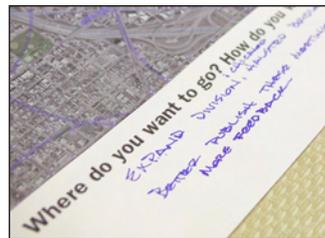
Simultaneously, existing transit services, facilities, and retail opportunities in each of the communities were inventoried and compiled in three Existing Conditions Reports (available online at [www.ReconnectingNeighborhoods.org](http://www.ReconnectingNeighborhoods.org)). The Task Forces reviewed and refined these documents and engaged in a visioning exercise to help develop ideas for improvements in each area.

### Community Meetings

Shortly after the Task Force visioning exercise, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) led community-wide meetings in conjunction with Task Force members to solicit more recommendations for each study area. These community meetings employed a wide variety of community participation

tools to elicit community opinions. The complete results of these meetings are also available online at the Reconnecting Neighborhoods website.

Based on this input, Preliminary Recommendations were developed (available online at the Reconnecting Neighborhoods website). A second round of IGAC, Task Force, and community meetings resulted in refinements to the preliminary recommendations. In a final round of Task Force, community and IGAC meetings in November of 2008, stakeholders were given the opportunity to hear the final recommendations. These recommendations were also presented to a larger audience during the Metropolitan Planning Council's *Building Successful Mixed-Income Communities Forum* in December of 2008, where national and local experts discussed new opportunities at the federal and state-level to support local efforts which connect affordable housing, public transportation, and workforce development investment.



**The Reconnecting Neighborhoods project convened public meetings and used a wide variety of techniques to solicit community feedback, including key pad polling and group mapping exercises.**



Mid South Project  
Kickoff Meeting



Near North Task  
Force Meeting



Near West Community  
Meeting

## PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Final Recommendations contained in this report are divided into three broad categories: transit service, access and urban design, and commercial development. Each set of recommendations was developed to support the study area Planning Principles outlined at the beginning of each study area section to follow, with an emphasis on identifying feasible and actionable strategies for implementation.

- **Transit Service Recommendations** describe short-term transit improvements based on near-term development and existing conditions and long-term transit improvements which may become viable as additional development and investment takes place or transit usage patterns change. The transit recommendations also include estimated order-of-magnitude costs for such improvements.
- **Access and Urban Design Recommendations** depict areas of priority for urban design improvements and potential locations for pedestrian nodes. Additionally, these recommendations highlight community assets and areas of new development that will need improved transit access in the future. Urban design treatments and techniques germane to all three study areas are presented in the following section: *Public Investment to Foster Re-Connection*.
- **Commercial Development Recommendations** depict pending future land uses and determine commercial development priorities for the study area, based on the desires of the community with respect to the location of retail and service options.

## PUBLIC INVESTMENT TO FOSTER RE-CONNECTION

The quality of the public realm encourages transit usage and neighborhood vitality. Targeted public investments in pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation improvements, landscaping and other site enhancements, public plazas, open spaces, streetscape and public art features can all contribute to a unique neighborhood identity, foster transit ridership and improve the business and retail climate. The implementation and ongoing maintenance of high quality public improvements are essential elements for ensuring a pleasant and inviting neighborhood for pedestrians and cyclists, be they local residents or visitors. This section describes and illustrates some of the key strategies to be implemented in each study area: streetscape enhancements, pedestrian crossing improvements, community gateways, identity elements, and wayfinding.



A well-shaded streetscape provides a pleasant pedestrian experience in the Near North (above left), an unconventional fence enhances the sidewalk in the Mid South (center), and well-maintained historic facades in the Near West reinforce a consistent street wall (above right).



## Streetscape Enhancements

Implementation strategies for streetscape enhancements include introducing design elements such as plazas and encouraging facade elements articulated to address a pedestrian scale. Plazas and architectural features can be used to provide interesting and significant enhancements to the streetscape. Plazas should be strategically positioned, highly visible, of high quality design, and constructed from materials that are coordinated to complement the adjacent public right-of-way streetscape. Plazas should be framed by complementary ground floor uses such as coffee shops, restaurants, or other uses which can help bring people to occupy the space. Building design elements should be articulated at the ground floor, with fine-grained facade elements that break up the scale of larger buildings and attract pedestrian exploration. Signage and entrances clearly identifying the access points to businesses should be visible from the street, and oriented to take advantage of adjacent sidewalks, open spaces or plazas. Street furniture such as benches and trash cans should be provided for the comfort of the pedestrian, especially near building entrances and at pocket parks or plazas. Trees and landscaping should be generously planted and well managed; ensuring that adequate visibility into and out of parks and plazas is maintained.



**Deteriorated existing sidewalk in the Near North (top), an auto-oriented streetscape in the Near West (center), and a street corner in the Mid South (bottom) lacking street furniture and a consistent visual identity.**

## Sample Design Treatments



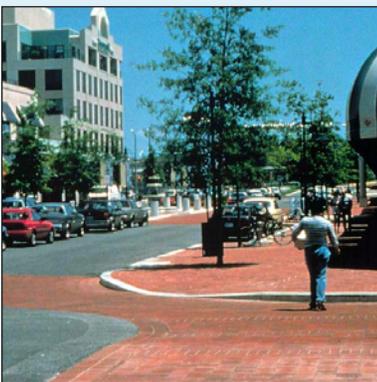
**For an enhanced pedestrian environment, incorporate urban plazas (top) where possible, orient building entrances toward the street to create a consistent street wall and eyes on the street (middle) and incorporate shade trees, benches, and plantings (bottom).**



## Sample Design Treatments



Define crosswalks by incorporating alternative paving materials (above), and provide bumpouts (below) at corners where they will not interfere with bus movement.



## Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

Implementation strategies for pedestrian crossing improvements include consistent design treatments along major roadways and at busy intersections that include safety elements. These elements include upgraded paving that clearly defines crosswalk areas, improved pavement markings, countdown signaling and, where feasible, providing corner “bumpouts” or median islands that reduce pedestrian crossing distance and increase available sidewalk area for street furniture, bicycle racks, or outdoor cafes.



Existing pedestrian crossing conditions at the intersection of Division and Sedgwick (above) in the Near North area.

## Community Gateways and Identity Elements

Implementation strategies for creating community identity elements include constructing gateway treatments to signal arrival into each study area. Gateways can provide both landmarks for easy navigation and informational signage, supplying the area with a unique arrival identifier while also directing visitors to other places of interest in the area. Other neighborhood identity elements could include seasonal banners that provide a consistent visual treatment for each area.

## Sample Design Treatments

Seasonal banners (right) and gateway features (below) create a consistent place-based identity.



## Wayfinding

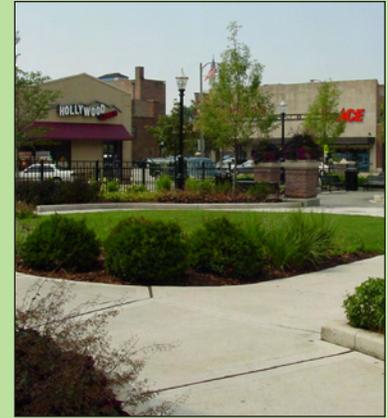
Implementation strategies for improved wayfinding include the development of orientation systems that include recurring visual elements and informational signage visible to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers to guide visitors to local recreational amenities and other destinations. Directory maps or kiosks near transit stations, major bus stops and other area destinations will encourage use of neighborhood amenities. Additionally, pedestrian walkways and seating areas should be well lit and provide views (if possible) to other activities. Bike racks should be available at recreational destinations, consistent with the City of Chicago's *Bike 2015 Plan* specifications.



Impeded circulation in the Near North for pedestrians at the Riverfront pathway (top) and along Blackhawk Street (bottom).



## Sample Design Treatments



Provide clearly delineated pedestrian routes (above) and informative signage for cyclists and pedestrians (below).



The broad based strategies presented above are all applicable to improving the public realm. Area-specific application of these strategies is described in the next sections. The sections to follow will guide and facilitate transit improvements, pedestrian access and urban design enhancements in each study area. They will also provide direction for the planning of new commercial and mixed use development in a timely, efficient and equitable manner.





## Mid South

In order to create a system which best connects the Mid South Area to the City as a whole, a Vision and set of complementary Planning Principles were created and refined based on input from residents, community leaders, and other stakeholders. These Principles then informed the development of the planning strategies. Together, the Vision, Planning Principles, and Strategies will serve as a guide for “reconnecting” the Mid South Area over the short (1-5 years), medium (5-10 years), and long-term (10-15 years). Principles and Strategies address Transit Service, Pedestrian Access and Urban Design, and Commercial Development.

### VISION: RECONNECTING THE MID SOUTH

*In the Mid South Area, the already-well established street grid provides pleasant and pedestrian-oriented retail streets along its major east-west connections; 35th, Pershing and 43rd. Pershing and 35th Street in particular have become local commercial nodes that serve both Oakwood Shores and established nearby neighborhoods along improved east-west transportation links. Improved bus facilities such as shelters and seating areas have been installed, along with landscaping improvements that complement new housing developments. Access to nearby Green Line train stations to the west have improved with successful redevelopment of commercial businesses in both renovated and new buildings in the areas immediately surrounding the stations. These infill developments and commercial concentrations are locally-owned and locally-patronized, welcoming residents and visitors to the area and serving their daily needs—dry cleaning, banking, grocery shopping, newsstands and restaurants. New and improved pedestrian bridges provide dramatic entry points to the lakeshore trail system from the Mid South Area, bringing greater access to the nearby recreational amenity and elevating the Mid South Area to a key gateway into the City from Lake Shore Drive. The “legacy” potential of significant South Side transit and public realm investments has been realized for all neighborhoods, even those located between major South Side destinations.*



The [Mid South Study Area] which is bounded by 35th Street, Lake Shore Drive, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and 43rd Street lies between the South Loop and McCormick Place to the north and Hyde Park and the University of Chicago campus to the south. While the study area is adjacent to Burnham Park on the lake, the neighborhood lacks regular and convenient connections to the lakefront and Lake Shore Drive. Rail transit service is also nearby to the west, but much of the neighborhood is beyond the ideal walking distance to stations. The study area was designed to focus particular attention on mobility and services in an area that sits between significant activity generators (such as IIT, Lake Meadows, and the University of Chicago), to ensure that all of the South Side is connected in the future.

## TRANSIT SERVICE

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Transit Improvement Principles have been developed that focus on improving access and service using the existing transit system currently in place, including CTA bus and rail. In the short term, further study is recommended to examine three potential long-term transit improvement strategies for the Mid South Area including: a new Metra station, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, and a local street car. All recommendations are depicted on the Mid-South Study Area Recommendations map to follow; the potential long-term recommendations will require significant further study and identification of funding sources. The Principles below are intended to provide policy direction consistent with the *Vision: Reconnecting the Mid South*.

### Transit Improvement Principles

1. New and expanded transit service should focus on improving connections to and between major south side destinations, including the IIT area and Hyde Park, improving access for local residents to these commercial and employment centers.
2. Streetscape improvements and any associated elements should support transit users, transit accessibility, and current economic development plans.
3. Good vehicular access should be maintained throughout the neighborhood, but care should be taken to limit heavy traffic and bus lines to main thoroughfares in order to avoid speeding and cut through traffic in nearby residential areas.
4. Safe bicycle parking should be accommodated in several locations easily accessible to public transit such as bus shelters and train stations.
5. Access to existing transit stations and stops should be clearly marked and signed, encouraging local residents to utilize transit.
6. Accessible and informative shelters for bus riders should be strategically placed to encourage new and regular transit users.



Burnham Park east of the Mid South Study Area

## PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND URBAN DESIGN

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The pedestrian accessibility and urban design principles provide an important tool for the Mid South Area to encourage transit usage and neighborhood vitality. These principles provide a framework against which the City can consider and evaluate both public and private improvement proposals for the area. They bring together many recommendations, including: pedestrian access and circulation considerations, landscaping and other site enhancements, effective integration of public uses and open spaces, and suggested streetscape and public area design features.

### Pedestrian Accessibility Principles

1. The placement of commercial storefronts should consider visibility and accessibility from transit stops.
2. Other street-level improvements such as raised planters and decorative paving should work in concert with commercial storefronts, facilitating visits to the neighborhood shopping venues from nearby residents and visitors alike.
3. Where parking is provided on-site at commercial uses, a designated pedestrian access way from the public sidewalk should be provided.
4. Grade separated pedestrian connections to the lakeshore should be enhanced and signed clearly wherever possible;



additionally such crossovers should include provisions for bicycles.

5. As sidewalk and bicycle lane upgrades are undertaken throughout the neighborhood, prioritize access to commercial areas, schools, parks and other activity centers.

## Urban Design Principles

1. Plazas, seating areas, and public art installations should be accommodated in key locations to enhance the pedestrian experience, and maximize usable green space, particularly along the streets specified for retail development. Adequate benches and trash receptacles are key features.
2. Design controls should be enforced, especially for access to sites that include mixed use and commercial development, to ensure compatibility with existing historic structures and new housing developments.
3. Facade and signage enhancements at existing buildings and businesses should be undertaken to preserve and enhance the character of the study area and contribute to its visual identity, reflecting the rich history of the area.
4. A gateway treatment should be provided at the key entry point to the neighborhood from Lake Shore Drive to enhance and elevate the community's identity.
5. Way finding signage should draw visitors and residents alike from the lakeshore recreation area into the neighborhood, and in turn, draw visitors from the Green Line train stations into the neighborhood from the west.

## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Land use in the Mid South Area includes a variety of land use and development patterns. Throughout the area, residential infill development is underway, weaving new townhouse or mid-rise multi-family structures into the existing neighborhood fabric at a compatible density. Rehabilitation of existing residential structures is also occurring in many locations. Commercial and service uses



**Lake Shore Drive (left) presents a barrier to pedestrian lakefront access. Local serving street fronting retail (right) may take advantage of facade grants to contribute to an improved visual identity.**

are notably absent within the study area, except for a few isolated ground floor businesses in older mixed use buildings. Large-scale development in the study area includes three substantial Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) housing transformation sites, which offer an opportunity to address a number of neighborhood issues, particularly the study area's lack of easy access to retail and services. To this end, planning can help direct quality locations for new retail, rather than miss opportunities to add services to the community as the residential infill development process moves forward. Transit and pedestrian linkages to surrounding retail destinations will be equally important, as the Lake Meadows project directly to the north of the study area is developed with large scale commercial uses.

## Commercial Development Principles

1. Both retail and residential infill development should be encouraged along the three primary east-west corridors (43rd, Pershing and 35th) to both support existing businesses that are present, and expand the retail vitality of the study area as a whole.
2. Small-scale shopping (dry cleaners, cafes, convenience stores) as well as larger stores should be located close to existing transit service so commuters and those without access to private autos may take advantage of neighborhood services efficiently. Access to bus stops and station

entrances should be considered as commercial and mixed use sites are designed.

- Public uses such as parks, schools and recreation centers should be maintained and enhanced in the study area to support both existing and new residential populations, with transit connections provided.
- Existing structures of historic value, such as the greystones lining Martin Luther King and Drexel Boulevards, should be preserved and enhanced to blend with and complement new development under construction in the area.



Three story townhomes line Bowen Avenue.

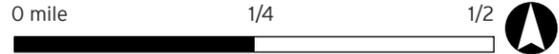


New and revitalized housing in the Mid South Area will contribute to new commercial opportunities. Clockwise from top left: Jazz on the Boulevard, historic greystones, Oakwood Shores, and scattered infill development.

It is important to note that, while the transit ridership estimate generated during the background phase of this process was focused on the potential of future Metra service, various alternative options for improving transit access and mobility have been developed. The physical and financial challenges of pursuing a new Metra Station at Oakwood Boulevard on the Metra Electric Line (construction costs between 20 and 30 million in 2007 dollars), coupled with the estimate that ridership would be quite low (between 45 and 85 weekday boardings), required that the planning process instead also consider a range of possibilities for improving mobility for neighborhood residents in the shorter term.

The Mid South recommendations summarized in this report reflect input received from the IGAC, Task Forces, and the community at large. The *Mid South Study Area Recommendations* map on the following page summarizes the Strategies identified through this planning process. A detailed description of each strategy is provided, followed by an Implementation discussion that includes a summary matrix of action items.





**LEGEND**

- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Transit Station
- Existing Transit Routes**
- CTA Green Line
- Metra Electric Line
- CTA Bus Routes
- 132 Bus Route Number
- Planned Future Development**
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Public / Institutional

**Transit Improvement Strategies**

- 1 New express route to Loop ↔
- 2 Extended service hours on #43 ↔
- 3 Extended route and service hours on #39/Pershing to access lakefront ↔
- 4 Additional/enhanced bus shelters
  - Neighborhood stop
  - Retail node stop
- 5 Sidewalk/lighting enhancements near Indiana Green Line station ↔

**Potential Transit Opportunities**

- 6 Long term potential for Metra Service ↔
- 7 Long term potential for BRT Service ↔
- 8 Long term potential for street car service ↔

**Access and Design Strategies**

- A Improve lakeshore access ↔
- B Streetscape enhancements
  - Retail streetscape
  - ▨ Key neighborhood route
- C Improved intersections, Pedestrian crossings ↔
- D Gateway feature ✳

**Key Commercial Development Strategies**

- I 43rd Street corridor
- II 43rd Street Green Line node
- III Pershing corridor
- IV Cottage Grove mixed use corridor
- V Lake Meadows area redevelopment

**TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

Mid-South community members advocated for localized transit service that focuses on moving residents throughout the community and select transit routes that link the Mid-South area to other communities of import. The following transit improvement strategies are depicted on the Mid South Study Area Recommendations map.

- 1 Consider implementing a new express bus route to the Loop. According to CTA data from 2007, bus use in the study area is high and is greater than ridership at nearby Green Line stations. Consistent with public input, this indicates that the community may support a new rush hour express bus route to downtown Chicago. This new route would collect passengers south of the study area along Stony Island and 47th Street. At 47th Street, the route would turn west to Cottage Grove and follow Cottage Grove north through the study area to 39th, turning east to Lake Shore Drive north and downtown. Other express options could be considered including a non-stop street express which avoids Lake Shore Drive congestion at the Museum Campus.
- 2 Extend the evening hours of service on the #43 43rd Street bus route. CTA is currently experimenting with extended weekday service on route #43 along 43rd Street. In March 2008, evening service on the route was extended from 7 p.m. to approximately 12:30 a.m. between 47th/Red Line and 43rd/Oakenwald. The service frequency on route #43 is every 20 minutes. This experiment is funded through the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, and will be evaluated periodically to review performance.
- 3 Consider implementing weekend service on the #39 Pershing bus route by operating only half of the weekday routing from the lakefront to the CTA Red Line at the Dan Ryan Expressway. In addition, investigate the possibility of building a bus turnaround on the lakefront. Currently, route #39 operates between St. Louis on the west and Lake Park on the east on weekdays only. To turn around on the east end and travel back west the bus operates on Ellis, 40th, and Lake Park. A new bus turnaround facility in the park east of Lake Shore Drive would provide transit access to the park and eliminate the on-street turnaround operation. Additionally, a lakeshore bus turnaround area can relieve nearby Ellis Street of unwanted bus turnaround traffic.
- 4 Passenger shelters located at bus stops greatly improve the waiting environment for CTA customers. Shelters shield waiting passengers from the elements and provide route and system information. New commercial developments should provide space for an adequate bus shelter or incorporate sheltering amenities in the new building's design. Commercial developments planned along existing bus routes should consider the needs of waiting bus customers in their design, to take advantage of the enhanced transit presence in these locations.
- 5 Accessibility to the existing CTA Green Line stations at Indiana and 43rd require improvements such as way finding signage, better lighting, and sidewalk reconstruction, in particular along 40th Street adjacent to the former railroad embankment.

**LONG-TERM TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES**

While community members were interested in the possibility of a new Metra station on the Metra Electric District, the ridership projections completed as part of this study did not support the addition of a station. Additionally, community members were interested in seeing BRT and/or a streetcar introduced in the community in the long-term. All are considered long-term opportunities due to the need to build ridership levels and the high level of funding needed for implementation. However, the community should continue to study the possibility for additional service improvements in the event that increased development in the future could support the service and funding becomes available.

- 6 Study the long term potential for the introduction of Metra Service in the study area. Future development resulting in increased population densities may justify the introduction of Metra service within the study area. A future study related to the introduction of Metra service within the study area should be done in conjunction with a broader assessment of how service within this area may impact the entire Metra Electric District as well as considering other long-term community transit needs.
- 7 As the neighborhood and its surroundings continue to develop, consider the long term potential for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Improve transit service along 35th and 39th Streets with more frequent or higher capacity vehicles and pre-paid boarding facilities. BRT service should provide connections to CTA's Green and Red line stations to the west and to the new Metra station on the Rock Island line just west of IIT at 35th Street.
- 8 Consider the long term potential for local street car service to improve transit options along Cottage Grove in the study area. A new South Side circulator route will provide connections to Hyde Park to the south and to other neighborhood destinations.

**ACCESS AND DESIGN STRATEGIES**

The urban design and pedestrian framework recommendations address the appropriate treatment for the public realm including enhanced connections for recreational opportunities, improved streetscapes, construction of plazas and gateways, and facade improvements. The access and design recommendations described below are shown on the accompanying map.

- A Improve access to the lakeshore from the study area and increase bicycle and pedestrian links to the proposed harbor and its associated amenities slated for construction on the lakeshore. Concurrently, develop a strong network of bike lanes and pedestrian routes in the area with particular respect to accessing and directing users to the lakeshore. Capitalize on existing and new connections to the lake, such as the planned pedestrian bridge at 35th Street, and the planned improved crossover facilities at 39th and 43rd Streets. Additionally, improved signage alerting pedestrians and bicyclists to lakeshore access already available at the existing 35th and 43rd crossovers is needed.
- B Improve the streetscape environment in targeted areas slated for retail development to enhance the feeling of safety and comfort for pedestrians, and provide public plazas, wayfinding features, or open spaces in conjunction with retail uses and transit stops. At key neighborhood routes, focus on providing well-maintained sidewalks, parkways and street trees. Local businesses should continue to take advantage of the facade improvement program available through QCDC. Access for emergency services should be a paramount consideration.
- C Improve pedestrian crossings at key locations, with bumpouts, clear crossing areas, countdown signaling and traffic bollards particularly along Martin Luther King Drive and Cottage Grove at major cross streets.
- D Establish a gateway feature welcoming visitors and residents to the neighborhood at Pershing from Lakeshore Drive and at 35th and Martin Luther King Drive. A successful gateway feature will provide the Mid South Area with a unique arrival identifier that can also serve to direct visitors to other places of interest in the area.

**KEY COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

Planning for key commercial areas is recommended to ensure that site-level development strategies coordinate well with transit and pedestrian movement patterns. Efforts must be made to direct retail to key locations along east-west corridors, particularly where it would provide residents with easy access to retail while walking from a transit station or bus stop. As the number of residential units within the community increases, the market for commercial uses will improve. In the near term, City assistance with land assembly, remediation or other financial incentives can speed the development of new mixed residential and commercial projects in high priority locations. Listed below and shown on the accompanying map are several recommendations with respect to commercial areas.

- I Along the length of 43rd Street from Vincennes to Langley, there is sporadic retail infill. Participants in the planning program desire a concentration of small independent neighborhood-serving retail and mixed uses along this corridor.
- II Mixed use development is desired in the area immediately surrounding the 43rd Street Green Line station; both the community and the task forces identify this area as a prime location for a thriving retail node, which is the subject of ongoing City planning efforts.
- III With the scale of development at Oakwood Shores there is a need to provide a neighborhood retail node to serve this new population. Locating a commercial and mixed use node along Pershing would place the retail at the center of the community and make it easy to access from many parts of the study area and highly visible at a key neighborhood entry point from the lakeshore. Planned mixed use construction on the Oakwood Shores site will complement this new node.
- IV Mixed use development at Cottage Grove-40th Street to 43rd Street-is planned to reflect the development character further south, building upon the established pattern at the 43rd Street corner.
- V Access to commercial development north of 35th Street at Lake Meadows should be improved through connections and signage to the area as retail and service amenities increase and the area redevelops. A planned arts and recreation center at Pershing and 35th Street will complement this new development.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Successful implementation of the study recommendations will be facilitated by prioritizing and phasing the associated action items and coordinated with the appropriate agencies. The matrix below outlines each action item and its recommended phasing timeframe, the identification of lead and supporting agencies and estimated costs, where applicable.

Because the action items are subject to change over time, flexibility should remain regarding implementation priorities, costs and timing. This matrix should be reviewed and updated periodically, and utilized to measure progress on realizing a “reconnected” Mid-South area in the coming years. Some actions will require further study and the identification of funding.

Community Stakeholders and Expert Panel participants

### Implementation Actions-Mid South

identified the following Implementation Actions as top priorities:

- **Transit Improvement:** Conduct a feasibility study examining the long-term potential for Metra service; explore the possibility of a public-private partnership to conduct a feasibility study for a street car or bus rapid transit service to connect major south side destinations; implement express bus service from 63rd Street to 35th Street to the Loop via Lake Shore Drive.
- **Access and Design:** Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the lakefront, implement streetscape improvements along Cottage Grove extending south from 35th to 53rd, and initiate creation of a neighborhood gateway entrance from Lake Shore Drive.
- **Commercial Development:** Focus City efforts on attracting and supporting small business development along 43rd Street.

	ACTION ITEM	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS	ESTIMATED COST (2008 \$)
<b>Short Term (1-5 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Conduct studies regarding the long-term potential to improve access to and within the South Side, utilizing Metra and/or BRT or other transit modes.	City of Chicago	RTA, Metra, CTA, RTA, Alderman's Office	Further study required
	Explore feasibility of operating a street car along key commercial corridors (such as Cottage Grove and 35th) to support commercial activity and improve north/south and east/west connections.	City of Chicago	QCDC, CTA, DPD, private sector partners, Alderman's Office	Further study required
	Coordinate with ongoing Olympic “legacy investment” planning efforts.	City of Chicago	Alderman's Office, CTA, RTA	N/A
	Continue the extended service hours of the #43 bus. (Extended service was first offered in the Spring of 2008, 7:00p.m.-12:30 a.m. between 47th/Green Line/Red Line and 43rd/Oakenwald).	CTA	Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, QCDC, JARC	Currently funded by the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development
	Build a #39 bus turnaround in the 39th Street Beach parking lot.	CTA	Alderman's Office	\$3-5 million
	Improve bike parking at all train stations and bus stops.	CDOT	CTA, DPD, Alderman's Office	\$1,000 per bike rack
	Install additional bus shelters to protect riders from the elements and provide travel information at neighborhood stops. Ensure new developments include adequate space for bus shelters, or incorporate sheltered waiting areas into the building design.	CTA, CDOT	DPD, City of Chicago Street Furniture Program, Alderman's Office	\$15,000-\$20,000 per shelter \$15,000-\$30,000 per plaza area
Access and Design Strategies	Continue to promote facade and signage streetscape enhancements for existing buildings, including awnings and attractive storefront displays.	QCDC	DPD	N/A
	Design a gateway feature at Lake Shore Drive to mark the point of entry into the community.	DPD	CDOT	\$750,000+
	Use effective and clear signage to improve access for lakefront visitors to the neighborhood's retail and commercial businesses.	CDOT	Park District, QCDC, DPD	\$300-\$700 per location
Commercial Development Strategies	Encourage the development of stores, such as dry cleaners and cafes, close to existing transit stops.	Private sector	DPD, QCDC	N/A
	Undertake appropriate zoning amendments to encourage commercial and mixed use development in the desired pattern.	DPD	Alderman's Office	N/A
	Conduct a study to understand the market trade area for the Mid South, to ensure appropriate and complementary commercial attraction and retention at all retail nodes.	DPD	QCDC, Alderman's Office, private sector partners	Further study required
	Support plans to develop an arts and recreation center at 35th and Cottage Grove.	Private sector partners	DPD, Alderman's Office, QCDC	N/A
	Support the establishment of independent retailers near the Green Line station at 43rd Street and along 43rd Street between Vincennes and Langley.	3rd and 4th Ward Alderman's Offices, (study currently underway)	DPD, QCDC	N/A

## Implementation Actions-Mid South

	ACTION ITEM	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS	ESTIMATED COST (2008 \$)
<b>Mid-Term (5-10 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Improve accessibility to the existing Green Line stations at Indiana and 43rd Street through better signage, lighting, and sidewalk construction.	DPD (Study currently underway at 43rd Street)	CTA, 3rd Ward Alderman's Office	\$375,000-\$500,000 per block
	Provide greater levels of bus shelter enhancements (such as the use of "Bus Tracker" real time information) at retail node stops.	CTA, CDOT	DPD, City of Chicago Street Furniture Program	Further study required
	Establish an express bus route through the Mid South Area, along Cottage Grove and onto Lake Shore Drive to the Loop.	CTA	Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, JARC	\$1,954,150 per year
	Add weekend service on route #39 between Sox-35th and the 39th Street Beach.	CTA	Alderman's Office, Park District, JARC	\$227,775 per year
	Explore feasibility of adjusting headways on the #3 and #4 bus routes to alleviate crowding during rush hours.	CTA	Alderman's Office, JARC	Further study required
Access and Design Strategies	Improve pedestrian crossings at the 35th St and Cottage Grove intersections to better coordinate the use of the intersection by pedestrians, bikes and cars.	CDOT	DPD	\$35,000-\$60,000 per intersection
	Improve pedestrian crossings along Martin Luther King Drive at the 37th, Pershing, 41st, and 43rd Street crossings. Improve pedestrian crossings along Cottage Grove at 38th and 35th Streets.	CDOT	DPD	\$75,000-\$1,000,000 per intersection
	Improve access to the lakefront via existing and planned pedestrian/bicycle bridges, at 35th, 39th and 43rd Streets and the Oakwood Boulevard bridge. (Improvements underway for the 35th and 43rd Street bridges, partially funded by CMAQ grants).	CDOT	DPD, Park District	Requires significant further study
Commercial Development Strategies	Focus the development of new retail along transit-accessible streets, particularly 43rd Street. In addition, support development on Pershing Road, Cottage Grove, and 35th Street.	QCDC	DPD, 3rd and 4th Ward Alderman's Offices	N/A
	Develop mixed use retail and housing near the Green Line station at 43rd Street.	Private sector	DPD, QCDC	N/A
<b>Long-Term (10-15 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Following more in-depth study and if warranted by ridership projections and availability of funding, introduce service on the Metra Electric District within the study area.	City of Chicago	Metra	\$20-\$30 million; requires significant further study
	If warranted, implement BRT and/or streetcar circulator service to serve other transit modes, along with existing Green Line stations.	CTA	QCDC, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, JARC	Further study required
Access and Design Strategies	Implement streetscape enhancements and plazas in conjunction with commercial developments on Cottage Grove throughout the study area and beyond, along Pershing from MLK Drive to Langley, 43rd Street from Berkeley to Prairie, and Oakwood from Mandrake Park to Lake Shore Drive.	CDOT	DPD	Approximately \$750,000 per block
	Improve the pedestrian environment with enhanced sidewalks and lighting along Vincennes from 43rd to Browning, 37th Street from MLK Drive to Cottage Grove, Pershing from Evans to Ellis, and Cottage Grove throughout the study area.	CDOT	DPD	\$375,000-\$500,000 per block
Commercial Development Strategies	Develop mixed use retail and housing on Cottage Grove between 40th and 43rd Streets.	Private sector	DPD, QCDC	N/A

### Agency and organization abbreviations:

CTA = Chicago Transit Authority, RTA=Regional Transportation Authority, DPD=City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, CDOT=Chicago Department of Transportation, JARC=Jobs Access and Reverse Commute, CHA= Chicago Housing Authority, QCDC=Quad Communities Development Corporation.



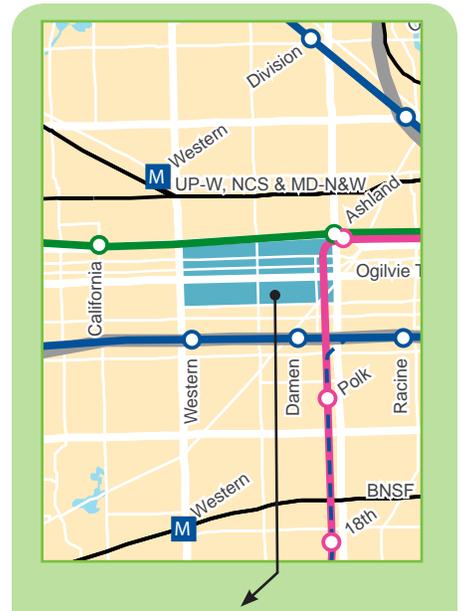


## Near West

In order to create a system which best connects the Near West Area to the City as a whole, a Vision and set of complementary Planning Principles were created and refined based on input from residents, community leaders, and other stakeholders. These Principles then informed the development of the planning strategies. Together, the Vision, Planning Principles, and Strategies will serve as a guide for “reconnecting” the Near West Area over the short (1-5 years), medium (5-10 years), and long-term (10-15 years). Principles and Strategies address Transit Service, Pedestrian Access and Urban Design, and Commercial Development.

### VISION: RECONNECTING THE NEAR WEST

*In the Near West Area, the already-well established street grid provides convenient pedestrian access to key retail nodes along its major east-west corridor; Madison Street; at Western, Damen, and Ashland Avenues. Improved bus facilities such as shelters and seating areas have been installed, along with landscaping improvements that complement new housing developments. Access to the nearby Green Line has improved, due to successful development of a new elevated station at Damen. Commercial businesses in mixed use buildings flourish along Damen to the south of the station. The Lake-Kinzie Industrial Corridor to the north of Lake Street enjoys greater access for its employees that commute to the area for work. Infill developments and commercial concentrations are locally-owned and locally-serving, welcoming residents and visitors to the area and serving their daily needs—dry cleaning, banking, grocery shopping, newsstands and restaurants. Patrons of the United Center arrive to events via the Green Line’s new Damen station and enjoy a meal or refreshments pre or post-game at the variety of restaurant choices available along the route to the arena. Clear signage directs United Center visitors to the venue from both the Blue Line to the south and the Green Line to the north. New and improved pedestrian access along Damen encourages transit use to the United Center, and facilitates pedestrian access to nearby neighborhood and recreational amenities by new and old residents alike. Some of the parking lots surrounding the United Center have become redevelopment sites that accommodate parking garages to serve the United Center, provide space for a new Pink Line station at Madison, and free existing parking lots for alternative developments.*



The [Near West Study Area] is bounded by Lake Street to the north, Ashland Avenue to the east, Monroe Street to the south, and Western Avenue to the west. The Lake-Kinzie Industrial Corridor abuts the neighborhood to the north, and a new mixed-income community, Westhaven Park, is under development. The United Center arena, at the center of the study area, represents a significant regional entertainment destination throughout the year. Surrounded by a vast expanse of surface parking, this area provides a potential catalyst for energizing retail activity to serve the remainder of the Near West study area. Though rail service passes along the north and eastern edges of the study area, much of the neighborhood is beyond the ideal walking distance to stations. The study area was designed to focus particular attention on mobility and services in an area that sits between significant activity generators (such as the United Center and the Lake-Kinzie Industrial Corridor), to ensure that all of the Near West side is connected in the future.

## TRANSIT SERVICE

Transit Improvement Principles have been developed that focus on improving access and service using the transit system currently in place, including CTA bus and rail. Additionally, early in the planning process the community expressed a desire for a new transit stop at one of two locations; an elevated Green Line station at Damen and Lake or an elevated Pink Line station at Madison. It has been concluded that potential ridership is likely sufficient to justify construction of just one new station. The community has expressed a preference for a Green Line station, which offers more advantages to the neighborhood. However, with further development in the area, and strengthened connections to the United Center, the potential for a new Madison station on the Pink Line at the United Center should be reinvestigated. The Principles below are intended to provide policy direction consistent with the *Vision: Reconnecting the Near West*.

### Transit Improvement Principles

1. Streetscape improvements and any associated elements should support transit users and transit accessibility.
2. Good vehicular access should be maintained throughout the neighborhood, but care should be taken to limit heavy traffic and bus lines to main thoroughfares in order to avoid speeding and cut through traffic to nearby residential areas.
3. Safe bicycle parking should be accommodated in several locations easily accessible to public transit such as bus shelters and train stations.
4. Access to existing transit stations and stops should be clearly marked and signed, providing a safe and pleasant pedestrian experience for riders and facilitating transfers between east-west and north-south routes.
5. Accessible and informative shelters for bus riders shall be strategically placed to encourage new and regular transit users.
6. As the neighborhood evolves and redevelopment continues, consider the long-term potential to provide a Madison Pink Line station. Such a



Elevated Green Line tracks above Lake Street

station could provide an opportunity for the United Center to strengthen its connection to the Near West area, and reduce the current amount of parking required for games and events.

## PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND URBAN DESIGN

The pedestrian accessibility and urban design principles provide an important tool for the Near West Area to encourage transit usage and neighborhood vitality. These principles provide a framework against which the City can consider and evaluate both public and private improvement proposals for the area. They bring together many recommendations, including: pedestrian access and circulation considerations, landscaping and other site enhancements, effective integration of public uses and open spaces, and suggested streetscape and public area design features.

### Pedestrian Accessibility Principles

1. The placement of commercial storefronts should consider visibility and accessibility from transit stops.
2. Other street-level improvements such as raised planters and decorative paving should work in concert with commercial storefronts, facilitating visits to neighborhood shopping venues from nearby residents and visitors alike.



3. Where parking is provided on-site at commercial uses a designated pedestrian access way from the public sidewalk should be provided.
4. Significant measures should be taken to ensure that pedestrians feel comfortable on the streets during the day or night, moving between the United Center and nearby transit stations, as well as to other neighborhood destinations.
5. As sidewalk and bicycle lane upgrades are undertaken throughout the neighborhood, prioritize access to commercial areas, community centers, schools, parks, the United Center, Malcolm X College, and other activity nodes and community anchors.



**The United Center parking lots contribute to a streetscape on Madison with little visual interest or pedestrian activity.**

### Urban Design Principles

1. Plazas, seating areas, and public art installations should be accommodated in key locations to enhance the pedestrian experience, particularly along the streets specified for retail development.
2. Design controls should be enforced, especially for access to sites that include mixed use and commercial development, to ensure compatibility with existing historic structures and new housing developments.
3. Facade and signage enhancements at existing buildings and businesses should be undertaken to preserve and enhance the character of the study area and contribute to its visual identity.
4. Gateway treatments should be provided at key entry points to the neighborhood, along Damen and Madison.
5. Way finding signage should draw visitors and residents from the surrounding Medical District and West Loop areas into the neighborhood, and attract visitors to remain in the neighborhood after or before events at the United Center.

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Land use in the Near West study area includes a variety of use and development patterns, organized on a street grid of long blocks separated by a series of major east-

west arterial streets. The former CHA housing project, the Henry Horner Homes, has been removed, and in its place a new mixed-income community, Westhaven Park, is under development. Additionally, several other privately financed residential development projects demonstrate market strength on the Near West side. Further, the United Center arena represents a significant regional entertainment destination throughout the year. Surrounded by a vast expanse of surface parking dedicated to the United Center and the adjacent Malcolm X College, this area provides a potential catalyst for energizing retail activity to serve the remainder of the Near West study area. Portions of this surface parking might be considered for consolidation into structured parking in order to free land to create a new active mixed use environment benefiting the United Center, Malcolm X College, and the community area as a whole. Commercial and service uses are notably absent within the study area, community members have continually stressed the study area's lack of easy access to retail and services. To this end, planning can help direct quality locations for new retail, rather than miss opportunities to add services to the community, as the residential infill development process moves forward.

### Commercial Development Principles

1. Both retail and residential infill development should be encouraged along the Madison and Damen corridors to both support existing businesses, and expand the retail opportunities of the study area as a whole. Particular emphasis should be placed on ensuring that affordable

retail offerings are provided that serve local resident needs.

2. Convenience shopping (dry cleaners, cafes, sundry stores) as well as larger stores should be located close to existing transit service so commuters and those without access to private autos may take advantage of neighborhood services efficiently. Access to bus stops and station entrances should be considered as sites are designed. As access to the Green Line improves with a new station at Damen, capitalize on transit-oriented development opportunities and linkages with adjacent privately-owned and City-owned redevelopment sites.
3. Public uses such as parks, schools and recreation centers should be maintained and enhanced in the study area to support both existing and new residential populations, with transit connections provided.
4. Existing structures of historic value, such as churches, institutions, and rowhouses in the area should be preserved and enhanced to blend with and complement new development under construction in the area.



Housing development in the Near West Area contributes to new commercial opportunities. Villages of West Haven Park (left), and scattered infill development (right).



Activity centers and recent public realm investments in the study area provide a strong basis upon which to build new connections. Clockwise from top left: the United Center, Mabel Manning library, existing Madison Street median.



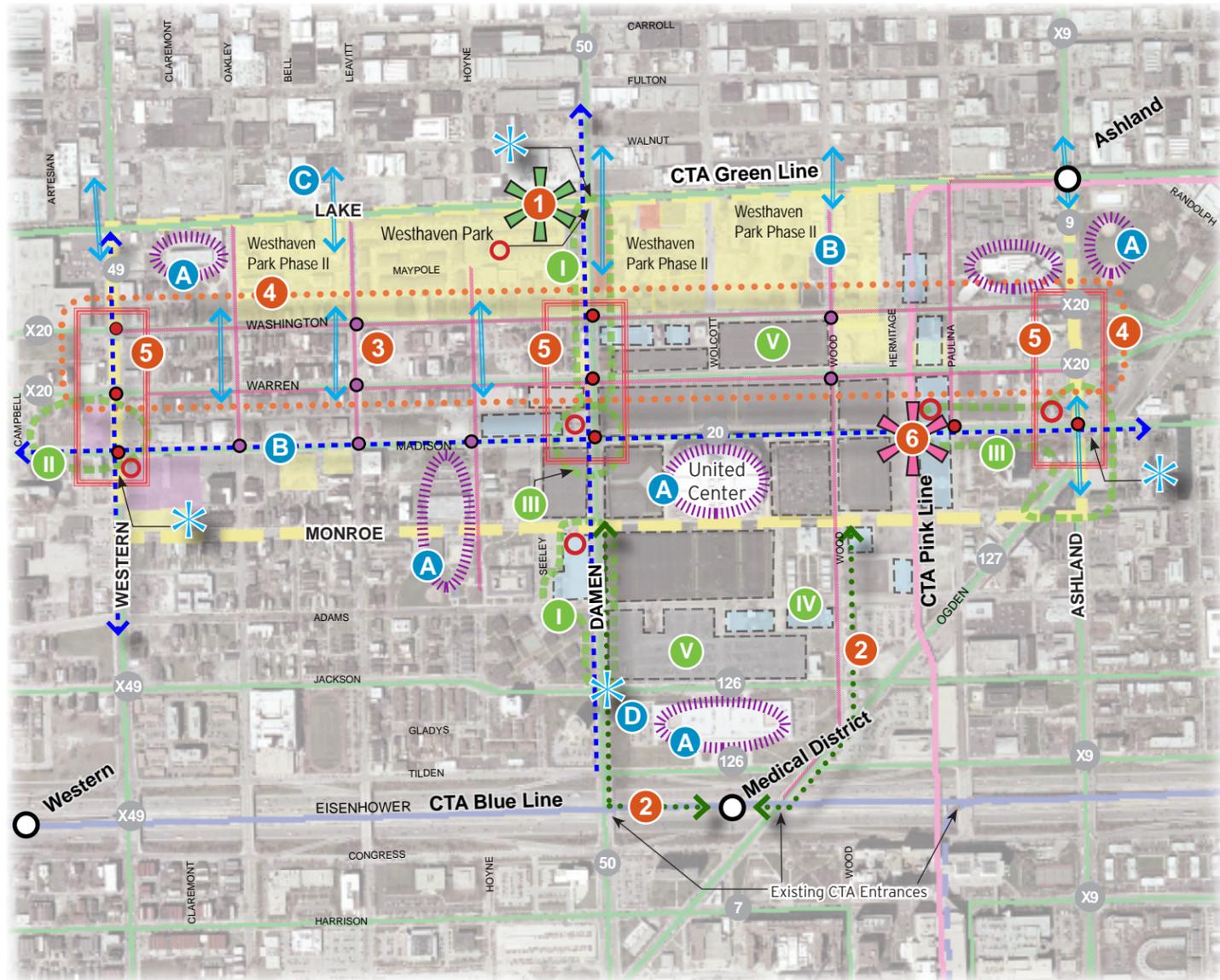
New homes for sale on Madison Street.

The Near West recommendations summarized in this report reflect input received from the IGAC, Task Forces, and the community at large. The *Near West Study Area Recommendations* map on the following page summarizes the Strategies identified through this planning process. A detailed description of each strategy is provided, followed by an Implementation discussion that includes a summary matrix of action items.





# NEAR WEST STUDY AREA RECOMMENDATIONS



### LEGEND

- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Transit Station
- Existing Transit Routes
  - CTA Green Line
  - CTA Pink Line
  - CTA Blue Line
  - CTA Bus Routes
- Bus Route Number (132)
- Planned Future Development
  - Residential
  - Mixed Use
  - Commercial

### Transit Improvement Strategies

- 1 New elevated station on Green Line
- 2 Enhance connection to Blue Line
- 3 Additional/ enhanced bus shelters
  - Neighborhood stop
  - Retail node stop
- 4 Washington/ Warren enhancement
- 5 Enhance transfer locations
- 6 New elevated station on Pink Line

### Access and Design Strategies

- A Improve access to community anchors
- B Streetscape enhancements
  - Plaza / open space opportunity
  - Retail streetscape
  - Key neighborhood route
- C Improved intersections, Pedestrian crossings
- D Gateway feature

### Key Commercial Development Strategies

- I Damen Corridor
- II Western Node
- III Damen and Ashland/ Paulina Nodes
- IV Privately owned event parking lots
- V United Center and Malcolm X College Parking Lots



## TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Near West community members advocated for improved transit service that provides accessible boardings within a feasible walking distance of major community activity nodes. The following transit improvement strategies are depicted on the *Near West Study Area Recommendations* map.

- 1** A new "L" station at Damen on the Green Line is recommended over a new station at Madison on the Pink Line. The ridership forecast suggests that a station at either of these locations would be viable (approximately 1,500 to 2,300 typical weekday boardings). The Madison area is not yet developed and there are no definite development plans in the future for the area surrounding the station. Additionally, a stop at Damen was an option preferred by the community and will better serve the Lake-Kinzie employment corridor. Consider placing the station in such a way that allows for two entrances so it can be accessed easily from both the clustering of community anchors located on Hoyne, and from the planned retail nodes located on Damen.
- 2** Improve the way finding signage and pedestrian environment to better connect the United Center with the Medical District Blue Line station at the existing Paulina, Ogden and Damen entrances. Although two CTA Blue Line stations are located within one-half mile of the southern portion of the study area, walking south to access station entrances requires traversing busy streets and a bridge over the Eisenhower Expressway, followed by a walk down a lengthy ramp. This inhospitable environment creates the perception that the stations are further away from the neighborhood than they are, and limits the potential to create synergies between commercial uses and transit.
- 3** Passenger shelters located at bus stops greatly improve the waiting environment for CTA customers. Improved shelters are especially needed along the heavily traveled #20 Madison bus route to better serve local transit riders. Commercial developments planned along existing bus routes should consider the needs of waiting bus customers in their design, by incorporating shelters or sheltering amenities into the building design.
- 4** Transit enhancements on Washington and Warren Streets are recommended to improve the environment for bus users. Washington and Warren are currently configured as a set of one-way pairs. By returning to a traditional two-way circulation pattern excessive speeding on these streets may be reduced. Further analysis is needed to determine the impact that two-way traffic would have on bus service.
- 5** Provide focused improvements at points of connection between intersecting bus routes to facilitate transfers, including wayfinding signage and use of "Bus Tracker" notification of wait times for approaching buses.
- 6** Leverage the potential of a public-private partnership to develop a Pink Line station at Madison to serve the United Center in conjunction with commercial and residential development.

## ACCESS AND DESIGN STRATEGIES

The urban design and pedestrian framework recommendations address the appropriate treatment for the public realm including enhanced connections for recreational opportunities, improved streetscapes, construction of plazas and gateways, and facade improvements. The access and design recommendations described below are shown on the accompanying map.

- A** Improve access to community anchors such as the United Center and the institutional cluster on Hoyne from the study area. Concurrently, develop a strong network of bike lanes and pedestrian routes in the area with particular respect to accessing and directing users to these activity centers. Although care has been taken to create a more pedestrian scaled street environment within the new Westhaven Park area, the street grid and pedestrian network in this area is interrupted in both directions. Additionally, the character of Lake Street, along with the lack of another continuous east-west route until Washington, contributes to the perception that the Ashland CTA station is difficult to walk to from the study area. Improved bike routing and signage is needed to facilitate an easily accessible route west from the Loop into the study area for bicyclists.

- B** Improve the streetscape environment in targeted areas slated for retail development to enhance the feeling of safety and comfort for pedestrians, and provide public plazas, wayfinding features, or open space in conjunction with retail uses and transit stops. Building on pending streetscape upgrades planned for Western and Lake, focus initial efforts along Damen. Along key neighborhood routes, focus on providing well-maintained sidewalks, parkways and street trees. Access for emergency services should be a paramount consideration.
- C** Improve pedestrian crossings at key locations, particularly along Lake, Washington and Warren Streets at major cross streets. Washington and Warren in particular are both very wide and designed to accommodate significant traffic levels despite being primarily lined with residential uses. Additionally, crossings on Ogden Avenue (both at Ashland and Madison) are dangerous and lack visibility for motorists and pedestrians alike. The need for additional traffic capacity, on-street parking and bus stops has in many areas resulted in limited street tree cover and planted parkways. Properly applied improvements and potential reexamination of the one-way pairings can work together to improve this condition.
- D** Establish gateway features welcoming visitors and residents to the neighborhood at key entry points to the neighborhood along Damen and Madison.

## KEY COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Planning for key commercial areas is recommended to ensure that site-level development strategies coordinate well with transit and pedestrian movement patterns. Existing land use in the study area consists of a mix of scattered retail space and residential uses. Plans for new retail are at the edges of the study area, leaving a large area in the middle beyond an easy walking distance of retail locations. Effort must be undertaken to direct and generate retail at key locations throughout the study area, including close to the United Center, concentrated along Madison Street and stretching north and south along Damen Avenue. As the number of households in the community continues to increase as a result of the current development program, the market for commercial uses will improve. It can be expected that in the near term, City assistance with land assembly and remediation, in addition to financial incentives, will be required to support commercial and mixed use projects in high priority locations. Listed below and shown on the accompanying map are several recommendations with respect to commercial areas in and near the study area.

- I** A commercial retail corridor should be developed along Damen. A new Green Line station would anchor the northern terminus of a retail corridor extending south to the United Center. A vibrant commercial corridor will encourage transit users to access the United Center from the Blue Line, and potentially from the Green Line in the future.
- II** The retail node at Madison and Western includes a new Walgreen's store, which will be joined by a new full-service grocery across the street. Many of the existing uses along Western have been developed in an auto-oriented pattern, favoring vehicle access over the creation of an inviting pedestrian environment that would encourage local patronage by walking or biking. Support for this important and valuable addition to the neighborhood should also include pedestrian-friendly amenities such as sensitively designed parking lots and bike racks to encourage non-driving users.
- III** Retail nodes should also be developed along Madison Street at both Damen and Ashland/Ogden/Paulina Avenues. The City should work with property owners to determine if some of the nodes should incorporate a portion of the privately owned parking lots that currently serve the United Center. The area between Oakley and Hoyne on the Madison frontage should be residential in focus.
- IV** The privately-owned parking lots surrounding the United Center provide an opportunity for new development (in conjunction with structured parking) that provides new housing, supports street level retail, serves as a neighborhood gateway, and provides a wider range of amenities for United Center visitors and local residents.
- V** Through a public-private partnership, structured parking to serve both the United Center and Malcolm X College should be developed, freeing existing parking lots for the development of retail, entertainment, and institutional uses to serve students and United Center visitors in a campus-like setting.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Successful implementation of the study recommendations will be facilitated by prioritizing and phasing the associated action items and coordinated with the appropriate agencies. The matrix below outlines each action item and its recommended phasing timeframe, the identification of lead and supporting agencies and estimated costs, where applicable.

Because the action items are subject to change over time, flexibility should remain regarding implementation priorities, costs and timing. This matrix should be reviewed and updated periodically, and utilized to measure progress on realizing a “reconnected” Near West area in the coming years. Some actions will require further study and the identification of funding.

### Implementation Actions-Near West

Community stakeholders and Expert Panel participants identified the following Implementation Actions as top priorities:

- **Transit Improvement:** Pursue a feasibility study and construction of a new Green Line station as first priority; consider opportunity to build a new Pink Line station in conjunction with United Center parking lot redevelopment.
- **Access and Design:** Implementing streetscape improvements along Damen between the Green Line and Blue Line, building on existing Madison streetscape improvements and planned Western and Lake streetscape improvements.
- **Commercial Development:** Pursuing public-private redevelopment options at the United Center and Malcolm X College to consolidate parking and develop commercial and entertainment uses.

	ACTION ITEM	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS	ESTIMATED COST (2008 \$)
<b>Short Term (1-5 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Improve bike parking at all train stations and bus stops.	CDOT	CTA, DPD, Alderman's Office	\$1,000 per bike rack
	Improve accessibility to the existing Blue Line station at the Medical District through better signage, lighting, and sidewalk construction. Use signage to better connect the United Center with the Blue Line.	CDOT	CTA, DPD, IDOT, RTA, Alderman's Office, United Center, Illinois Medical District.	\$375,000-\$500,000 per block
	Study the feasibility of a Green Line station with access points at Damen and Hoyne.	CTA	DPD	Further study required
	Install additional bus shelters to protect riders from the elements and provide travel information. Ensure new developments include adequate space for bus shelters, or incorporate sheltered waiting areas into the building design.	CTA, CDOT	DPD, City of Chicago Street Furniture Program, Alderman's Office	\$15,000-\$20,000 per shelter \$15,000-\$30,000 per plaza area
Access and Design Strategies	Continue to promote coordinated facade and signage streetscape enhancements for existing buildings, including awnings and attractive storefront displays particularly along Damen, Hoyne and Madison Streets.	Near West CDC	DPD, Illinois Medical District	N/A
	Design gateway features along Damen and Madison to mark the point of entry into the community.	DPD	CDOT, United Center	\$750,000+
	Develop effective and clear way finding signage to direct pedestrians, cyclists and drivers to the neighborhood's retail and commercial business anchors.	CDOT	Near West CDC, DPD	\$300-\$700 per location
Commercial Development Strategies	Undertake appropriate zoning amendments to encourage commercial and mixed use development in the desired pattern.	DPD	Alderman's Office, City of Chicago, ICNC, MPC, private sector	N/A
	Encourage the development of retail and services (such as dry cleaners and cafes) close to existing transit stops, with particular emphasis on providing affordable options.	Near West CDC	DPD, other commercial development organizations, private sector	N/A
	Target the area surrounding the United Center and Malcolm X College for service and entertainment-oriented retail development (i.e. retail nodes at Damen and Madison, and Madison and Paulina) in conjunction with structured parking to serve visitors and students.	Malcolm X College, United Center, private sector	Energy and Environmental Block Grant Program (EEBG), DPD, Near West CDC, and other commercial development organizations.	N/A
<b>Mid-Term (5-10 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Provide greater levels of bus shelter enhancements (such as the use of “Bus Tracker” real time information) where bus routes intersect, specifically on Madison at Western, Damen, and Ashland, and other retail node stops.	CTA, CDOT	DPD, City of Chicago Street Furniture Program, JARC	Further study required
	Construct a new elevated Green Line station along Lake Street between Damen and Hoyne.	CTA	City of Chicago, RTA, CMAP, MPC, LEED Council, ICNC, Local Alderman, Federal/State Support	\$50+ million; significant further study required

## Implementation Actions-Near West

	ACTION ITEM	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS	ESTIMATED COST (2008 \$)
Access and Design Strategies	Improve the Washington and Warren intersections between Ashland and Damen and the Ashland/Odgen/Madison triangle to better coordinate the use of the intersections by pedestrians, bikes and cars.	CDOT	DPD	\$35,000-\$60,000 per intersection
	Improve pedestrian crossings along Lake, Washington and Warren Streets with bumpouts, clear crossing areas, countdown signaling and traffic bollards. Improve pedestrian crossings along Odgen at Madison and Ashland Streets.	CDOT	DPD	\$75,000-\$1,000,000 per intersection
	Improve access to community anchors such as the United Center and the Lake-Kinzie Industrial Corridor, via existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes along Madison and Lake Streets, with clear signage and pavement markings.	CDOT	DPD	\$300-\$700 per location
Commercial Development Strategies	Focus the development of new retail along transit-accessible streets: particularly Damen and Madison.	Private sector	DPD, Near West CDC, CMAP, Partnership for New Communities, and other commercial development organizations.	N/A
	Develop retail nodes at Madison and Western, and on Madison from Ashland to Paulina.	Private sector	DPD, Near West CDC, and other commercial development organizations.	N/A
<b>Long-Term (10-15 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Construct a new elevated Pink Line station along Paulina Street at Madison, in conjunction with private development of retail and entertainment uses.	CTA	City of Chicago, RTA, CMAP, MPC, LEED Council, ICNC, Local Alderman, Federal/State Support, United Center	\$50+ million; significant further study required
Access and Design Strategies	Implement streetscape enhancements and plazas in conjunction with commercial developments along Madison Street from Ashland to Western, and Western from Lake to Monroe.	CDOT	DPD	Approximately \$750,000 per block (some areas completed)
	Improve the pedestrian environment with enhanced sidewalks and lighting along Madison from Western to Ashland, on Damen from Lake to the Eisenhower Expressway, and between Washington and Warren from Ashland to Western.	CDOT	DPD, United Center, Illinois Medical District.	\$375,000-\$500,000 per block
Commercial Development Strategies	Explore the development potential of the privately-held parking lots surrounding the United Center.	United Center, lot owners	DPD, Near West CDC, and other commercial development organizations.	N/A
	Focus residential development on Madison between Oakley and Hoyne Streets to support future retail development.	Private sector	DPD, Energy and Environmental Block Grant Program (EEBG), Near West CDC.	N/A

### Agency and organization abbreviations:

CTA = Chicago Transit Authority, DPD=City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, CDOT=Chicago Department of Transportation, RTA= Regional Transportation Authority, IDOT=Illinois Department of Transportation, JARC=Jobs Access and Reverse Commute, Near West CDC=Near West Side Community Development Corporation, ICNC= Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago, CMAP= Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, LEED Council= Local Economic and Employment Development Council, MPC= Metropolitan Planning Council.





## Near North

In order to create a system which best connects the Near North to the City as a whole, a Vision and set of complementary Planning Principles were created and refined based on input from residents, community leaders, and other stakeholders. These Principles then informed the development of the planning strategies. Together, the Vision, Planning Principles, and Strategies will serve as a guide for “reconnecting” the Near North Area over the short (1-5 years), medium (5-10 years), and long-term (10-15 years). Principles and Strategies address Transit Service, Pedestrian Access and Urban Design, and Commercial Development.

### VISION: RECONNECTING THE NEAR NORTH

*In the Near North Area, a well established street grid connects to Clybourn Avenue providing pedestrian-accessible retail across and along this area’s major diagonal axis. Improved bus facilities such as shelters and seating areas have been installed, along with landscaping improvements that complement new housing developments. New entrances and exits to the North/Clybourn Red Line station have increased accessibility for riders and access to the nearby Brown Line has been improved, due to successful development of a new elevated station at Division. Transit access in the heart of the neighborhood has been improved with expanded bus service on Larrabee and Clybourn. Commercial businesses in renovated and new buildings thrive in the areas immediately surrounding the new station and along Clybourn. These infill developments meet local retail and service needs for residents of all income levels. Dry cleaning, banking, specialty foods, newsstands and restaurants—all allow residents to gather in the center of the community. Improved pedestrian and bicycle access is provided to the already established retail areas on North Avenue and Orleans, and to existing and new community-based institutional anchors. Community facilities cluster along Oak and Larrabee, and Orleans is revitalized with mixed use development and community serving nodes in keeping with its historic pattern. The nearby recreational amenity of Seward Park serves as a key gateway entry point into the community from the east, and the expanded riverfront path allows access to and from the community.*



The [Near North Study Area] is bounded by North Avenue, Orleans Street, Chicago Avenue, and Halsted Street. The study area is currently an eclectic mix of development types that show wide disparities in resident income and highlight the rapid pace of change in the area. The ongoing transformation of the Cabrini-Green public housing complex into new mixed-income housing and the shift from manufacturing uses to new retail uses are dramatically redefining the neighborhood. Though rail service passes underground and along the eastern edge of the study area, much of the neighborhood is beyond the ideal walking distance to stations. The study area boundaries were set to focus particular attention on mobility and services in the neighborhood as the residential infill development process moves forward, to ensure that all of the Near North side is connected in the future.

## TRANSIT SERVICE

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Transit Improvement Principles have been developed that focus on improving access and service using the transit system currently in place, including CTA bus and rail. Additionally, early in the planning process the community indicated a desire for a new rail station at one of two locations; an underground Red Line station at Larrabee and Clybourn or an elevated Brown Line station at Division and Orleans. As described in the existing conditions report, the potential ridership projected for the Division and Orleans location, upon completion of all proposed developments, is sufficient to justify construction of a new station. At this time, the construction of an underground Red Line station at Larrabee and Clybourn is cost prohibitive, but as the neighborhood continues to evolve the possibility could be reexamined. The Principles below are intended to provide policy direction consistent with the *Vision: Reconnecting the Near North*.

### Transit Improvement Principles

1. Streetscape improvements and any associated elements should support transit users and transit accessibility.
2. Good vehicular access should be maintained throughout the neighborhood, but care should be taken to limit heavy traffic and bus lines to main thoroughfares in order to avoid speeding and cut through traffic to nearby residential areas.
3. A strong network of bicycle lanes and pedestrian routes should be developed with particular respect to accessing the river walk promenade and related recreational opportunities.
4. Safe bicycle parking should be accommodated in several locations easily accessible to public transit such as bus shelters and train stations.
5. Access to existing transit stations should be clearly marked and signed, providing a safe and pleasant experience for riders.
6. Accessible and informative shelters for both bus and transit riders shall be strategically placed to encourage new and regular transit users.



Adaptive re-use at 600 West Chicago Avenue lines the North Branch of the Chicago River.

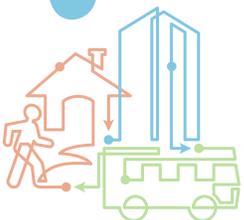
## PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND URBAN DESIGN

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The pedestrian accessibility and urban design principles provide an important tool for the Near North Area to encourage transit usage and neighborhood vitality. These principles provide a framework against which the City can consider and evaluate both public and private improvement proposals for the area. They bring together many recommendations, including: pedestrian access and circulation considerations, landscaping and other site enhancements, effective integration of public uses and open spaces, and suggested streetscape and public area design features.

### Pedestrian Accessibility Principles

1. The placement of commercial storefronts should consider visibility and accessibility from transit stops.
2. Other street-level improvements such as raised planters and decorative paving should work in concert with commercial storefronts, facilitating visits to the neighborhood shopping venues from nearby residents and tourists alike.
3. Where parking is provided on-site at commercial uses, a designated pedestrian access way from the public sidewalk should be provided.
4. As sidewalk upgrades are undertaken throughout the



neighborhood, prioritize access to commercial areas, schools, parks and other activity centers.

5. Pedestrian safety should be of paramount concern; ensure that there is adequate crossing time and protective traffic islands to shelter pedestrians, particularly at the Division and Clybourn intersection.

## Urban Design Principles

1. Plazas, seating areas, and public art installations should be accommodated in key locations to enhance the pedestrian experience, particularly along the streets specified for retail development.
2. Design controls should be enforced, especially for access to sites that include mixed use and commercial development to ensure compatibility with existing historic structures and new housing developments.
3. Facade and signage enhancements at existing buildings and businesses should be undertaken to preserve and enhance the character of the study area and contribute to its visual identity.
4. Gateway treatments should be provided at the key entry points to the neighborhood on Division Street to enhance and elevate the community's identity.
5. Way finding signage should draw visitors and residents alike from the proposed Brown Line train station at Division into the neighborhood.

## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Land use in the Near North Area is currently an eclectic mix of development types, organized on a street grid of long blocks separated by a series of major east-west arterial streets. The former CHA Cabrini-Green public housing complex is in the process of being removed, and in its place a new mixed-income community, the Parkside at Old Town, is under development. Additionally, several other privately financed residential and mixed use development projects demonstrate market strength on the Near North side. Though many new commercial and service uses have recently come online within the study area, community members have continually stressed the study area's lack of easy access to affordable retail and services. To this end,



**The vacant lots at the intersection of Clybourn and Larrabee contribute to a streetscape on Clybourn with little visual interest or pedestrian amenities.**

planning can help direct quality locations for new affordable retail, rather than miss opportunities to add services to the community, as the residential infill development process continues to move forward.

## Commercial Development Principles

1. Both retail and residential infill development should be encouraged along the Clybourn corridor to both support existing business that are present, and expand the economic vitality of the study area as a whole.
2. Empower and develop a local (or non-profit) community based retail leadership team, to ensure future commercial development remains affordable and accessible to all Near North residents.
3. Convenience shopping (dry cleaners, cafes, sundry stores) should be located close to existing transit routes and stations so commuters and those without access to private autos may take advantage of neighborhood services without exacerbating traffic congestion. Special efforts should be made to attract retail and services that provide affordable products and services.
4. Public uses such as parks, schools and recreation centers (such as the recently refurbished Seward Park facility) should be maintained and enhanced in the vicinity of the study area to support both existing and new residential populations.

5. Existing structures of historic value should be preserved and enhanced, to blend with and complement new development under construction in the area.



Housing development in the Near North Area will contribute to new commercial opportunities. The Parkside at Old Town (above left), and Old Town Village (above right).



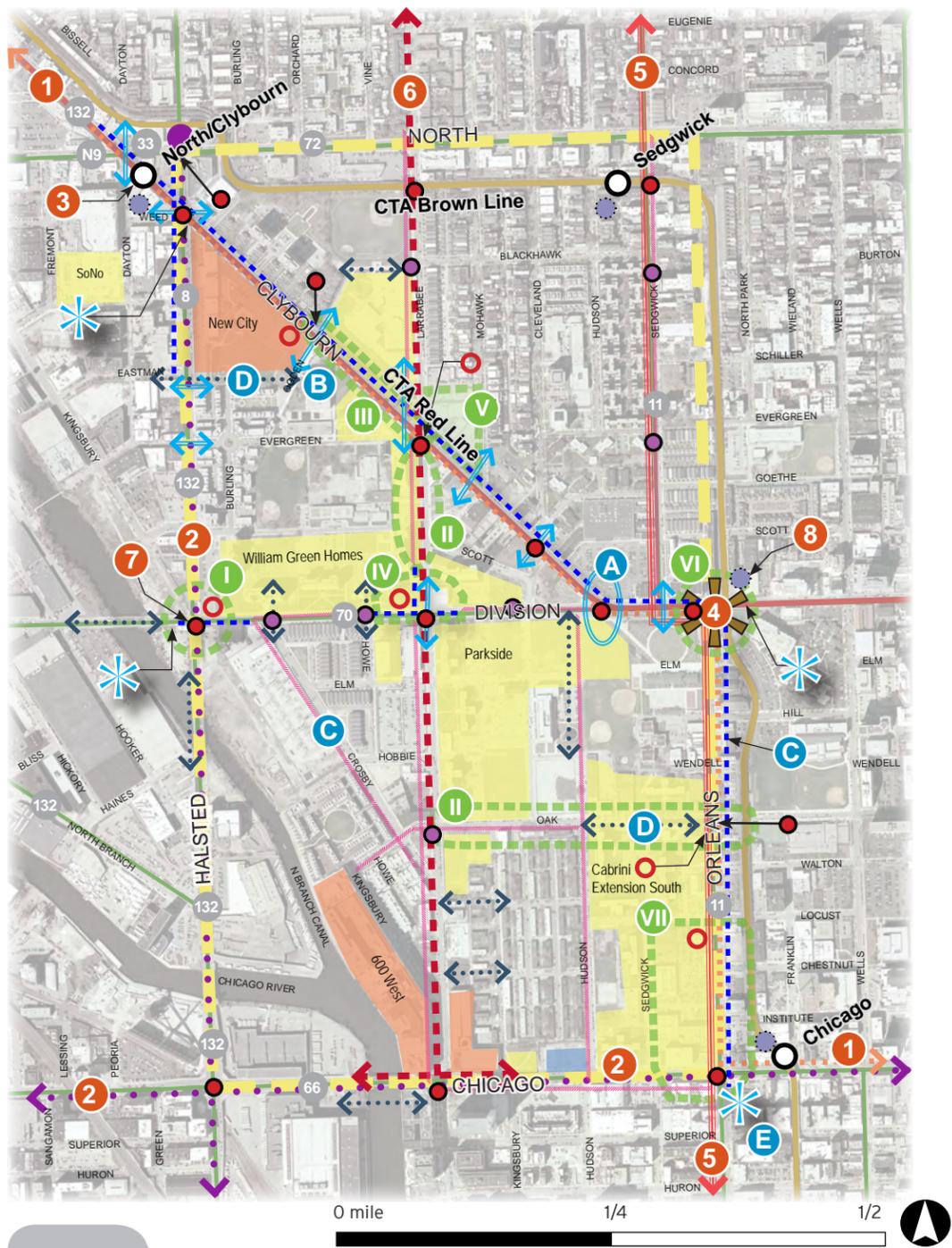
Recent residential construction in the study area includes: new homes on Kingsbury Street (top left), Burling and Scott (top right), and Marina Village (below).



Increased access to community assets in the Near North Area can be achieved with improved streetscapes and way finding signage. Clockwise from top left: the Winfield Moody Health Center, the Chicago River Walk, and Seward Park.

The Near North recommendations summarized in this report reflect input received from the IGAC, Task Forces, and the community at large. The *Near North Study Area Recommendations* map on the following page summarizes the Strategies identified through this planning process. A detailed description of each strategy is provided, followed by an Implementation discussion that includes a summary matrix of action items.





**LEGEND**

- Study Area Boundary
- Existing Transit Station
- Existing Train Routes
  - CTA Red Line
  - CTA Brown Line
- Existing Bus Routes
  - CTA Bus Routes
  - Bus Route Number (132)
- Planned Future Development
  - Residential
  - Mixed Use
  - Public / Institutional

**Transit Improvement Strategies**

- 1 Reinstated Clybourn bus service
- 2 BRT opportunities
- 3 Improved entrances to the North/Clybourn station
- 4 New elevated station on Brown Line
- 5 Extended service hours on #11
- 6 New Larrabee bus service
- 7 Additional / enhanced bus shelters
- 8 Improved / installed bike racks and way finding signage

**Access and Design Strategies**

- A Clybourn/Division intersection enhancements
- B Improved intersections, Pedestrian crossings
- C Streetscape enhancements
- D Complete the pedestrian and bicycle network
- E Gateway feature

**Key Commercial Development Strategies**

- I Division/Halsted Node
- II Community Facility Nodes
- III Clybourn /Larrabee/ Ogden Node
- IV Division/Larrabee Node
- V White Way Sign Site
- VI Division/Orleans Node
- VII Orleans Corridor

**TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

Near North community members advocated for improved transit service that provides accessible boarding within a feasible walking distance of retail and service destinations. The following transit improvement strategies are depicted on the Near North Study Area Recommendations map.

- 1 Reestablish the Clybourn Bus. Prior to 1998, CTA operated weekday bus service on Clybourn Avenue between Belmont Station on the Blue Line and Union Station. Development along Clybourn northwest of the study area has prompted the CTA to pursue JARC funding to implement a new Clybourn bus route between the Chicago Red Line Station and the Logan Square Blue Line Station. The new route will operate on a trial basis through the study area on Chicago, Orleans, Division and Clybourn.
- 2 Explore Chicago Avenue and Halsted BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) opportunities. The announcement of proposed BRT alignments on Chicago Avenue and Halsted Street bordering the study area suggests opportunities for cooperation between developers, the City of Chicago and CTA. BRT will be a high-quality, high-capacity bus service that travels in exclusive lanes at peak hours.
- 3 The North and Clybourn Red Line Station can be difficult for transit patrons to identify from the street, and can be difficult for riders to approach particularly from North Avenue. The station, in order to be more accessible to transit patrons, would benefit greatly from improved signage, additional entrances/exits and underground pedestrian tunnel(s) for improved access, and improved at-grade pedestrian crossings. The New City YMCA site redevelopment affords a unique opportunity to implement a grade-separated access point.
- 4 Pursue a new elevated Brown Line train station at Division and Orleans. Early in the planning process the community indicated a desire for a new rail station at one of two locations; an underground Red Line station at Larrabee and Clybourn or an elevated Brown Line station at Division and Orleans. As described in the existing conditions report, the potential ridership projected for this location, upon completion of all proposed developments, is sufficient to justify construction of a new station (approximately 3,800 to 4,300 weekday boardings). The estimated cost of building an elevated Brown Line station is significantly less expensive than construction of a Red Line subway station due to the increased difficulty of building in the subway (see Appendix). Additionally, community meeting attendees favored the Division location for a new transit station.
- 5 Improve the #11 Lincoln/Sedgwick weekend schedule. The study area is generally well served by CTA bus routes. However, north-south bus access on weekends could be improved by operating the weekend routing of the #11 Lincoln/Sedgwick on weekends. Currently, weekend service on #11 operates between Howard/McCormick on the north and North/Clark as the southern terminus. As development continues to emerge south of North Avenue, CTA should consider expanding #11 weekend service into the study area.
- 6 Consider a Larrabee Street bus service; examine existing bus routes that could be combined with a Larrabee routing such as the return of the Clybourn bus (see next mobility improvement alternative). In the future, as development along Larrabee grows, a route change moving service from Orleans to Larrabee may be appropriate.
- 7 Passenger shelters located at bus stops greatly improve the waiting environment for CTA customers. Shelters shield waiting passengers from the elements and provide route and system information. Responsibility for the provision of shelters rests with the City of Chicago through the City's Street Furniture Program. The criteria for locating shelters include the presence of bus service, the availability of sufficient space on the sidewalk, and the number of boarding passengers. New commercial developments should provide space for a shelter or incorporate sheltering amenities in the building design. This type of design element should be incorporated into new developments that are planned along Clybourn and Larrabee in anticipation of new bus service on these streets.
- 8 Install improved and extra bike racks at the Chicago, Sedgwick and North/Clybourn stations. Accessibility between points of interest in the study area and existing CTA rail stations can also be improved with way finding signage.

**ACCESS AND DESIGN STRATEGIES**

The urban design and pedestrian framework recommendations address the appropriate treatment for the public realm including enhanced connections for recreational opportunities, improved streetscapes, construction of plazas and gateways, and facade improvements. The access and design recommendations described below are shown on the accompanying map.

- A Install intersection enhancements at the Division/Clybourn intersection to improve pedestrian comfort and safety. Median refuge areas, countdown signals, lane reduction, restricted turning movements and other strategies should be considered.
- B Improve pedestrian crossings at key locations, particularly at future transit stops on Division, Clybourn and Chicago at major cross streets. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring adequate visibility and safe traffic patterns at Clybourn intersections. At the Division and Clybourn intersection adequate crossing time for pedestrians and sheltering traffic islands should be installed. Where feasible, intersections should be reconfigured as redevelopment occurs.
- C Improve the streetscape environment in targeted areas slated for retail development to enhance the feeling of safety and comfort for pedestrians, and provide public plazas, way finding features, or open spaces in conjunction with retail uses and transit stops. At key neighborhood routes, focus on providing well-maintained sidewalks, parkways and street trees. Access for emergency services should be a paramount consideration.
- D Improve bike and pedestrian access throughout the area by completing the street grid where feasible. Develop a strong network of bike lanes and pedestrian routes with particular respect to accessing and directing users to the riverfront pathway and across river bridges. Pedestrian circulation should be improved leading to the Cabrini Row houses east from Larrabee Street and west from Orleans. Additionally, new mixed use housing developments in the area such as New City and Parkside, and community amenities like Seward Park will benefit from improved access. In areas subject to future redevelopment, a complete and connected street grid should be provided, pending more detailed traffic studies.
- E Establish design elements that welcome visitors and residents to the neighborhood at key entry points along Division, Halsted and Chicago.

**KEY COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

Planning for key commercial areas is recommended to ensure that site-level development strategies coordinate well with transit and pedestrian movement patterns. Existing land use in the study area is substantially dominated by planned developments. Effort must be made to direct retail at key locations throughout the study area in a concentrated manner, including along the area's spine— the angled Clybourn corridor. As the number of households in the community continues to increase, the market for commercial uses will improve. It can be expected that in the near term, City assistance with land assembly and remediation, in addition to financial incentives, will be required to support commercial and mixed use projects in high priority locations. Listed below and shown on the accompanying map are several recommendations with respect to commercial areas.

- I Pending the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on Halsted, retail at the intersection of Division and Halsted should be established to invigorate the streetscape and provide comfortable and entertaining waiting areas for bus passengers.
- II Community facilities should be clustered along Larrabee and Oak as the William Green Homes and Cabrini Extension South are redeveloped.
- III Locating a commercial node on Clybourn from Ogden to Larrabee would place retail in the center of the community and make it easy to access from many parts of the study area. A node in this location provides an opportunity for sidewalk and landscaping improvements, way finding signage, and the accommodation of visible street level retail in the heart of the study area.
- IV Establish a commercial node at the intersection of Division and Larrabee to invigorate the streetscape along Division and provide convenient services to both the residents located in surrounding blocks and bus passengers along Division.
- V Accommodate commercial uses in the redevelopment of the White Way Sign Site at Clybourn and Mohawk streets. New development here can anchor street level retail along the Clybourn corridor in conjunction with residential development.
- VI Mixed use development should be encouraged immediately surrounding the proposed Division Brown line station; this area is a prime location for a thriving retail node, which has been the subject of (and benefited greatly from) previous planning efforts.
- VII Mixed use, service and retail development on Orleans should be expanded along the corridor improving this gateway area and supporting the existing stores and services on Orleans.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Successful implementation of the study recommendations will be facilitated by prioritizing and phasing the associated action items and coordinated with the appropriate agencies. The matrix below outlines each action item and its recommended phasing timeframe, the identification of lead and supporting agencies and estimated costs, where applicable.

Because the action items are subject to change over time, flexibility should remain regarding implementation priorities, costs and timing. This matrix should be reviewed and updated periodically, and utilized to measure progress on realizing a “reconnected” Near North area in the coming years. Some actions will require further study and the identification of funding.

Community Stakeholders and Expert Panel participants identified the following Implementation Actions as top priorities:

- **Transit Improvement:** Improve access to the North/Clybourn Red Line station via additional entrance/exit sites, particularly on the SE corner of the North/Clybourn/Halsted intersection, and pursue new Brown Line station at Division/Orleans.
- **Access and Design:** Enhance pedestrian safety at Clybourn crossings, in particular at Division and Clybourn intersection; establish street grid connections within current and future redevelopment areas.
- **Commercial Development:** Pursue commercial nodes at Halsted/Division (in conjunction with BRT service) and establish community-serving commercial and institutional uses along Larrabee and Oak.

### Implementation Actions- Near North

	ACTION ITEM	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS	ESTIMATED COST (2008 \$)
<b>Short Term (1-5 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Establish a bus route on Clybourn, traveling from the Logan Square Blue Line station to the Red Line station at State Street.	CTA	LEED Council	\$3,229,000 (implementation pending)
	Implement Chicago Avenue and Halsted Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).	CTA	DPD, CHA, private sector partners	Further study underway
	Improve pedestrian access to existing North/Clybourn Red Line station via underground pedways and additional entrances/exits.	CTA	DPD, private sector partners	Further study required
	Expand the Lincoln/Sedgwick #11 weekend bus service.	CTA	DPD, JARC	\$305,250 per year
	Improve secure bike parking at train stations and bus stops.	CDOT	CTA, DPD, Alderman's Office	\$1,000 per bike rack
	Install additional bus shelters to protect riders from the elements and provide travel information. Ensure new developments include adequate space for bus shelters, or incorporate sheltered waiting areas into the building design.	CTA, CDOT	DPD, City of Chicago Street Furniture Program, Alderman's Office	\$15,000-\$20,000 per shelter \$15,000-\$30,000 per plaza area
Access and Design Strategies	Continue to promote facade and signage enhancements for existing buildings, including awnings and attractive storefront displays.	Community-based retail team	DPD	N/A
	Establish design elements along Division, Halsted and Chicago to mark community entry points.	DPD	CDOT	\$750,000+
	Develop effective and clear way finding signage to direct pedestrians, cyclists and drivers to the neighborhood's retail and commercial businesses.	CDOT	Community-based retail team, DPD, Alderman's Office	\$300-\$700 per location
Commercial Development Strategies	Encourage the development of stores, such as dry cleaners and cafes, close to existing transit stops.	Private sector	DPD, Old Town Merchants and Residents Association, Community-based retail team	N/A
	Undertake appropriate zoning amendments and explore shared parking strategies to encourage commercial and mixed use development in the desired pattern.	DPD	Alderman's Office	N/A
	Develop a retail activity node at the BRT stop at Division and Halsted.	Private sector	DPD, Community-based retail team, CTA	N/A
	Target the Clybourn corridor for service and retail-oriented development, attracting affordable products and services.	Private sector	DPD, Community-based retail team	N/A
<b>Mid-Term (5-10 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Construct a new elevated Brown Line station along Orleans Street at Division.	CTA	City of Chicago	\$50+ million; significant further study required
	Provide greater levels of bus shelter enhancements (such as the use of “Bus Tracker” real time information) where bus routes intersect, specifically on Halsted at Division, Clybourn, Chicago, and North. Other locations for enhancements are specified on the <i>Near North Study Area Recommendations</i> map.	CTA, CDOT	DPD, City of Chicago Street Furniture Program	Further study required

## Implementation Actions-Near North

	ACTION ITEM	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS	ESTIMATED COST (2008 \$)
Access and Design Strategies	Improve the Halsted intersections of Evergreen and Eastman, the Larrabee intersections south of Division, and pedestrian crossings at the Halsted/North/Clybourn triangle to better coordinate the use of the intersection by pedestrians, bikes and cars. Other locations for improved pedestrian crossings are specified on the <i>Near North Study Area Recommendations</i> map.	CDOT	DPD	\$35,000-\$60,000 per intersection
	Improve the pedestrian environment at key intersections along Division and Clybourn with bumpouts, clear crossing areas, pedestrian refuge islands, countdown signaling and traffic bollards.	CDOT	DPD	\$75,000-\$1,000,000 per intersection
	Improve access to the neighborhood, via new streets or right-of-ways and on existing river bridges at Halsted, Chicago and Division by improving pedestrian and bicycle routes with clear signage and pavement markings.	CDOT	DPD, CHA	\$300-\$700 per location
Commercial Development Strategies	Focus the development of new retail along transit-accessible streets: Clybourn, Orleans and Division.	Private sector	DPD, Old Town Merchants and Residents Association, Community-based retail team	N/A
	Develop a retail activity node surrounding the new Brown Line station site at Division.	Private sector	DPD, Community-based retail team, CTA	N/A
<b>Long-Term (10-15 Years)</b>				
Transit Improvement Strategies	Explore the feasibility of operating new bus service on Larrabee Street.	CTA	DPD, Alderman's Office	Further study required
	If warranted, implement a shuttle or feeder route service to the existing Orleans/Sedgwick bus service from Larrabee Street, or consider combining the Larrabee and Orleans routes.	CTA	Alderman's Office	Further study required
Access and Design Strategies	Implement key neighborhood and retail streetscape enhancements and plazas in conjunction with new developments along Division Street from Halsted to Orleans, Chicago from Larrabee to Orleans, North at Clybourn and Orleans from Chicago to Division.	CDOT	DPD	Approximately \$750,000 per block
	Improve the pedestrian environment with enhanced sidewalks and lighting along Division from Halsted to Larrabee, on Orleans from Oak to Locust, and on Clybourn at Larrabee.	CDOT	DPD	\$375,000-\$500,000 per block
Commercial Development Strategies	Construct new neighborhood-serving recreational facilities where feasible.	City of Chicago, Park District, Chicago Public Schools (CPS)	NNDC, DPD	N/A
	Monitor redevelopment so that new development complements existing, historic structures.	City of Chicago	Alderman's Office	N/A

### Agency and organization abbreviations:

CTA = Chicago Transit Authority, DPD=City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, CDOT=Chicago Department of Transportation, CHA= Chicago Housing Authority, NNDC=Near North Development Corporation, LEED Council= Local Economic and Employment Development Council, JARC=Jobs Access and Reverse Commute.

