



Section 3: **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The Near South Community Plan sets forth an agreed-upon "road map" for improvement and development during the next ten to fifteen years. It is the product of considerable effort on the part City of Chicago elected officials and staff; other public agency representatives; and several community-based organizations including the Greater South Loop Association, Historic Printers' Row Neighbors, and the Near South Planning Board.

The Plan is the culmination of a detailed planning process. Adoption of the Plan is one of the first steps, not the last. Without continuing actions to implement Plan recommendations, efforts to this point will have little lasting impact.

This section presents the recommended Implementation Action Agenda, which is intended to help the City organize and initiate the Plan implementation process.

Action Responsibilities:

In order for the Near South Community Plan to be successful, it must be based on strong and consistent partnerships between the City and other public agencies, local business, community groups and organizations, and the private sector.

Key participants in the implementation process should include the following:

City of Chicago. The City must assume the leadership role in implementing the Plan. In addition to carrying out many of the public improvement projects called for in the Plan, the City will administer a variety of financial and technical assistance programs available to local businesses, property owners and developers. City staff, elected officials, and community groups should monitor the implementation of the Plan and identify updates as conditions in the area change. Land use control laws, such as the Zoning Ordinance, should be modified as needed to carry out the recommendations of the Near South Community Plan.

Other Public Agencies. A variety of taxing districts and other public agencies will need to undertake many of the recommended improvement activities, and participate as a partner in others. Examples include Metra, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, and the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority. Schools, churches, and other institutions should continue to maintain their own properties while adhering to the overall guidelines and objectives of the Plan.

Business and Resident Groups and Individuals. A number of neighborhood groups exist in the area and are actively involved in initiatives, including this Plan, that affect its future. The Greater South Loop Association, Near South Planning Board, New South Association, and Historic Printers' Row Neighbors, among others, should assist the City in monitoring the Plan's implementation. Residents, business persons, employees, and other interested individuals should also provide input as to the Plan's effectiveness.

Private Property Owners, Builders, and Developers. This group has the primary responsibility for enhancing the overall quality and character of the Near South Community's privately held land. Private property owners, builders, and developers should be encouraged to rehabilitate existing buildings as needed and undertake new construction that is consistent with the Plan and enhances the overall quality and character of the Near South Community.

Implementation (continued)

Zoning

The City is currently undertaking a comprehensive revision of its Zoning Ordinance, which was enacted in 1957. Redrafting the Zoning Ordinance affects all property owners and residents of the City by changing the character of development on private land; therefore, it should involve significant community participation. The intended outcome of this process is a set of procedures and standards that are user-friendly and more helpful in guiding future improvement and development consistent with contemporary conditions and needs.

Revisions to the Zoning Ordinance will take place in a series of "modules," each covering a subject or geographic area. The Downtown module covers most of the Near South Community. Other modules include residential, industrial, parks/open space, and business and commercial.

Zoning Issues:

The following sections outline zoning-related issues and opportunities that should be addressed as the City begins implementation of this Plan.

- **Zoning should help ensure that the intensity of new development is consistent with existing and proposed neighborhood scale and character.**

The intensity of development allowed under existing zoning can exceed the scale of development recommended in the Plan. The FARs currently permitted in the Near South range from 3 to 12. The FARs of existing buildings vary widely throughout the Study Area. Also, the FARs of some existing buildings in Planned Developments fall well below the permitted FARs of zoning districts.

- **Zoning should preclude the establishment of incompatible land uses.** The Plan recommends a diverse mix of residential, retail, service, office, entertainment, public, and recreational uses. However, portions of the area are currently zoned for manufacturing, which is not consistent with recent development trends or the land use and character recommendations of the Plan. Furthermore, some uses currently allowed in the commercial zoning districts (such as poultry slaughtering, house trailer sales, and materials processing) would be incompatible with recent development and recommended land uses. Zoning districts should be established for the area that better reflect the desired land use mix.

- **Zoning should foster the design and character recommendations established in the Plan.**

The Plan includes a number of design-related recommendations that focus on the appearance and character of sites, buildings, street-level development, and public areas. For example, the Plan recommends that buildings in many Development Districts be located very close to the front property line in order to maintain the "street wall" effect. The Plan also promotes upper story building setbacks in several Development Districts, especially where future buildings are likely to be taller than the predominant existing character of the area. While these design-related characteristics are not addressed to any significant degree in current zoning regulations, they could be advanced effectively through new zoning controls.

- **Zoning should allow for some flexibility to permit creative development solutions.** The use of Planned Developments has been popular in the Near South area due to a number of special conditions (such as rail lines and small building sites) affecting development. Planned Developments can encourage building and development patterns and amenities that provide mutual benefits to the developer and community. Planned Developments must still be in compliance with underlying zoning.

* Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The FAR of a site is the ratio of building floor area to parcel size. For example, in simplified terms, an FAR of 7.0 applied to a 10,000 square foot lot would permit a 70,000 square foot building. Precisely how the 70,000 square feet is configured will be guided by other "bulk regulations" such as building height, setback, and yard requirements.

- **Zoning should help conserve historic buildings and areas that are not protected by Landmark status.** Historic buildings and areas are important distinguishing characteristics of the Near South Community. The use of a) planned development procedures, b) building height and bulk controls, and c) design guidelines can help protect important historic resources.

Zoning Recommendations:

This section outlines zoning actions and recommendations to address the issues outlined above and to assist in the implementation of the *Near South Community Plan*.

No single zoning district in the current Chicago Zoning Ordinance can effectively address the full range of planning and design recommendations set forth in the Plan. The ongoing rewrite of the City's Zoning Ordinance will provide opportunities to craft and apply new zoning districts that better reflect the desired character of the area.

The Plan for the Near South Community points to the need for more precise guidance in several categories, including: a) building scale and mass, b) development density, c) pedestrian scale and street character, and d) land use mix. The Zoning Ordinance modifications will address these four categories. The new Zoning Ordinance, including the planned development technique, should serve as an important tool for Plan implementation.

- **Building Scale and Mass.** The Plan establishes a variety of guidelines intended to encourage new construction that promotes continued growth and development, while respecting the character that exists in the various Development Districts.

The Development District guidelines in Section 2 of this Plan provide recommendations pertaining to building scale and mass. In addition, building height guidelines illustrated in Figures 17 and 18 are intended to provide guidelines for new development and assist in the review of proposed Planned Developments, and to protect and enhance existing neighborhood character, especially where historic and architecturally significant structures exist. Current building height limitations that apply to designated Chicago Landmark Districts are included in Figures 17 and 18.

The Plan encourages upper story setbacks in several Development Districts in order to respect the character of historic buildings, reduce building mass, and enhance the pedestrian scale in these areas. Zoning regulations and review of proposed Planned Developments should promote upper story setbacks as recommended in the Plan.

- **Development Density.** The Near South Community, especially Area 2, will continue to experience new construction and increasing development density. This is due to both the growing popularity of the area and its rising land values. While this Plan does not suggest new FAR limitations – those will be considered as part of the Zoning Ordinance revision process – it does describe the intended scale and character of new development.

The density that is ultimately allowed in each Zoning District in the Near South Community will likely be controlled through various methods, including building mass regulations; parking and access requirements; and proximity to Landmark Districts, transit facilities, and open spaces.

- **Pedestrian Scale and Street Character.** The Plan includes many recommendations for enhancing the pedestrian scale and character of the Near South Community. These recommendations encompass private properties and the public rights-of-way, and focus on street-level improvements. Street furniture, way-finding signs, landscaping, curb bump-outs at intersections for pedestrian safety, and the provision of articulated facades and building entries along streets are among the recommendations that may be addressed in part by the Zoning Ordinance.

- **Land Use Mix.** The Near South Community should continue to grow as a diverse, mixed-use urban neighborhood with a strong residential orientation. The mix of uses currently permitted in several business and commercial zoning districts is not consistent with this recommended neighborhood character.

A variety of housing types, at a range of prices, should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diverse population. Zoning bonuses should be considered to promote types of housing and other land uses and amenities that are recommended in this Plan.

Implementation (continued)

The desired mix of uses for each Development District is described in the Development District Guidelines within this Plan. For much of the Near South Community, retail, service, and pedestrian-oriented uses on ground floors are complemented and supported by residential and office uses on upper floors.

The mix of permitted uses (authorized by right) within the Near South Community should be amended to be more compatible with a high-density, mixed-use urban neighborhood. Retail and service uses that cater to the needs of area residents should be emphasized.

- **Special Consideration for Landmark Districts.** The presence of Landmark Districts within the Near South Community also has implications for zoning. The City's Commission on Chicago Landmarks monitors and approves changes to designated Landmark buildings and Landmark Districts to ensure compatibility with existing historic and architectural character.

The Printing House Row Chicago Landmark District maintains development generally consistent with the underlying allowable FAR. Despite existing conditions, the need to control building scale may become an issue. The City's Commission on Chicago Landmarks should continue to review development proposals for conformance to both Landmark District guidelines and the Plan for the Near South Community.

The City has also established the Historic Michigan Boulevard Chicago Landmark District within Area 1. The Commission on Chicago Landmarks has developed guidelines for building scale and massing. Landmark District designation can be a more effective way of implementing building heights than a zoning reclassification. Regardless of approach, the unique contextual needs and characteristics of the Historic Michigan Boulevard Chicago Landmark District, as recommended in the Plan, should be maintained and enhanced.

In Area 2, the Prairie Avenue Chicago Landmark District, home to a small but significant group of late nineteenth century structures, is a historic area in need of preservation. The number of potential infill lots, which are adjacent to but not within the Landmark District, points to the need for guidelines and/or regulations to encourage sensitive, contextual development. The City has developed guidelines for building massing and scale for the Prairie Avenue area which, along with the Development District Guidelines contained in this Plan, will be incorporated into the new Zoning Ordinance and used to review the compatibility of proposed new construction.

Also located in Area 2, as described in the Historic Properties section of this Plan, is the historic Motor Row Chicago Landmark District. The Development District Guidelines in this Plan provide recommendations for appropriate new construction and rehabilitation in the Motor Row area. Given the level of consistency among buildings in this area - particularly with respect to building height, lack of setbacks, fenestration, building materials, and architectural features - promotion of the Landmark District guidelines and Development District Guidelines will be crucial to the future character of the area. The variety of uses to which this outstanding group of structures could be put to in the future points to the need for close monitoring of development proposals in the south part of Area 2.



Throughout the Near South Planning Area, the goal is to have new buildings at a variety of heights, the indicated numbers are intended to set upper limits. These numbers will assist the Department of Planning and Development and community groups in their review of future developments. *Table 1: Development District Guidelines* includes additional suggestions related to building mass and scale.

Where a well established building pattern exists, new buildings should generally reflect the predominant scale, massing, and heights of the surrounding area. Upper-story setbacks may be used in many cases as a tool to achieve appropriate scale and massing. Unless otherwise noted, new buildings should be a minimum of 2 to 3 stories tall.

1. Franklin Point District. Building heights should "step down" from north to south. Buildings along Wells Street should be compatible with existing development along the east side of Wells Street.
(northern half): 440 feet.
(southern half): 280 feet.

2. Wells Street District. New buildings should generally reflect the heights of existing buildings along the east side of Wells Street.
200 feet.

3. Clark Street District. New buildings should generally reflect the heights of the existing buildings to remain along and near Clark Street.
200 feet.

Note: Designated Chicago Landmarks and buildings located within Chicago Landmark Districts are subject to review by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks.

4. River City District. Building heights in the northern portion should be consistent with existing River City development. Taller buildings are acceptable along the Roosevelt Road frontage.

Northern portion: 280 feet.
Roosevelt Road frontage: 400 feet.

5. LaSalle Park District. The tallest buildings should be along Roosevelt Road and the Metra tracks with shorter buildings along Clark and Wells Streets as permitted in the adopted planned development.

Roosevelt Road frontage: 400 feet.
Along the Metra tracks: 350 feet.
Elsewhere: 280 feet.

6. Dearborn Park I District. No further development is anticipated within this District.

7. Printing House Row District. New buildings should reflect and complement the heights of existing historic buildings and comply with Chicago Landmark District guidelines. Buildings should be a minimum of 90 feet tall.
180 feet.

8. South State Street District. Higher intensity development should be permitted, particularly along the east side of the street.
350 feet.

9. Wabash Avenue District. Higher intensity development could be permitted along both sides of the corridor, provided it does not detract from the image and character of the Michigan Avenue Development District.
350 feet.

10. Michigan Avenue District. New buildings should reflect the heights of existing buildings and comply with Commission on Chicago Landmarks guidelines, indicated below. Somewhat taller buildings might be considered between 11th Street and Roosevelt Road to enhance this gateway location.

Minimum: 55 feet.
Maximum for street wall: 280 feet.
Maximum (with upper floor setback above 280 feet): 425 feet.

Congress Parkway Overlay. New buildings should reflect the strong street wall established by the existing buildings. To this end, new buildings should be a minimum of 100' tall (although the lack of depth of some lots may make this unfeasible), and have a significant cornice/setback at 175 feet to 200 feet. Total building heights should conform with the overlapping District guidelines.

Roosevelt Road Overlay. New buildings are intended to create a street wall effect; buildings should be built to the sidewalk with tower elements visually integrated with the base.
Heights may reach 400 feet.

Figure 18 • Proposed Building Heights, Area 2

Throughout the Near South Planning Area, the goal is to have new buildings at a variety of heights, the indicated numbers are intended to set upper limits. These numbers will assist the Department of Planning and Development and community groups in their review of future developments. *Table 2: Development District Guidelines* provides additional suggestions related to building mass and scale.

Where a well established building pattern exists, new buildings should generally reflect existing heights. Upper-story setbacks may be used as a tool in many cases to achieve appropriate scale and massing. New buildings should be a minimum of 2 to 3 stories tall.

1. River Corridor District. The tallest buildings should be along Roosevelt Road; tall buildings are also appropriate along the St. Charles Air Line and the Metra tracks/Clark Street. For the rest of the site, the majority of buildings should be under 100' with a few taller structures.

Roosevelt Road: 400 feet.

Along St. Charles/Metra: 350 feet.

Elsewhere in the District: predominantly less than 100 feet.

2. Dearborn Park 2 District. No further development is anticipated west of State Street. East of State Street heights should be around 300 feet or less.

East of State Street: 300 feet.

West of State & North of 15th Street: 60 feet.

West of State Street & South of 15th Street: 120 feet.

3. Dearborn South District. The low-rise character west of State Street should be maintained. East of State Street, taller buildings would allow for vertical separation between the "L" tracks and upper stories of buildings.

West of State Street: 60 feet.

East of State Street: 180 feet.

4. South State Street District. Recommended building heights are generally reflective of existing structures. East of State Street, taller heights allow for vertical separation between upper floors and the "L". Taller buildings along Cermak Road "frame" this important arterial.

West of State, North of Cermak Road: 100 feet.

East of State Street: 120 feet.

West of State Street, South of Cermak Road: 100 feet.

Along Cermak Road: 280 feet.

5. Wabash-Michigan District. Buildings should be tallest near Roosevelt Road and gradually step down to the south.

North of the St. Charles Air Line: 300 feet.

South of the St. Charles Air Line: 200 feet.

Along Roosevelt Road: 400 feet.

6. Motor Row District. Tallest buildings are recommended to create a street wall along the north side of Cermak Road. Along the "L", mid-rise heights allow for vertical separation between the tracks and buildings' upper stories. The lowest heights respect the District's existing character.

Along Cermak Road: 280 feet.

Within Landmark District: 60 feet.

Elsewhere in the District: 100 feet.

7. Central Station District. High rise buildings should frame the south end of Grant Park along Roosevelt Road, tall buildings are also appropriate along the St. Charles Air Line and the Metra Tracks/Lake Shore Drive. For the rest of the site, the majority of buildings should be under 200', consistent with the adopted planned development.

Roosevelt Road - 400 feet

Along Metra/LSD/St. Charles - 300 feet

Elsewhere in the District - 200 feet



8. Prairie Avenue District. Building heights in this area should reflect the low-rise character of the Prairie Avenue Chicago Landmark District, and gradually increase with distance from the Landmark District's center.

Along Prairie, Cullerton, and 18th: 60 feet.

Elsewhere in the District: 225 feet.

9. McCormick Place District. Mid-rise development is appropriate for the McCormick Place area, except near the Prairie Avenue Chicago Landmark District.

Northwest, Southwest, and Southeast corners of Cermak and Prairie: 280 feet.

Elsewhere in the District: 100 feet.

Roosevelt Road Overlay. New buildings are intended to create a street wall effect, buildings should be built to the sidewalk with tower elements visually integrated with the base.

Heights may reach 400 feet.

Cermak Road Overlay. New buildings are intended to create a street wall effect; buildings should be built to the sidewalk with tower elements visually integrated with the base. Heights may reach 280 feet. Particular attention should be paid to new buildings at Cermak and Michigan to ensure that the massing of these structures is sympathetic to the buildings in the Motor Row Landmark District

Note: Designated Chicago Landmarks and buildings located within Chicago Landmark Districts are subject to review by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks.

Funding Sources and Implementation Mechanisms

Many of the projects and actions recommended in the Near South Community Plan can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or can be funded through existing municipal programs. Other projects, such as land assembly, site preparation, new building construction, infrastructure improvements, and urban design enhancements - especially when undertaken within a targeted area and within a relatively short time frame - may require special technical and/or financial assistance.

Tax Increment Financing:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a mechanism used to carry out revitalization and redevelopment activities on a local basis. TIF allows a community to capture the increase in local property taxes that results from a redevelopment project in order to pay for the public costs involved.

While TIF districts have most typically been used in commercial and industrial areas of communities throughout Illinois, TIF is increasingly being undertaken for mixed-use areas as well. To carry out a TIF project, the municipality designates an area for revitalization and redevelopment, and establishes specific boundaries for the project area.

The base equalized assessed valuation (EAV) of all properties within the area is determined as of the date of TIF District adoption. Thereafter, all relevant property taxing districts continue to collect property taxes based on levies against the base EAV for a time period not to exceed 23 years.

The increased real estate tax revenues generated by all new private development and redevelopment projects, and all appreciation in the value of existing properties that result in higher property values, are used to pay for public improvements within the TIF District.

TIF funds can be used for:

- Acquisition, clearance, and other land assembly and site preparation activities.
- Rehabilitation of older, deteriorating, or obsolescent buildings.
- Incentives to attract or retain private development.
- Marketing of development sites.
- Area-wide infrastructure improvements such as road repairs and utility upgrades.
- Streetscape and other pedestrian system improvements.
- Construction of park and open space facilities.
- Correction or mitigation of environmental problems.
- Job training, workforce readiness, and related educational programs.
- Professional fees related to the project, such as legal, planning, and architectural services.
- Transit improvements.
- Affordable and mixed-income housing improvements and developments.

The City has already established several Tax Increment Financing districts within the Near South Community. These TIF Districts cover most of the land area of the Near South; establishment of additional districts is not likely. The focus will be on implementation of the existing TIF District plans.

The Near South TIF District. The Near South TIF District was adopted as "Central Station" in 1990 and was expanded in 1994 to include the area east of State Street to Michigan Avenue (except the Chicago Hilton and Towers Hotel, the 2 East 8th Street Apartments, and the 1130 South Michigan building), and the frontage along the west side of State Street between Congress and Harrison. This TIF District is scheduled for expiration in 2013.

The Near South TIF District is an improved area with a variety of buildings, many of which date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. TIF funding within this area has been used in a number of beneficial ways, including provision of financial assistance toward the cost of rehabilitation and reuse of the vacant Roosevelt Hotel and major streetscape improvements along Michigan Avenue.

Within the Near South TIF District, funding should be used for the following types of infrastructure and community facilities improvements:

- Roadway and intersection improvements.
- Streetscape improvements along primary pedestrian routes.
- Construction of gateway design features.
- Pedestrian crosswalk improvements.
- Public transit facility improvements.
- Parks and open space development and improvements.

Implementation (continued)

TIF funding should also be used for other projects including:

- Assistance with the rehabilitation of older, deteriorating, and obsolete buildings, especially those with architectural or historical interest.
- Building acquisition and property assembly assistance for development projects that further goals of the Near South TIF District.

The River South TIF District. The River South Tax Increment Financing Project Area was adopted in 1997, and includes most of the area west of the Historic Printing House Row District and the Dearborn Park development area from Van Buren to Cullerton. This TIF District is scheduled to expire in 2020.

Much of the River South TIF District, including large sections south of Polk Street and west of Clark Street, is vacant and lacking basic infrastructure. TIF funding should be considered to assist in the cost of providing the following:

- Street grid extension, such as Wells Street extension from Polk Street to Roosevelt Road.
- Intersection improvements.
- Pedestrian and/or vehicular bridges or underpasses.
- Continuous greenway and pedestrian promenade along the River.
- Neighborhood parks and plazas.
- Public transit facility improvements.

In addition to the TIF Districts listed above, which cover parts of both Near South Areas (1 and 2), three additional TIF Districts are located within Area 2.

24th/Michigan TIF District. A TIF District established in 1999 covers the geographic area south and west of the Michigan/Cermak TIF District, encompassing much of Motor Row, Hilliard Homes, and Ickes Homes. Its primary implementation emphasis will be on public improvements, site assembly, and administrative and financing costs. Public improvements may be made in the following areas:

- Provision for streets, public rights-of-way, and public transit facilities.
- Provision of utilities necessary to serve the redevelopment.
- Public landscaping, street lighting, and general beautification.
- Public parking facilities.
- Public schools.
- Public parks and open space.
- Assistance with the rehabilitation of older, deteriorating, and obsolete buildings, especially those with architectural or historical interest.
- Building acquisition and property assembly assistance for development projects that further goals of the District.

The Calumet/Cermak Road TIF District. The Calumet/Cermak Road TIF District was formed in 1998, covering three blocks of Area 2 north of Cermak Road and west of the Metra Electric railroad tracks. This District was formed to facilitate the redevelopment of several historic industrial buildings that were part of the R.R. Donnelley & Sons printing company. Redevelopment activities funded or encouraged through the Calumet/Cermak TIF District include:

- Property assembly, site preparation, and capital expenditures.

- Business relocation costs.
- Improvements to public rights-of-way and parks and open space.

The Michigan/Cermak TIF District.

The Michigan/Cermak TIF District covers the Cermak Road Corridor (and several properties to the north and south thereof) from approximately Calumet Avenue on the east to State Street on the west. This TIF District is intended to help pay for:

- Incentives to encourage renovation and redevelopment projects.
- Utility improvements.
- Construction and improvements of infrastructure.
- Property acquisition and assembly, demolition and site preparation, and relocation expenses.

Other Potential Resources and Programs:

The City's Department of Planning and Development administers a number of other economic development programs that may also apply to initiatives described in this Plan. Programs and resources that may be useful in the Near South include:

- The Property Tax Incentive Program, providing financial assistance to attract new industry, stimulate expansion of existing industry, and increase employment opportunities.
- The Class L property tax reduction, available to owners of individual Chicago Landmark buildings. Owners can have their taxes reduced for a 12-year period when they invest at least half the building's assessed value in an approved rehabilitation project.

Implementation (continued)

- The Bank Participation Loan Program, which provides low-interest business loans through banks for eligible business expansions.
- The Micro Loan Program, which provides business loans up to \$20,000 to existing small businesses in Chicago for projects that create jobs.
- The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Float Loan Program, which provides City financing up to 100 percent of project costs for acquisition of fixed assets, renovation, and new construction for eligible companies that create jobs.
- The Business Infrastructure Assistance Program (BIA), which helps pay for infrastructure and utility improvements and landscaping in certain commercial, retail, and mixed-use industrial areas of the City.
- TIF Works, providing funding for small and medium sized businesses for workforce development and training activities. TIF Works is available within the Near South, River South, Michigan/Cermak, and Calumet/Cermak TIF Districts.
- CitySpace, a cooperative program of the City of Chicago, Chicago Park District, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, and Chicago Public Schools. The program is intended to expand open space and park land by converting underutilized property into community gardens, parks, and other forms of open space.
- Neighborspace, a program supporting the creation and preservation of community-managed open spaces such as community gardens, neighborhood parks, greenways,

river edge easements, wetlands and natural areas, plazas, and industrial area landscapes.

- The Special Service Area Program (SSA), a mechanism for contiguous areas to fund expanded services and programs through a localized property tax levy.
- City-wide Technical Assistance Support Groups, providing funding to not-for-profit organizations that offer support services to groups seeking to create and retain jobs in local businesses. These support services may include legal, training, financial, and administrative support and strategic planning.
- Technical Assistance to Business Groups, a program to develop the capacity of neighborhood-based business and economic development groups to retain and create jobs, increase the quality and quantity of goods and services to low/moderate income residents, and promote the health of local economic areas.
- Retail Chicago, an outreach program to link retailers, brokers, developers, and neighborhoods underserved by commercial businesses. Retail Chicago offers planning, informational, and project management services to facilitate retail development.
- "Business Express" services, which provide direct assistance to business people on City operations, capital improvements, resources, and service-related questions.

Priority Projects and Actions

The following projects and actions recommended in the **Near South Community Plan** should receive priority consideration for funding and implementation.

The City of Chicago:

The Department of Planning and Development and the Department of Transportation will assume lead responsibility for the further study and coordination with other agencies and property owners leading to implementation of the following projects, described in greater detail in the Framework Plan section.

Areas 1 and 2:

- Extend Wells Street south from Polk Street to 18th Street or beyond.
- Design and construct additional new public plazas at key locations along primary pedestrian routes.
- Assess the need for and feasibility of additional bridges at Taylor and Polk Streets over the Chicago River.
- Provide for Riverwalk construction as development occurs. Work with developers to encourage amenities along the Riverwalk.
- Provide special sidewalk and streetscape treatments and amenities along primary pedestrian routes (such as Michigan Avenue and the Riverwalk), especially those linking focal points and recreational features.
- Promote the preservation and improvement of buildings with historical or architectural interest.
- Design and construct attractive and distinctive "gateways" at key intersections.
- Provide safe, convenient crosswalks throughout Areas 1 and 2.
- Reconstruct the Roosevelt Road station along the Metra Electric line.
- Consider a future stop along the Lakefront Busway at Roosevelt Road to serve the Museum Campus.

Implementation (continued)

Areas 1 and 2:

- Require that parking lots be well lighted and edged with landscaping and/or decorative fencing.
- Improve signage for both motorists and pedestrians to direct them to museums and cultural facilities, transit stops, parking, entertainment venues, and other places of interest.
- Require that accessory parking lots be located behind buildings wherever possible.
- Provide pedestrian connections between Roosevelt Road and the Wells Street extension to allow for transfer between bus lines.
- Improve the Clark Street and Roosevelt Road intersection to provide stronger pedestrian links, help separate turning movements from through traffic, and improve access to adjacent development sites.

Area 1:

- Design and construct traffic operational improvements along Congress Parkway to improve traffic and pedestrian safety and convenience.
- Improve crosswalks and traffic operations in the vicinity of Harrison/State and Polk/8th Streets.
- Assess the impact of closing selected east-west streets within the Historic Printing House Row District to obtain additional open space.

- Develop an "intermodal transit center" at LaSalle/Congress, including a CTA bus turnaround.
- Provide convenient pedestrian connections from the Metra LaSalle Street Station to LaSalle/Congress subway station and the LaSalle/Van Buren "L" station.
 - Improve existing Metra underpasses to enhance pedestrian comfort and convenience, particularly at Polk and Harrison Streets (in cooperation with Metra). Provide new pedestrian and/or vehicular underpasses as opportunities arise.
 - Construct the new "Campus Park" at the northwest corner of State Street and Harrison Street.
 - Improve pedestrian connections along east-west streets.
 - Provide new east-west bicycle corridors between Polk Street and Roosevelt Road.
 - Improve Wabash Avenue and State Street as pedestrian links to the Loop.
 - Provide one or more new north-south pedestrian routes west of the Metra tracks.
 - Consider changes to the one-way streets within the Printers Row District.
 - Improve the Wells/Polk intersection.
 - Extend Polk Street west to the Chicago River, and improve Polk as an important east-west route through Area 1.

Area 2:

- Consider the removal of freight rail uses and subsequent re-use of the St. Charles Air Line as a recreational trail and pedestrian link.
- Extend new east-west streets in the River Corridor District between Roosevelt Road and 18th Street.
- Improve and upgrade 18th Street through Area 2.
- Provide or promote gateway treatments at the following entryways to Area 2: Roosevelt Road and Columbus Drive; Clark and Cermak; Roosevelt and Clark, State, and Michigan; the Stevenson Expressway and Michigan, State, and Martin Luther King Drive; Cermak and the Metra Rock Island Line viaduct; and 18th Street and the Rock Island viaduct.
- Improve pedestrian connections across Cermak Road.
- Require that new buildings along commercial corridors in Area 2 be built out to the property line.