

NEAR WEST SIDE

Projected Development & Traffic Increases

As noted earlier, the Near West Side can expect a significant amount of development in the near future. If developed, each opportunity site could generate significant additional traffic. Development of all of the sites together, could generate as much as 20,000 new trips per day to the street system.

As new development projects are proposed, traffic studies will be required by DPD to show how existing traffic and parking will be impacted and to identify improvements that might be necessary to accommodate traffic flow and/or access.

The amount of traffic growth, and potential parking impact will be heaviest in the Halsted corridor where several large under-developed sites exist. Several sites already have proposed developments or strong potential for new development in the near future.

Future traffic growth projected overall for the Near West Side and Greektown should be incorporated into the Halsted Street improvement project planned by CDOT.

As traffic grows in the future, it may be difficult and/or undesirable to widen streets within the Near West Side to address potential traffic congestion. Implementation of coordinated traffic signal systems can significantly increase the traffic carrying capacity of roadways without the cost and disruption typically associated with street widening. As development occurs, the coordination of traffic signals would be a desirable and cost effective method of dealing with traffic increases.

It appears that the Near West Side's grid street system has excess capacity to handle some future development. The improvements discussed earlier need to be further studied regarding engineering feasibility. They conceptually have the potential to improve current and future traffic movement throughout the area.

Ramp Study

CDOT is currently reviewing the potential to close some of the Kennedy Expressway ramps located in Downtown between the Eisenhower Expressway and Lake Street. The ramp closures are being studied to reduce safety problems related to weaving of traffic caused by the tight spacing of these ramps. Each of these ramps plays an important role in providing expressway access to the Near West Side.

The ramp closure study is still underway, and improvement plans have not been finalized. CDOT has been meeting with local groups to review local access to/from the expressways and impacts to local traffic operations from potential ramp closures.

Transit Access:

Bus Service

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) operates several major bus routes through the area.

Route #8: Halsted Street

(Average Weekday Riders: 17,890)

This route runs along Halsted from Addison to 119th Street. This is an important route within the CTA system, ranked in the top 15 in the number of riders, and very active with the number of riders transferring for trips to the west. This route experiences delays at times due to traffic congestion on Halsted.

Route #9: Ashland Avenue

(Average Weekday Riders: 25,930)

This route runs along Ashland from Irving Park to 95th Street. This route carries very heavy ridership and is ranked second in the CTA system. This route also experiences delays due to traffic congestion along Ashland.

Route #20: Madison Street

(Average Daily Riders: 12,270)

This route runs along Madison from Downtown to Austin Avenue. This route is ranked in the top ten for ridership volumes in the CTA system, including a significant number of reverse commuters going to destinations west of downtown. This route is also affected by traffic congestion along Madison.

Route #19: Stadium Express

This route operates during Chicago Bulls and Chicago Blackhawks games, running along Michigan from Chicago to Madison, and west on Madison to the United Center. The service only carries about 200 riders on average to the games, but serves 600 to 700 after the game. This is reflective of fans that take cabs to games and find it easier to take the bus back after the game.

Route #126: Jackson/Van Buren

This route runs along Jackson from Austin Avenue to Downtown. Within the Near West Side, it follows the one-way pairing of Jackson eastbound and Van Buren westbound. This route tends to be more reliable and less impacted by street congestion, which may be due to its use of one-way streets. This is an important route serving Whitney Young High School and the Police Academy.

Overall, CTA bus service within the Near West Side is generally good. The service is delayed due to traffic congestion along most of the routes. The improvements identified in the Area Land Use Plan to address traffic congestion will help improve the performance and reliability of the bus service.

CTA Bus Stops

When bus stops are provided at street intersections they typically require 110 to 115 feet of curb space to pick up and drop off passengers. This disrupts traffic flow and eliminates on-street parking spaces. The relatively short distance between blocks in the Near West Side provides an opportunity to consolidate stops to every other block. This could increase the amount of on-street parking, or provide for a separate right turn lane at some intersections. Reducing the number of bus stops will also improve traffic flow, and reduce travel times for the bus routes. The CTA should be consulted as new development or redevelopment projects are proposed to coordinate transit stop consolidation with development plans. Consideration should be given to a comprehensive consolidation of all bus stops in the Near West Side as a test or model for other Chicago communities.

Shuttle Bus Service

The feasibility of a special trolley shuttle bus to serve Greektown and the restaurant row along Randolph should be considered. Such a service, which would be similar to the Lakefront Museum Campus shuttle and Downtown tourist buses, may improve traffic movement and parking access in these busy locations. If a shuttle ran through Downtown, it may be possible to draw weekday commuters to Greektown and/or the Randolph restaurant row for lunch. A feasibility study would need to identify an appropriate service area and potential market for riders. The estimated ridership and potential benefits to traffic and parking operations would need to be balanced against the cost of a shuttle service.

NEAR WEST SIDE

Rapid Transit Service

The CTA also provides rapid transit service through the Near West Side via the elevated Green Line along Lake and the Blue Line in the Eisenhower Expressway median. Along the Green Line, one station is currently located within the Near West Side at Ashland. The one-half mile walking service area for this station includes the northwest corner of the Near West Side.

A Green Line station at Halsted was removed several years ago due to low ridership. When in operation, this station served the northeast corner of the Near West Side. This corner of the Near West Side is not currently within a one-half mile walking distance of a CTA rail station.



CTA Green Line Station: Ashland/Lake

Along the Blue Line, there are two stations currently serving the Near West Side. The UIC-Halsted Station is located in the Eisenhower Expressway median at Halsted. This station currently provides full access at Halsted and Peoria, and provides exit only access to Morgan. The one-half mile walking service area for this station includes the southeast quarter of the Near West Side, including Greektown. The other station is located in the Expressway median at Racine, providing full access at Racine and a limited hours entrance at Loomis. The one-half mile walking service area for this station includes the south central portion of the Near West Side.

Green Line

Ashland Station: Average Daily Riders: 1,090
Annual Riders: 221,697

Blue Line

UIC-Halsted Station: Average Daily Riders: 4,150
Annual Riders: 1,487,497

Racine/Loomis Station: Average Daily Riders: 1,740
Annual Riders: 542,757

While overall transit service appears to be good, the northeast corner of the Near West Side is not located within convenient walking distance of a CTA station.

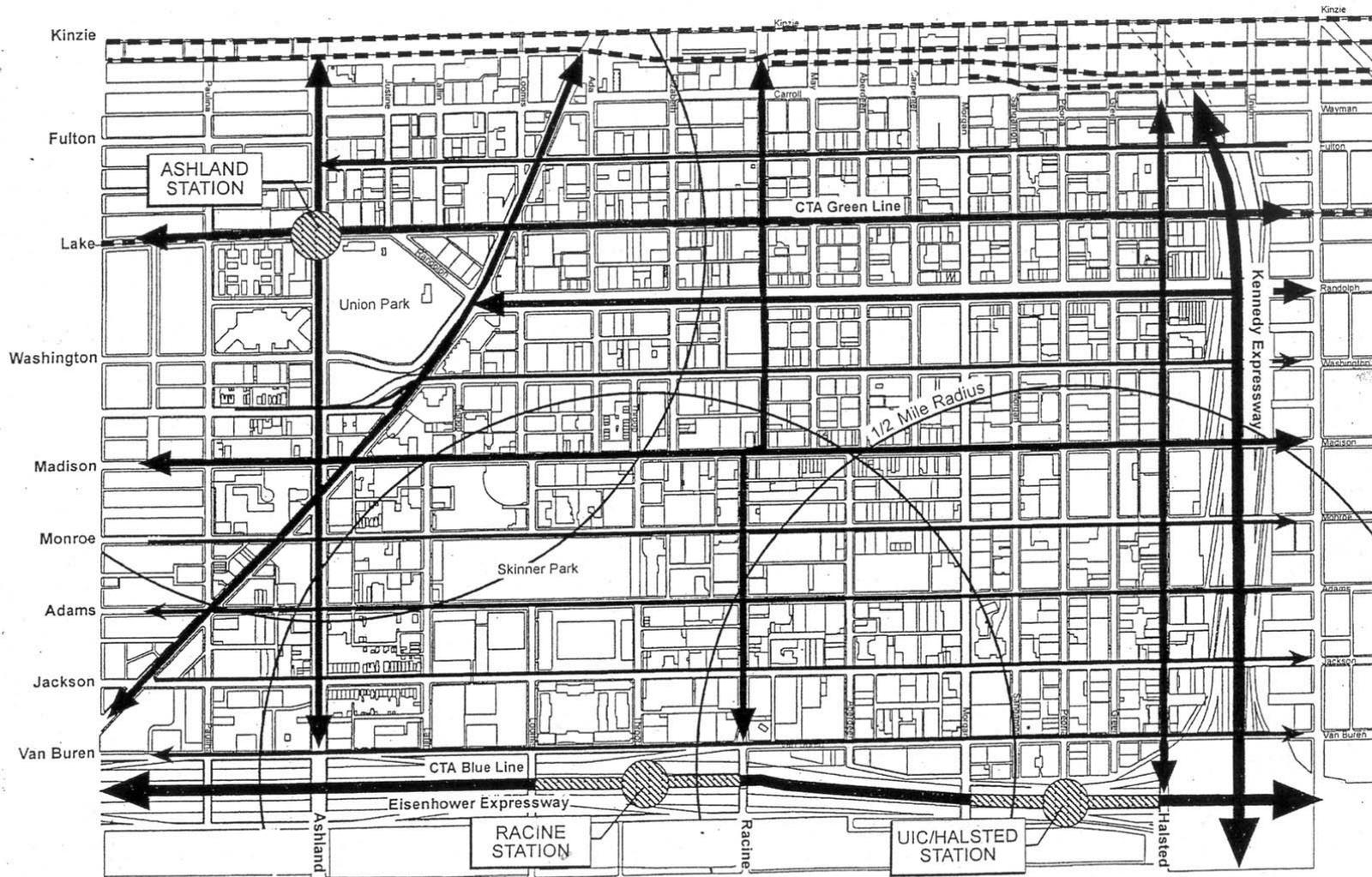
- Creating a new Green Line station between Halsted and Morgan would help address this issue.

The cost and length of time needed to implement a new station is considerable. A new station will be considered as a long-term development option depending on ridership growth in the area.

The newly reopened Blue Line Milwaukee/Grand station provides convenient walking access for the Near West Side as it is located outside of the area. Reopening this station has provided service to a growing area just to the north, and a small portion of the Near West Side.

Operations along the Green Line should continue to be monitored along with the area's continued residential and business growth to determine if a new Green Line station is needed in the future.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



NEAR WEST SIDE

Parking:

The mix of land uses located within the Near West Side generates a variety of parking needs. The characteristics of parking demand vary for different land uses: residential, schools, commercial, restaurants, office, industrial, and institutional. The types of parking demand vary based upon the time of day, length of stay, and tolerance to walking distances.

The existing supply of parking within the Near West Side is extensive, for both on-street and off-street parking spaces. Based on Lakota and Metro's field surveys there are approximately 10,250 off-street parking spaces located in various public and private parking lots within the area. There are also an additional 4,700 on-street parking spaces, for an approximate total of 15,000 parking spaces.

The parking shortages currently experienced within the Near West Side are generally not due to a lack of parking spaces. Rather, many of the parking problems occurring in the area are due to the location of parking spaces, time of day restrictions on some spaces, or restricted use of private off-street parking spaces. Therefore, an extensive program to develop new parking lots and/or parking garages does not appear to be needed. Provision of new parking facilities in a few selected locations and better utilization of the existing parking supply through improved parking meters and shared lots, is more appropriate.

The areas within the Near West Side facing the biggest parking challenges include Greektown, the Randolph and Fulton Markets, and the Institutional Cluster, which includes Whitney Young High School, Skinner Elementary School, Jackson Boulevard Historic District, and the Chicago Police Academy.

Greektown

The current parking congestion in Greektown could increase due to projected development of several large surface parking lots located along the east side of Halsted. It is critical that future development projects in Greektown, and throughout the Near West Side provide sufficient on-site parking to serve the demand generated by the new developments, as well as some local demand currently served by the surface lots.

Shared off-site parking options need to be identified and implemented to replace the loss of surface lots as development occurs. The four story parking garage (400 spaces) proposed for the southeast corner of Adams and Halsted will address the loss of large parking lots along Halsted at Madison to development and accommodate some local parking needs for proposed commercial space and residential units.

Many visitors to Greektown look for parking on the street or in surface lots, and if parking is unavailable, use the free valet service offered by several restaurants. Significant on-street parking is available during peak restaurant activity within a few blocks west of Halsted. There are also several large parking lots west of Halsted that could possibly be used for shared parking for Greektown.

AREA ANALYSIS

Streetscape improvements, including lighting and signage along the streets west of Halsted, may encourage the use of both on-street and off-street parking on these western blocks.

Another way to improve parking in Greektown is to encourage the use of public transportation. The existing UIC-Halsted station on the Blue Line is located at the southern end of Greektown, and is only a few blocks walk from the furthest restaurant.

Greektown is well served by this station, but many visitors are not aware of its location. Renaming the UIC-Halsted station to the UIC-Greektown station and promoting it to visitors could increase the use of public transit. This would be particularly helpful to tourists, who may not be as familiar with the area.

Institutional Cluster:

Parking conditions in the Skinner Park area are affected by several factors. Most of the streets surrounding Whitney Young and Skinner schools do not allow parking during school hours (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM). These school hour parking restrictions are in place for safety reasons.

The schools, along with the Chicago Police Academy, generate significant parking demands on this sub-area. In addition, due to the narrow width of Jackson through the Historic District, the street does not provide on-street parking or visitor parking for residences.

Several possible changes may improve the parking situation in the institutional cluster:

- Chicago Public Schools is currently considering a new school campus for Skinner School. Such a campus may be expanded to the east to accommodate more parking room for employees and visitors.
- Local residents and visitors can park during off-hours in the High School parking lot located at the southeast corner of Laflin and Jackson. However, many of residents do not know of or use the lot. There is not adequate signage to inform visitors of the parking option and location. New signs could encourage more use.

- The large parking lot on Monroe north of Skinner Park serves the adjacent Chicago 911 Emergency Response Center. There may be capacity in this lot to accommodate employees and trainees of the Chicago Police Academy located on the south side of the Park.
- It may be possible to eliminate on-street parking restrictions along several street segments to increase parking supply during the day:
 - South side of Monroe between Loomis and Throop along Skinner Park. This segment is not adjacent to either school.
 - East side of Laflin between Jackson and Van Buren adjacent to Whitney Young's parking lot.
 - West and east sides of Loomis between Jackson and Van Buren adjacent to the High School's green space.
 - North side of Van Buren between Laflin and Loomis at the south end of the High School Campus, which is not located near its main entrances.
 - Eliminate parking restrictions on Adams from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

NEAR WEST SIDE

Randolph and Fulton Markets

As mentioned previously, there are a wide variety of land uses within the Near West Side's street corridors and blocks. Many of its streets are required to serve different traffic needs, including some travel needs generated outside of the area. For this reason, many of the corridors experience a variety of operational problems due to conflicting needs.

The Randolph and Fulton Markets especially experience operational problems. The mix of residential uses, produce/meat businesses, other businesses, and restaurants generates varying traffic, parking, and loading needs that often overburden the local street and sidewalk system. The different demands generated in these sub-areas include:

- delivery truck access, staging, and loading;
- vehicular circulation on narrow, congested streets;
- employee parking needs;
- business customer parking needs; and
- resident and visitor parking needs.

Although traffic volumes appear to be below the carrying capacity of the streets in the Markets, operations often break down due to conflicts between each of the needs listed above. There are a number of regulations that attempt to balance all of the demands, such as posted parking areas, no parking zones, loading zones, one-way street operations,

and signs requesting that sidewalks be kept free for pedestrian use. However, they are often misinterpreted or ignored. Enforcement of these regulations appears to be pursued only in extreme cases, and parking, loading, and traffic circulation have become serious problems.

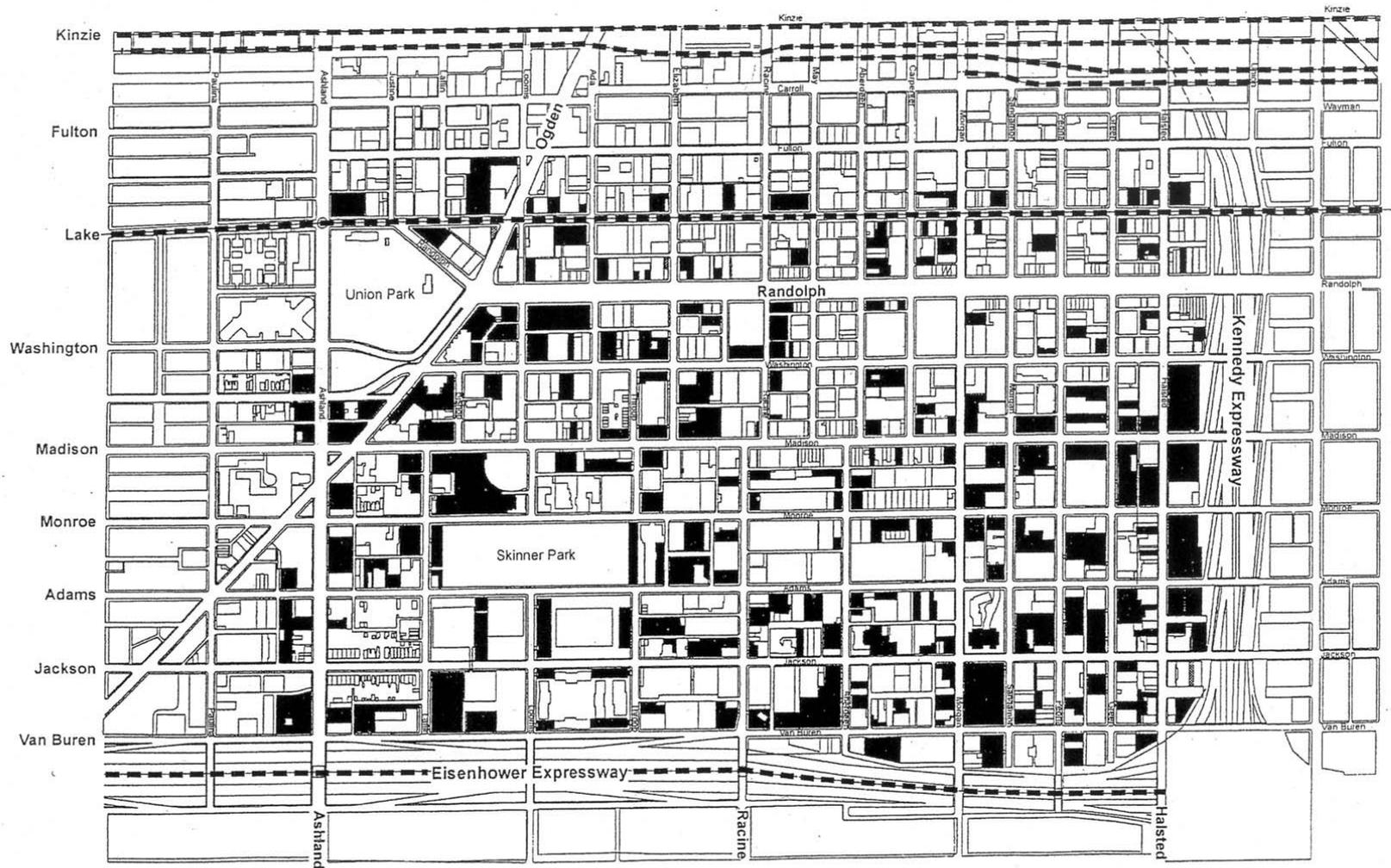
As the amount of activity increases in the area, and the mix of uses continues, the potential conflicts will increase. A consistent, clearly marked, and easily understood program must be developed that balances the various demands within the Randolph and Fulton Markets. A traffic operations and parking plan should be developed for the combined market area that incorporates:

- Detailed review of all curb frontages and adjoining properties, to identify more appropriate locations for on-street parking.
- Appropriate locations for shared off-street parking lots for employees and/or trucks, especially in the most congested blocks, near Green and Sangamon. Small and/or inefficient parking lots are located throughout the Markets that could be consolidated for shared parking.
- Appropriate locations for shared off-street loading zones where it may be feasible to serve several businesses within the most congested blocks.

- Shared staging areas to accommodate trucks waiting to load/unload goods while the loading zone is occupied.
- Shared curb space and parking lots should also be identified based upon time of day. The same street frontage or parking lot could be set aside for particular uses at different times throughout the day. For instance, the same space could be restricted to loading between 4:00 AM and 8:00 AM, 2 hour metered parking between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM, and free parking from 6:00 PM to 4:00 AM. Expansion of such an approach could allow market oriented businesses to conduct business during peak morning hours, customers and visitors to park during the day, and restaurant patrons or residents to park for free at night.
- Other types of restrictions and/or time periods could be identified according to land use mix and block needs.
- Stricter enforcement of all parking and loading regulations, including the possibility of adding police personnel to direct traffic during the peak morning period.

AREA ANALYSIS

PARKING LOTS



NEAR WEST SIDE

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

As the Near West Side continues to grow, under-utilized sites as well as surface parking lots will develop with more intensive uses. Locations could be considered redevelopment sites based on the presence of sub-optimal land uses, vacant building space, deteriorating buildings, under-utilized sites, key corner locations, and/or the potential to consolidate small parcels of land to create larger redevelopment sites.

This will continue to add more residents and businesses to the Near West Side, placing additional pressure on the area's resources. Development at maximum permitted density levels and attempts to increase density through zoning changes or planned developments could prove to be detrimental to the character of the Near West Side.

POPULATION PROFILE

The Near West Side study area has a population of approximately **7,000**. It is a diverse community consisting of a population that is approximately **62%** White, **29%** African American, **4%** Hispanic, and **4%** Asian with the remaining **1%** a mix of other nationalities.

To estimate the potential impact that residential development could have on the area, population growth was generally projected based on projects under construction or planned from 1996 through 2003, as well as the general build-out potential of the area's remaining vacant or underdeveloped land, excluding the Randolph Market.

If all planned and proposed residential projects are completed and vacant/underdeveloped land not in the Randolph Market was developed with housing, the Near West Side could have a population of approximately 9,450 persons in the next few years. Projecting forward, the population could be over 15,000 by 2020.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>POPULATION INCREASE</u>
1980	1,396 population ¹
1990	2,192 population ²
1996	2,737 population ³
2000	7,050 population ⁴
2003 Projected	9,450 population ⁴

**Total Projected
Population by 2020: 15,300⁵**

Notes:

1. Based on 1980 Census provided by Claritas.
2. Based on 1990 Census data.
3. Based on 1990 population and permit data.
4. DPD estimate based on new projects completed, under construction, and under development.
5. DPD projections.

NEAR WEST SIDE PLAN
AREA LAND USE PLAN

NEAR WEST SIDE

LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The Area Land Use Plan for the Near West Side provides the City and community with a framework for continued development and redevelopment of this unique mixed-use community. The Plan is focused on maintaining the area's land use mix and encouraging quality development through land use and design controls, increased open space, and improved traffic access, parking, and streetscape.

Several design concepts are also presented along with the Area Land Use Plan to illustrate various development patterns. The design concepts are conceptual, and indicate potential development densities, building massing, and landscaping and parking layouts. Actual building, landscaping, and parking designs will vary for each site as more specific improvement/development plans are generated by the City, property owners, businesses, and developers.

Residential Development:

Except within the Randolph and Fulton Markets and Kinzie Industrial Corridor, residential development should continue to be promoted to activate the area and create a more recognized neighborhood identity. In addition to condominiums, other housing types should be encouraged to further diversify the area. Housing types should include townhouses, single-family homes, and rental apartments.

Higher density development should be located on the east side of the study area. Higher density mixed-use buildings with upper-floor condominiums and apartments are more appropriate along the east side of Halsted adjacent the Kennedy Expressway. Single family homes and townhouses should be encouraged in the southwest corner of the study area, near the Jackson Boulevard Historic District to maintain its existing residential character.

Low to moderate density development is appropriate throughout the rest of the study area. New development should be consistent with the density and character of adjacent structures and overall area.

Commercial Development:

Neighborhood oriented retail and service uses should be promoted to serve the area's growing residential and visitor population, as well as employees of local businesses. Grocery stores, pharmacies, video and book stores, restaurants, delicatessans, shoe stores, and home accessory shops are examples of such businesses.

These businesses should be developed at the base of residential buildings where access and parking is appropriate, and at major corners along Ashland and Madison. New retail development should especially be considered along Ashland between Adams and Warren, and at the northwest corner of Madison and Racine where the City owns a large site. All new commercial sites should have adequate off-street parking.

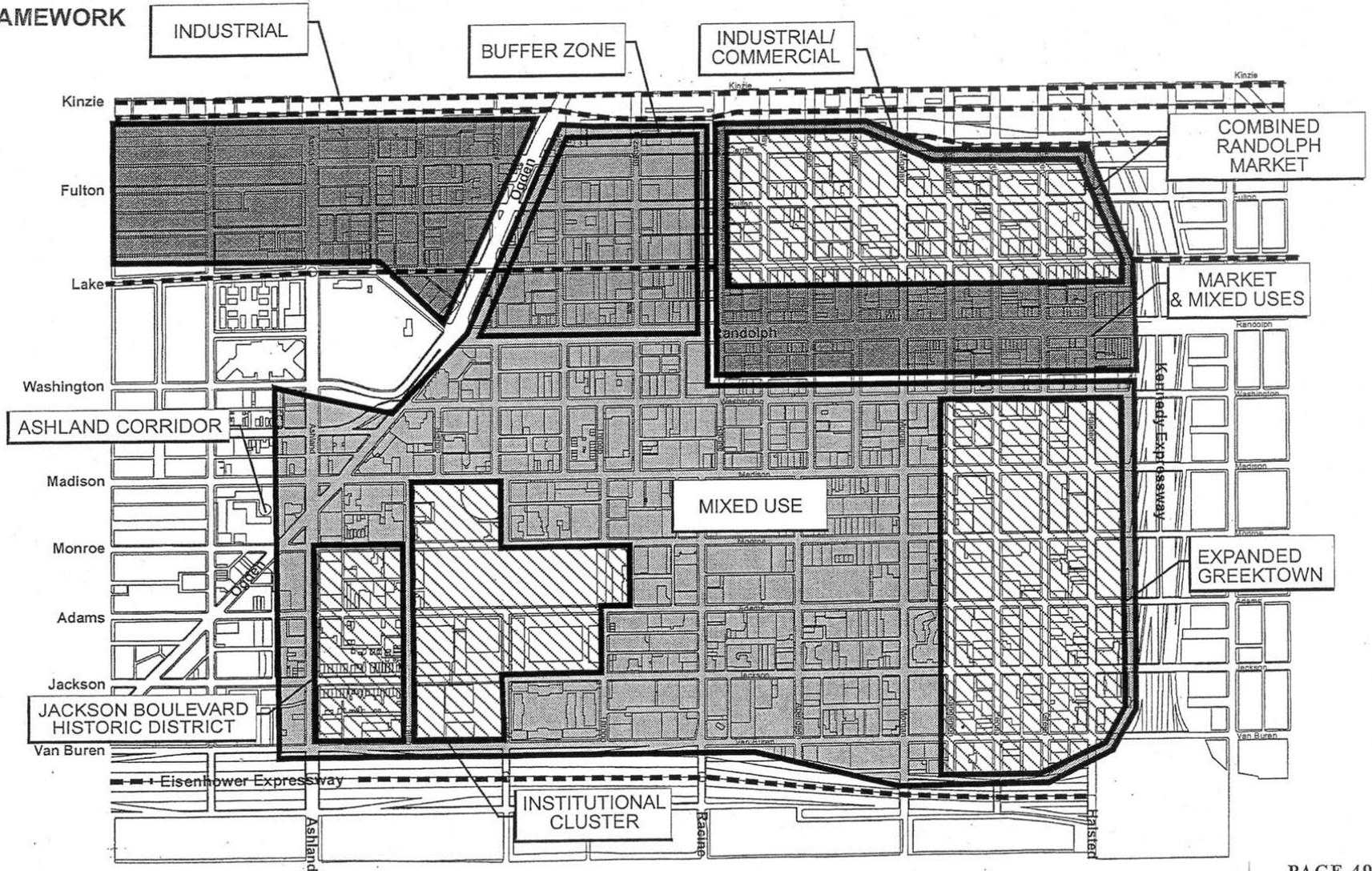
Art gallery and studio space has been expanding along with the growing residential population. Cultural uses and galleries should continue to be developed to activate the Near West Side at night. They should be located where there would be minimal conflicts with existing uses.

The Near West Side should also continue to be promoted for office development to accommodate small professional firms and corporate headquarters as an alternative location to the City's Central Business District. Such uses activate area streets during the day and provide customers for shops and restaurants.

The Whittman-Hart corporate campus with office and training facilities, which is under construction at the northwest corner of the study area, is an example of an "in-town" office complex located near Downtown.

AREA LAND USE PLAN

LAND USE FRAMEWORK



NEAR WEST SIDE

Industrial Development:

Industrial and service companies on the Near West Side occupy a significant amount of building space (30%) and provide numerous jobs. Such companies should continue to operate in the area. Recognizing the recent trend toward residential and commercial development, such companies should work with local groups and DPD to physically improve their sites and facilitate truck access and employee parking. DPD will continue to work with businesses looking to expand at their current sites or needing to move to larger sites.

Those companies needing to relocate because of local development pressures should consider locating in the nearby Kinzie Industrial Corridor. This industrial zone, which is located a few blocks northwest of the area, also provides excellent access to the Central Business District and overall region.

The City has created a Planned Manufacturing District and Tax Increment Financing District for the Kinzie Corridor to facilitate infrastructure improvements and industrial development. This corridor contains approximately 675 acres of land, zoned primarily for industrial uses.

Institutional/Public Facilities:

The feasibility of developing a larger institutional campus closer to industrial jobs for local social service agencies with similar missions and facility needs should be explored. Parking, open space, recreation facilities, maintenance, security, and food service could possibly be shared within such a campus. Relocation of the Salvation Army and Chicago Christian Industrial League programs to new and larger facilities would improve agency services and provide new development and open space opportunities on their current sites.

Skinner School is considering expansion of its existing facility to include a larger school campus and additional parking for faculty and staff.

Open Space:

Neighborhood open space and mini-parks should be developed wherever possible in the center and eastern blocks of the community. Potential locations include:

- the block at the northeast corner of Adams and Sangamon (neighborhood park) (2.3 acres).
- the parkways on Madison between Green and Peoria (flower gardens/seating pockets).
- the south side of Madison between Morgan and Aberdeen within a new development (plazas).
- the southeast corner of Randolph and Morgan (corner plaza).

The site at the northeast corner of Adams and Sangamon should especially be considered for a neighborhood park. If such a park were developed, there may be an opportunity to reuse the large existing University building as a multi-purpose park fieldhouse, community center, library, and cultural facility.

Consideration should be given to relocating the Illinois Public Aid building located on the north half of the block to provide a larger, full block site for a park.

The building at the southwest corner of Skinner Park should also be considered for a park/community center.

Randolph and Fulton Markets:

The Randolph Market is a unique business district within the City and Near West Side. Consideration should be given to the establishment of one consolidated wholesale food district that includes both the Randolph and Fulton Markets. The combined Randolph-Fulton Market would be bordered by Randolph on the south, the Kennedy Expressway on the east, Kinzie and the rail tracks on the north, and Racine on the west.

A mix of uses, including the Whittman-Hart campus, have been developing west of Racine to Ogden, north of Randolph. This sub-area should be considered a mixed-use "buffer" between the Kinzie Industrial Corridor to the west and combined Randolph-Fulton Market to the east.

Results of a recently completed real estate needs assessment for the Randolph/Fulton Market area indicates that some existing food businesses wish to remain and expand, while others wish to relocate from the area. (Source: Arthur Andersen, February, 2000)

Continued careful management of any requests for zoning changes or land use changes will help to minimize conflicts between businesses and other uses, and help to manage this as a mixed-use area.

The four blocks surrounding the Halsted/Lake intersection up to Fulton are located at the eastern gateway to the combined Market and Near West Side. These deteriorated blocks should be especially targeted for major redevelopment with shared parking. Additional turning lanes and extensive landscaping with gateway features should be incorporated into each block.

The feasibility of developing a multi-purpose facility that provides information about the Randolph-Fulton Market's products, development opportunities, operations, and history should be explored. Such a center could be a place for businesses to meet about local issues and development opportunities, restaurant owners to learn about available products, and visitors to learn about the Market.

There are a few produce/meat businesses scattered throughout the Market that include a retail operation that sells food directly to the public. Additional retail food operations should be encouraged where appropriate in regards to building layout, parking, and pedestrian access. The feasibility of a "Saturday Produce Shopping Day" for the public should be explored.

A critical issue facing the combined Market is its deteriorated physical condition, which negatively affects truck access/circulation, loading operations, and employee/visitor parking. Addressing these physical issues should be a priority in the next few years, both to accommodate businesses who wish to remain and expand in the area, or those who may seek to redevelop their property.

A cooperative effort by area businesses, including restaurants, to create shared parking opportunities throughout the Randolph and Fulton Market should be part of a comprehensive redevelopment approach. Several locations are noted in the Area Land Use Plan that may have potential to be shared parking lots.

NEAR WEST SIDE

Greektown:

Consideration should be given to expanding Greektown to the west and a block north to Randolph. This larger sub-area, would be bordered by Randolph on the north, the Expressways on the south and east, and Sangamon on the west.

Expansion of the district to Sangamon and north to Randolph would establish a larger special district, link Greektown to the Randolph restaurant row, and facilitate pedestrian movement through these blocks. Such an expansion could involve extending the special streetscape character of Greektown along the east/west streets, as well as encouraging additional shops and restaurants on the adjacent blocks.

Such an improvement should also include a cooperative effort by area businesses and residents to create shared parking opportunities on the blocks between Sangamon and Halsted. Extending the Greektown identity and improving its surrounding blocks could facilitate use of shared parking and street parking as pedestrians become more comfortable walking beyond Halsted.

A Greek museum/visitors center has been considered for the northeast corner of Halsted and Van Buren. Such a development concept, which could enhance Greektown's unique character, should be further analyzed in regards to project feasibility and funding.

The Halsted Corridor will experience major change in the next five years due to the location of several properties that have significant redevelopment potential:

- **One North Halsted**
(northeast corner Madison/Halsted)
(approved for 50,000 square feet of commercial space including a Dominicks grocery store, 300 dwelling units, and 600 parking spaces).
- **Chicago Christian Industrial League**
(southwest corner Monroe/Halsted)
(considering relocation).
- **Mid-City Bank**
(northwest corner Monroe/Halsted)
(underdeveloped site).
- **Quality Inn**
(northeast corner Monroe/Halsted)
(potential for second hotel tower).
- **Large Parking Lot**
(southeast corner Adams/Monroe)
(planned parking garage; 4 stories, 400 spaces).

It appears at this time that the Halsted corridor will be able to accommodate the current development plans and proposals due to the following factors:

- DPD has refined the One North Halsted site plan in regards to access and parking;
- a lower density commercial development is planned for the northeast corner of Adams and Monroe (approximately 30,000 square feet);
- a new parking garage is planned for the southeast corner of Adams and Monroe, rather than a large commercial development. Such a facility will also accommodate a large number of the parking spaces that will be lost when the lots are developed to the north;
- the potential to expand Greektown to the west and develop shared parking arrangements to reduce traffic congestion, parking problems, and restaurant valet/drop-off conflicts;
- CDOT's Halsted improvement project, which will address signalization, turning movements, and turn lanes; and
- the potential to significantly improve the Halsted/Lake intersection, which CDOT will study as part of the pending corridor project.

The potential development of the Chicago Christian Industrial League, Quality Inn, and Mid-City Bank sites will be considered within the CDOT project to determine appropriate building/parking densities and access points.

AREA LAND USE PLAN

Ashland Corridor:

Ashland should be enhanced with streetscape improvements and area gateway elements. Establishing a “history/cultural walk” along the street from the union office buildings near the Expressway to Union Park should be considered as part of a new streetscape design. Such a walk could celebrate the area’s history and encourage more pedestrian activity along the street and in the Park.

Realigning Ashland to a consistent two lanes north of Ogden and three lanes south of Ogden should be considered. Such an improvement may facilitate traffic flow and increase parking and/or sidewalk space.

Consideration should also be given to narrowing Washington through Union Park and closing Warren east of Ashland at Ogden. Diagonal parking along the Park’s north side between Lake and Ogden should be implemented.

The triangle between Ashland, Ogden, and Warren should be redeveloped with a coordinated mixed-use development with ground floor commercial. A mixed-uses development should be considered for the east side of Ashland if the Salvation Army relocates to a new site.

Buildings along Ashland should be similar in size and density to the buildings at the southwest corner of Ashland and Ogden to maintain the streetwall.

Streetscape/Gateways:

Recent improvements to the streetscape along Randolph, Madison, and Halsted have significantly improved the area’s appearance and set a standard for the rest of the community.

The City has recently completed a streetscape plan for Lake Street. The Plan recommends comprehensive improvements including new pavement, curbing, landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, decorative lighting, fencing, trash/recycling receptacles, and signage. Funding sources for engineering and construction are currently being identified.

A comprehensive streetscape improvement program should be established for the rest of the area that:

- enhances the Near West Side’s visual attractiveness and “pedestrian friendliness”, and encourages pedestrian circulation on the blocks west of Greektown up to and along the Randolph restaurant row;
- establishes a distinct, recognizable area identity and links its numerous diverse blocks;
- provides easily recognizable boundaries and gateways for the overall Near West Side and its sub-areas; and
- eliminates or limits billboards.

Streetscape improvements should include:

- new lighting, street trees, landscaping, fencing, benches, fountains, and recycling/trash cans. Decorative pavers could be provided at special locations;
- gateway corners using columns, signage, fencing, pavers, and/or landscaping at highly visible entrances and intersections. Area and sub-area identity gateways should be considered for the following locations:
 - **Near West Side:** along Expressways and Ashland.
 - **Greektown:** along Expressways, Sangamon and Washington.
 - **Randolph and Fulton Markets:** along Racine, Halsted, and Randolph;
- a coordinated kiosk/signage program to identify area businesses, activity generators, and parking. The kiosks could include area maps, parking locations and restaurant/business and entertainment listings, as well as local events; and
- improved landscaping along the Eisenhower and Kennedy Expressways.

NEAR WEST SIDE

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

As noted earlier, the Near West Side is well served by its transportation system. To address current traffic concerns, improve physical conditions, and accommodate future growth, several changes to the system are recommended:

Randolph Street:

Traffic circulation along Randolph and its local frontage lanes should be improved by adding striping between the raised planters and restricting turning movements at the unsignalized intersections with new signage. Consideration should be given to redesigning the medians to improve visibility and safety.

Taxi staging/waiting areas should be considered for Randolph near the new restaurant row to provide convenient access to alternate transportation.

Madison/Racine Intersection:

The offset Racine/Madison intersection should be realigned into one efficient intersection to facilitate traffic flow. Such an improvement could be accomplished by using parts of the properties located on the southeast and northwest corners of the intersection.

The realignment should be planned together with the redevelopment of the northwest block, which is partially owned by the City.

Halsted/Lake Intersection:

The CTA Elevated support columns at the Halsted/Lake intersection should be moved and the intersection widened. Such an improvement should be incorporated into a master plan for streetscape improvements along Halsted and redevelopment of all four blocks around the intersection.

Union Park:

Diagonal parking should be added on Randolph adjacent to Union Park between Ogden and Lake.

Warren should be closed at Ogden and incorporated into a plan for streetscape improvements and redevelopment of the blocks south of the Park.

A more detailed engineering study of the feasibility of reducing the number of lanes on Washington through the Park should be conducted.

Ashland Avenue:

A more detailed engineering study of the feasibility of consolidating lanes along Ashland should be conducted.

Bus Stop Consolidation:

A study of the feasibility of consolidating CTA bus stops to every other block to facilitate traffic turning movements and/or gain parking/loading spaces should be conducted.

Taxis:

The community has identified the lack of frequent street taxi service as a problem. Continued development will help to address this; however, outreach to taxi operators needs to be aggressive.

AREA LAND USE PLAN

Transit:

The long range need for a new Green Line station between Morgan and Halsted should be monitored as the area develops.

Consideration should be given to adding Greektown signage to the UIC-Halsted CTA station.

Parking:

Parking improvements within the area should focus on optimizing available on-street and off-street parking lots for a variety of land uses and time periods. On-street parking and loading restrictions/meters throughout the area should be modified to:

- limit all day use;
- create shared loading zones and shared employee parking lots for small businesses;
- increase parking space turnover in front of local retail businesses;
- increase evening parking availability for residents, restaurant patrons, and visitors; and
- eliminate unnecessary restrictions such as during rush hour on side streets like Adams.

Large residential developments should consider the need to accommodate parking for increasing numbers of visitors, as well as residents.

Small vacant lots, inefficient parking lots, and deteriorated buildings should be cleared and consolidated to create strategically located off-street, shared parking for employees during the day, and residents, visitors, and valets in the evening. Cooperative parking arrangements between businesses for employees and visitors/patrons, especially in the Randolph and Fulton Markets and Greektown, should especially be developed. Such arrangements could significantly improve the availability of parking during lunchtime and evening hours, and will become increasingly important as the large public parking lots along Halsted are redeveloped.

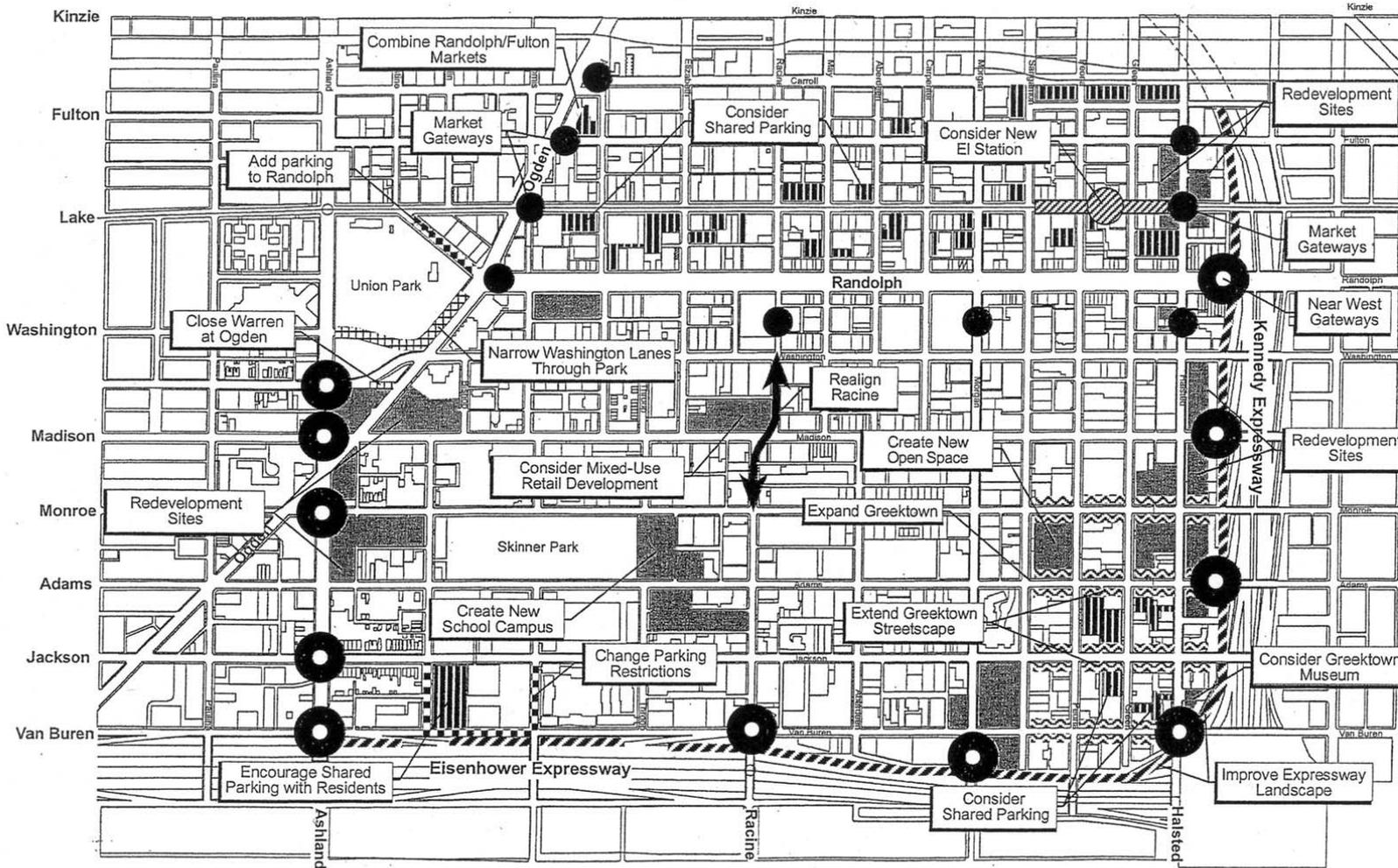
The Chicago 911 Emergency Response Center parking lot should be considered for restricted overflow parking for the Chicago Police Academy.

Removing parking restrictions along Monroe (south side) between Loomis and Throop, and along Laflin (east side) and Loomis (east/west sides) between Jackson and Van Buren should be considered. Removing the no parking restrictions along Van Buren (north side) between Laflin and Loomis should be also be consolidated.

Signage identifying shared parking opportunities at Whitney Young High School for residents and visitors during evenings and weekends should be improved to provide better visibility to potential users.

NEAR WEST SIDE

AREA IMPROVEMENTS



- LEGEND**
-  Near West Gateway
 -  Randolph/Fulton Markets Gateway
 -  Redevelopment Site
 -  Potential Shared Parking
 -  Greektown Streetscape Expansion
 -  New EI Station
 -  Expressway Landscape Improvements
 -  Change Parking Restrictions

AREA LAND USE PLAN

DESIGN GUIDELINES

A critical issue confronting the Near West Side is the physical quality of its built environment. There is a need for development to be more consistent with the area's low density building scale, traditional loft district architectural character, and urban streetscape.

The following standards provide the community and developers with general guidelines for site and building design. They are suggestive only and not intended to supplement or supersede the City's Building Code, Zoning Ordinance, Landscape Ordinance, or Department of Planning and Development's 1995 Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial Districts.

Land Use:

Neighborhood-oriented retail and service uses should be encouraged on the ground floor of buildings throughout the Near West Side outside the Randolph and Fulton Street Markets.

Larger retail uses should be focused on the major streets such as Halsted, Madison, Randolph, and Ashland.

First floor residential should be avoided in multi-family residential buildings, unless used to provide a duplex unit, which activates an otherwise blank facade.

Strip shopping centers with front parking lots should be discouraged.

Uses that conflict with pedestrian activity or compromise established building patterns should be discouraged.

The temporary use of vacant building space for community information and art display should be encouraged.

Density:

New developments which do not maximize the number of permitted units under existing zoning are encouraged to enter into a deed restriction to prohibit additional units.

Planned development applications should be in substantial compliance with underlying FAR. PD's should not be used to up-zone sites.

Zoning request changes should not seek to increase or deviate from existing or surrounding FAR so that new development retains the scale of the existing building fabric.

Residential development with a diversity of unit sizes is encouraged, especially family-sized units.

NEAR WEST SIDE

Site Layout:

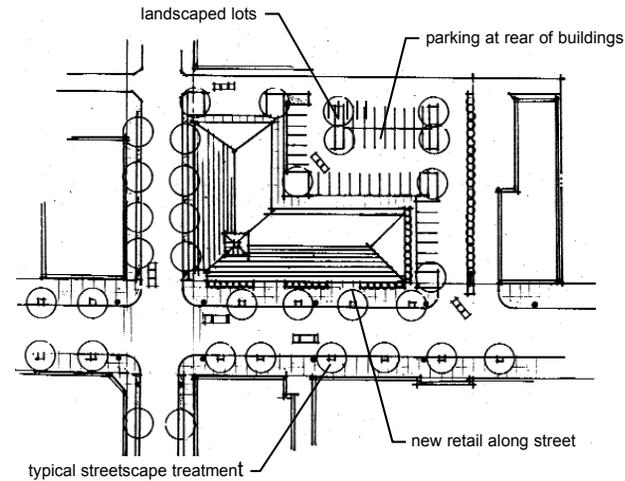
Where possible, new buildings should be built at or near the property line to continue or recreate building walls along the street ("urban streetwall pattern"). Building placement should especially attempt to "hold or frame the corners" of a site or block. At corner locations new construction should be built to the property line on both street frontages.

New buildings should be set back from property lines only for small pedestrian spaces such as plazas and outdoor cafes, or for additional landscaping room if consistent with landscaping set backs along the entire block. Building corners can be notched out or set back approximately 15 feet for plazas and and/or gateway elements.

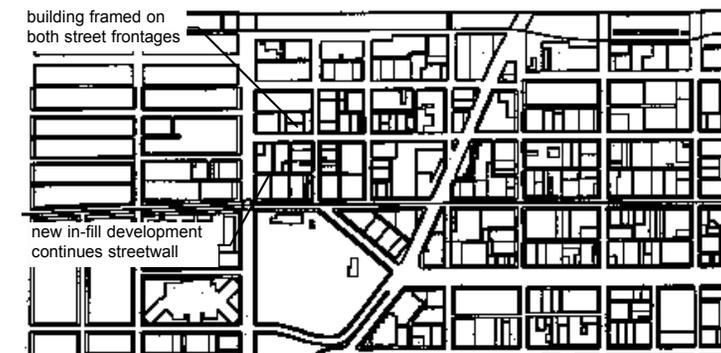
Off-street parking should be provided behind buildings wherever possible. Off-street parking should be provided underground or within new buildings when possible. When feasible, parking should be accessed by way of alleys.

Main entrances to stores should be located along the street at highly visible locations. Secondary entrances can be located along the sides and/or backs of buildings to provide access from side streets and parking lots.

Driveway curb cuts on major streets, especially along retail-oriented blocks, should be avoided where possible. Curb cuts should not be wider than 24 feet.



Plan View of Corner Development Concept



Perspective View of Corner Development Concept

AREA LAND USE PLAN

Buildings:

Preservation

Buildings should be preserved and renovated where possible to maintain existing building walls along streets.

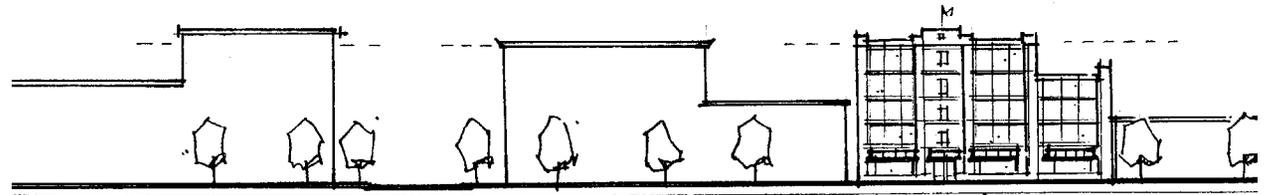
Rehabilitation/renovation should be sensitive to the original architectural character of the building and surrounding area.

Height

New buildings should not be more than 25% higher than the average height of buildings on surrounding blocks to maintain the general scale of an urban industrial loft district, except on the properties abutting the Kennedy Expressway.

If tall buildings are developed along the Expressways, they should be stepped back away from adjacent streets, approximately 50 feet above ground level to provide a transition to surrounding buildings.

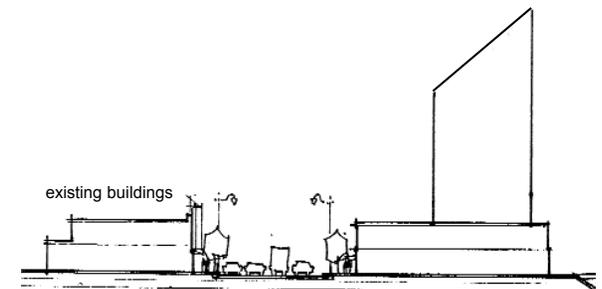
If a development is located in an area with buildings of varying heights, the transition or step down between buildings should be considered in the overall height and design of the new buildings.



New building consistent with existing streetwall.



New building at streetwall with ground level glass.



Building step back along Expressways.

NEAR WEST SIDE

Architecture

Building scale and architectural design for new buildings should be consistent with the physical character of the Near West Side's distinct land use sub areas: Randolph and Fulton Markets; Greektown; Jackson Boulevard Historic District; and Central Core blocks. Traditional brick industrial buildings represent the most common building type in the area and provide an overall context for new architecture. Building design should especially address the visibility and prominence of street corners.

Buildings should include a low knee wall (18" to 24") at ground level with clear glass and open window displays to allow views into building interiors from streets and sidewalks. Where possible, building walls along streets at ground level should include at least 70% glass.

Cinder block, wood, metal, or vinyl siding should not be used on building facades or walls that are highly visible from streets and sidewalks.

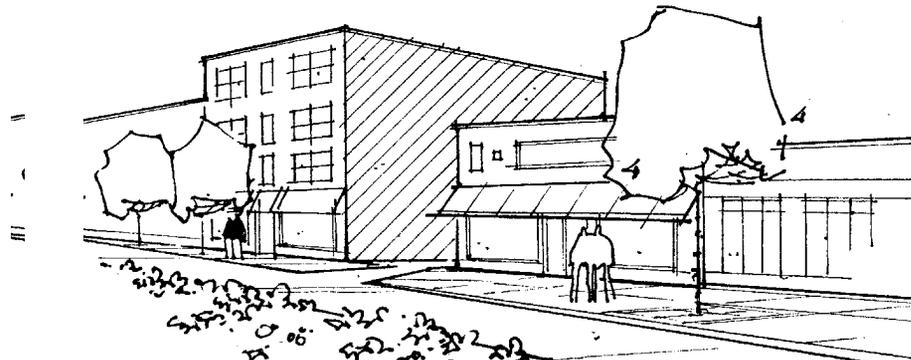
Solid, windowless walls should be avoided wherever possible. If such walls are a necessary part of a building's function, they should include false windows, arches, piers, murals, planters or other elements that reduce building scale and add visual interest.

New buildings should be constructed of durable materials that are easily maintained and consistent with surrounding buildings. Synthetic plaster should be used only for decorative purposes and limited to 15% of building walls.

Metal garage doors, folding security screens and other security features that are visually unattractive should be avoided and/or screened from street views. If needed, retractable interior security gates or shutters should be used.

Pedestrian-scale, cloth, retractable awnings that enhance the architectural character of a building or storefront are encouraged.

Wherever possible, exterior mechanical systems, as well as service, loading, trash, and storage areas should be screened from street and sidewalk views.



Painting or mural treatments on large blank walls.

AREA LAND USE PLAN

Signage:

Signs should not be placed above the cornice line of buildings. Signage for upper floor office space should consist of painted window signs. Signs should not block windows.

The scale of signs should be in proportion to a building's wall size and street frontage. Projecting or electronically animated signs should be avoided.

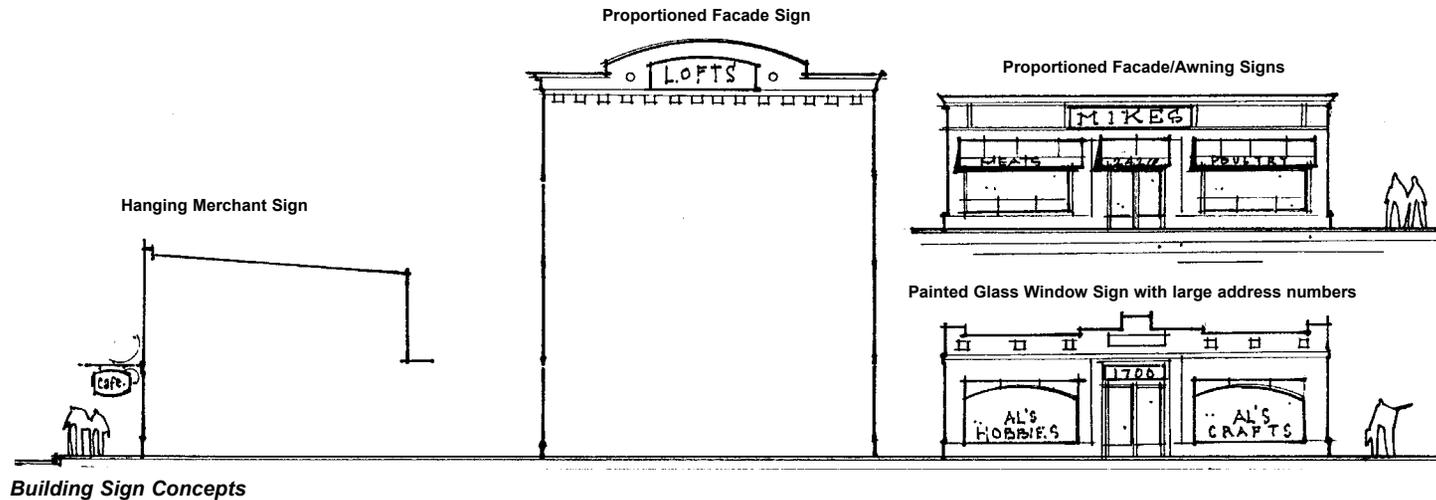
Billboards attached to sides of buildings, placed on rooftops, or in vacant lots should be removed and prohibited.



Unattractive Signage



Attractive Signage



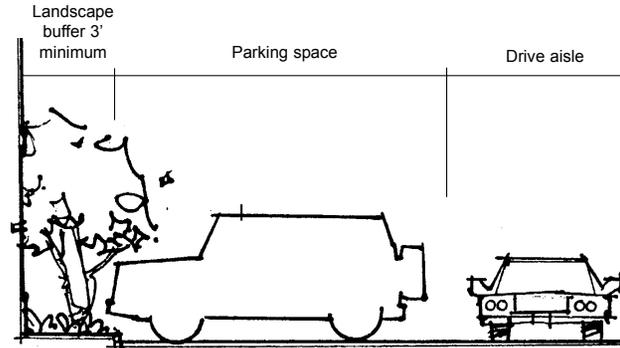
NEAR WEST SIDE

Parking:

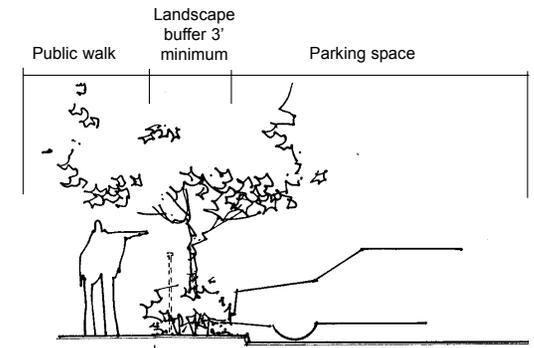
Parking should be placed behind, within, or underground in buildings wherever possible. Surface parking lots in front of buildings and along street frontages should be avoided. Where feasible, additional parking should be provided for visitors.

Existing parking lots in front of buildings or along street frontages should be screened with shrubbery and decorative metal fencing. Where parking lots abut a sidewalk or building, a landscape buffer should be provided consistent with the City's Landscape Ordinance. Lighting should minimize glare on surrounding properties.

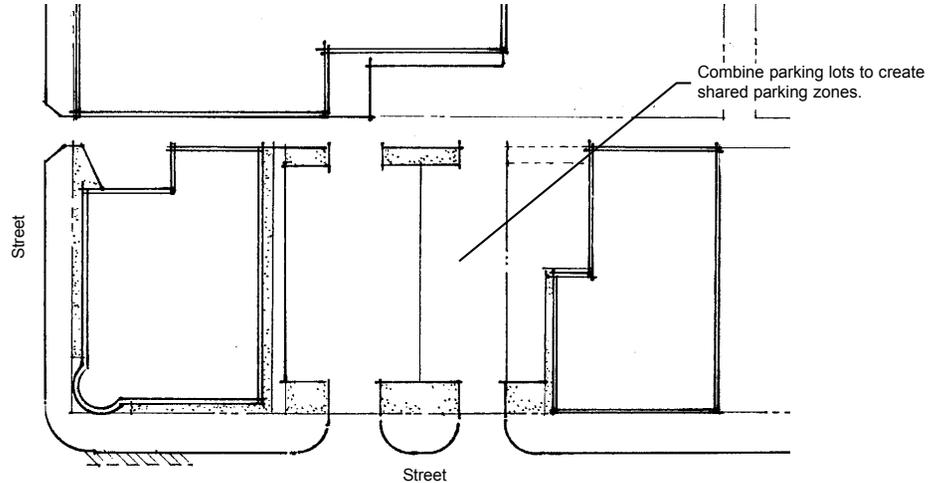
Shared parking between land uses and between businesses should be developed wherever feasible, especially on blocks that have varied parking needs. For example, a business with daytime employee parking could allow evening use of its lot by residents, shoppers, and/or restaurant patrons.



Parking abutting building



Parking abutting sidewalk



Shared parking opportunity

AREA LAND USE PLAN

Streetscape:

Streetscape amenities including pedestrian-scaled lighting, decorative paving, trash/recycling cans, and decorative newspaper boxes should be placed in high activity locations and grouped together to minimize clutter along sidewalks.

Streetscape design for private development sites should be coordinated with the overall streetscape design of the Near West Side or adjacent streets to reinforce a coordinated physical character for the area. For example, lighting for a pedestrian plaza should be similar in design to new lighting installed on nearby streets by the City.

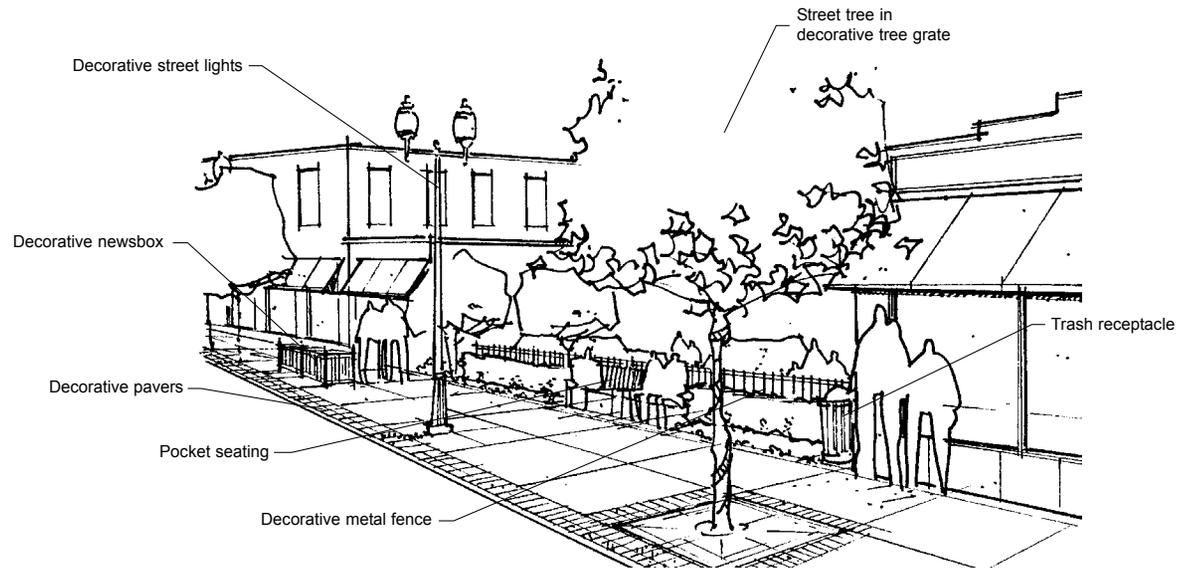
Seasonal flowers, evergreens, shade trees, and other plantings are encouraged throughout the area to provide interest, color, and seasonal variety.

Sidewalks and parking lots should be retrofitted for ADA accessibility.

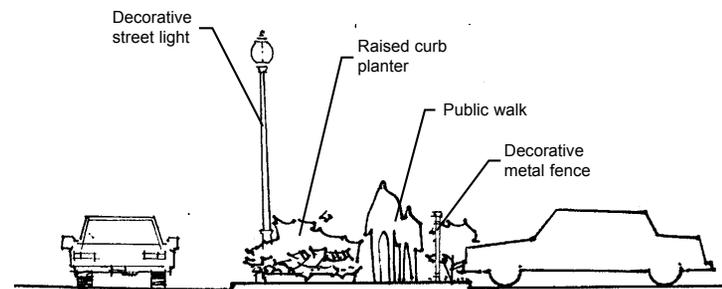
The perimeter and interior of all existing and future parking lots should be extensively landscaped.

Decorative metal fencing should be used where appropriate to enhance and define the streetscape, open spaces, landscaped areas, parking lots, and building entrances. Such fencing should not be more than three to four feet in height.

Chain link fence should not be used in locations on or along a site that are visible from sidewalks and streets.



Streetscape view with screened parking area



Streetscape Elevation View

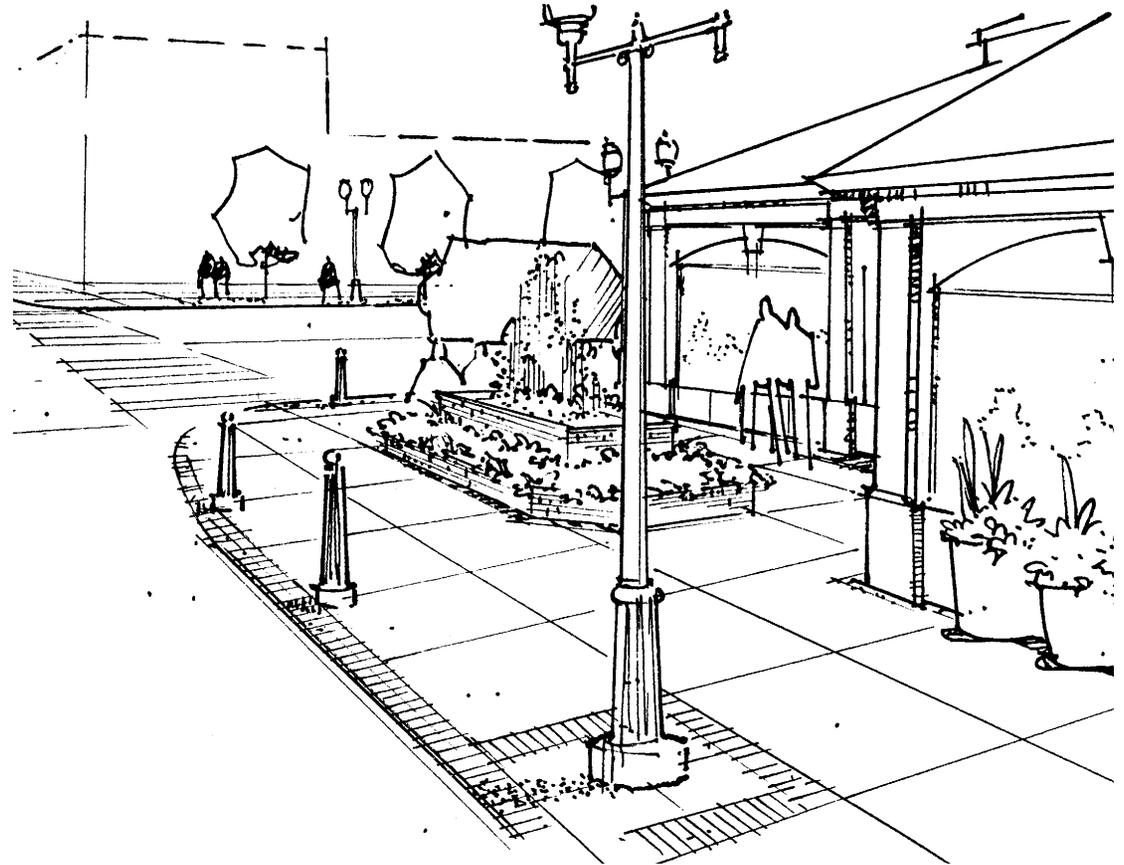
NEAR WEST SIDE

Open Space:

Where feasible, pedestrian plazas should be provided in conjunction with new large-scale development. Plazas should be sited to maximize southern sun exposure. Decorative pavers, benches, landscaping, and lighting should be incorporated into plaza designs.

Miscellaneous:

The fencing and chairs of outdoor cafes located along Randolph or elsewhere in the Near West Side should be removable to provide wide sidewalk space if needed for loading/unloading by businesses during peak morning hours.

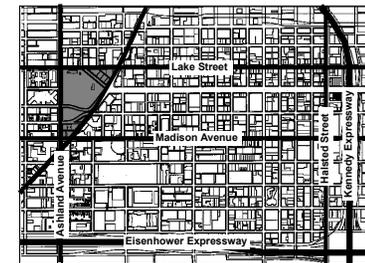
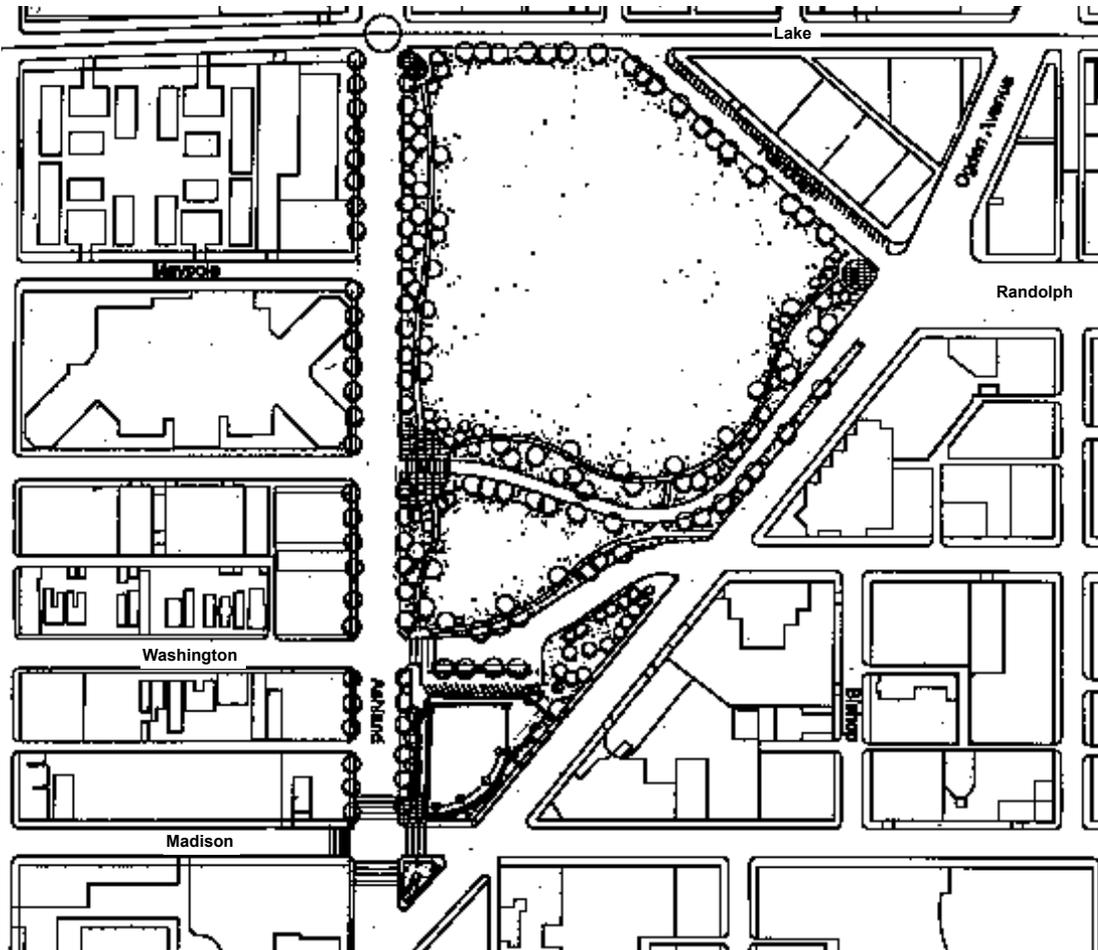


Corner Plaza Concept

AREA LAND USE PLAN

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Ashland Corridor: Ashland between Lake & Madison



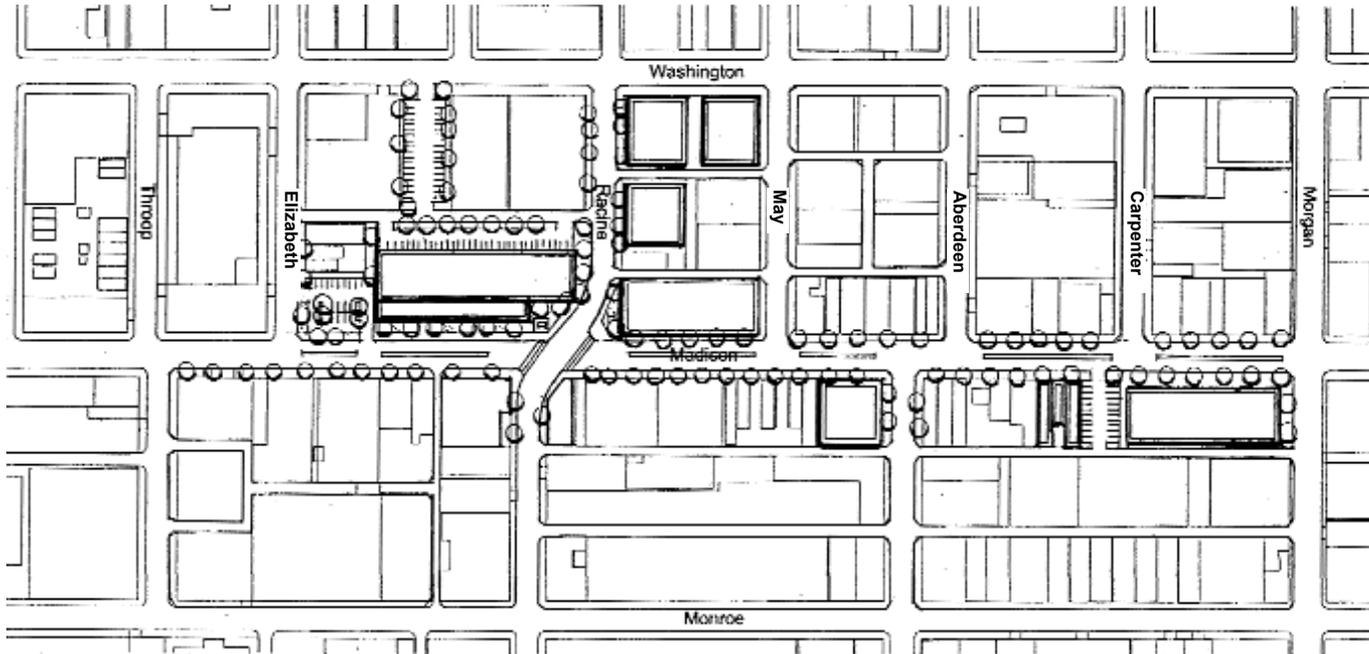
Key Map



NEAR WEST SIDE

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Madison between Morgan & Throop with Realigned Racine Intersection



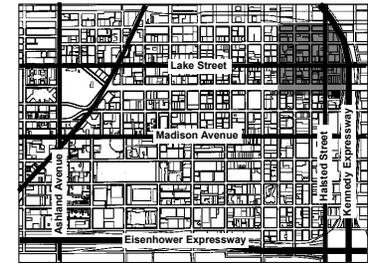
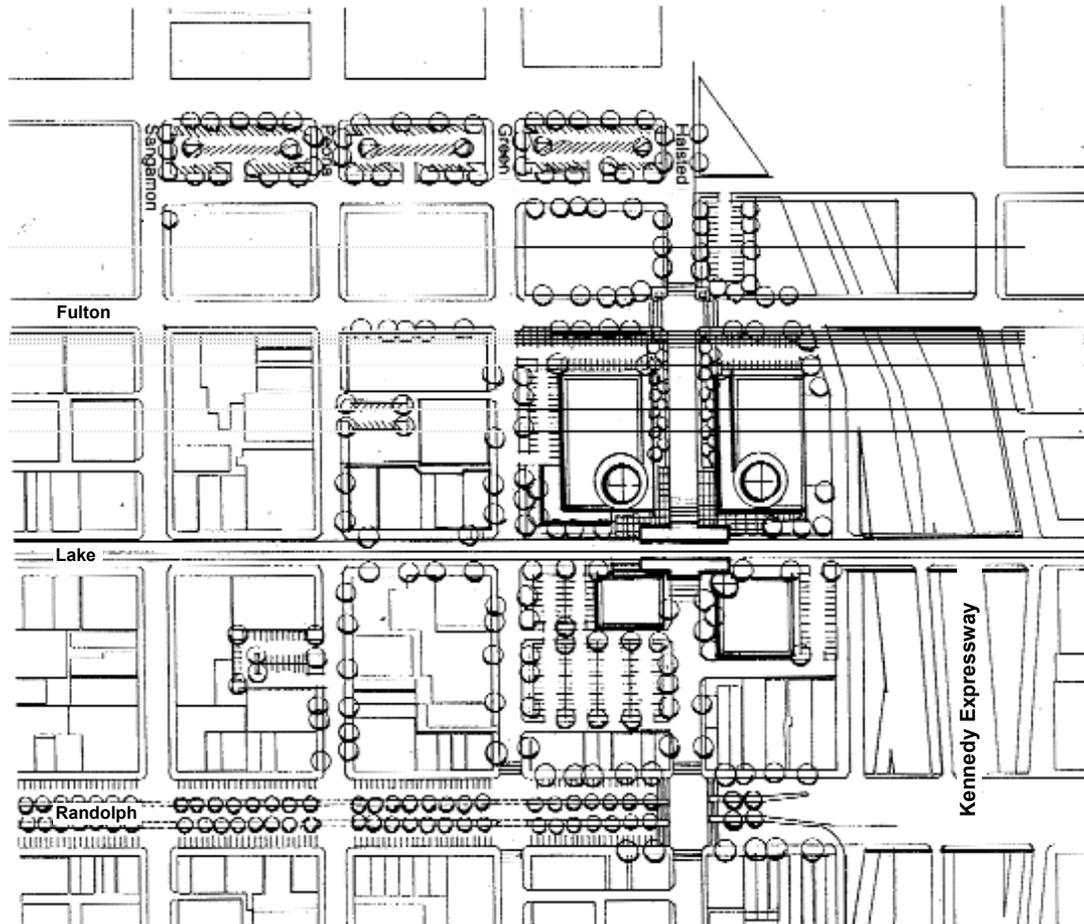
Key Map



AREA LAND USE PLAN

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Halsted/Lake intersection with shared parking



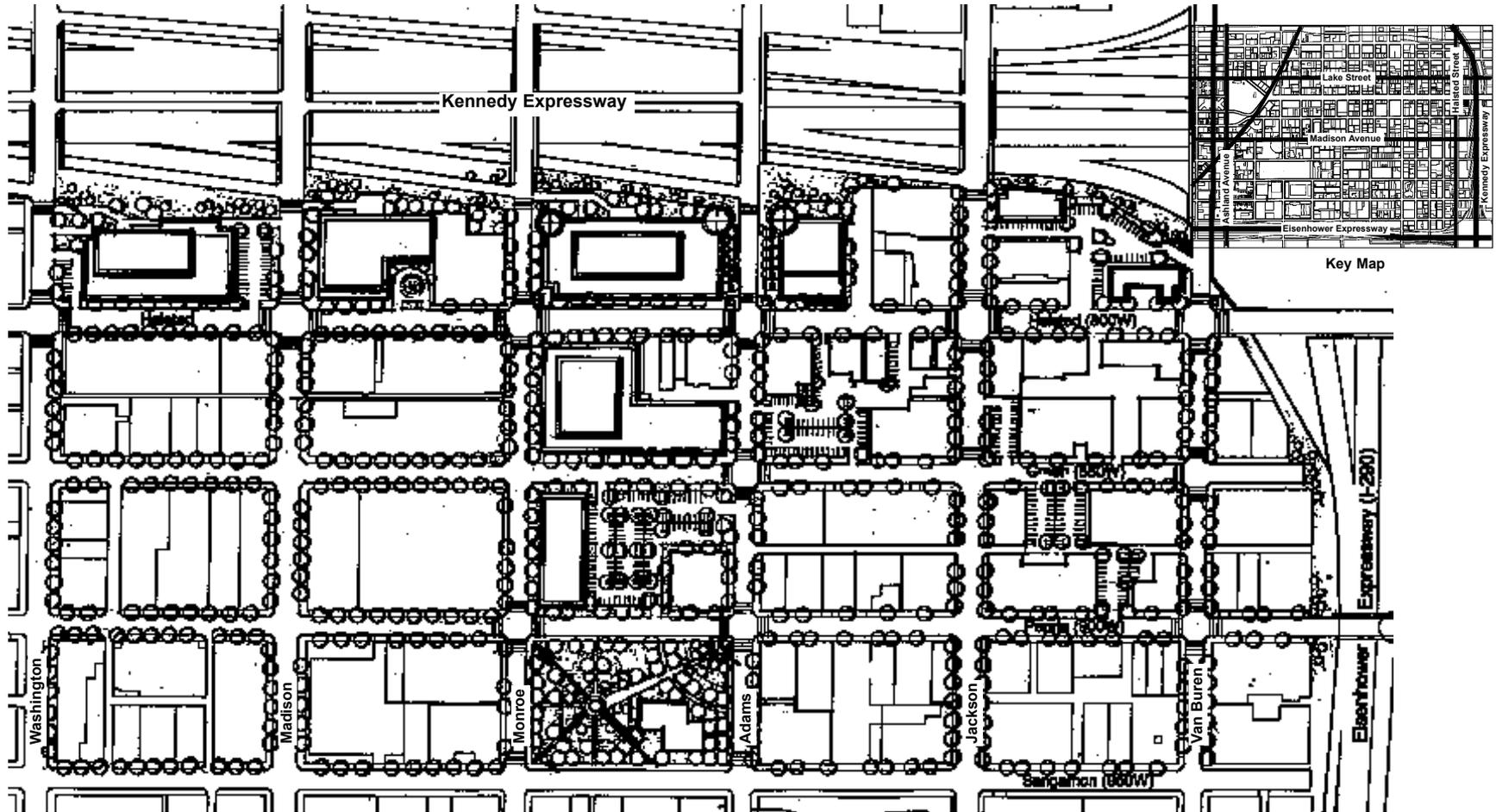
Key Map



NEAR WEST SIDE

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Greektown District with new park at Sangamon/Adams intersection with shared parking



NEAR WEST SIDE PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION

NEAR WEST SIDE

IMPLEMENTATION

A major commitment has been made by the City and Alderman to continue the revitalization of the Near West Side as a vibrant, active, mixed-use community. The City, Alderman, local organizations, and area business/property owners will need to continue to work closely together to implement the Area Land Use Plan and improve the area.

The following is a general framework of potential next steps in implementing the plan:

- Community Resources.
- Streetscape Design/Engineering.
- Capital Improvement Programming.
- Facade Rebate Program.
- Micro Loan Program.
- CitySpace Program.
- NeighborSpace Program.
- Chicago Gateway Green Partnership.
- CTA Adopt-A-Station Program.
- Open Space Impact Fee Program.
- Special Service Area Financing (SSA).
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Additional task-order studies to implement proposed actions.

Community Resources:

During the planning process, local residents, business owners, and institutional representatives expressed confusion with the role and function of the area's civic groups. They also indicated a strong need for everyone to work together because of the area's mixed-use character and increasing development pressures.

A clearinghouse should be established within each group to facilitate information exchange and resource sharing, and increase local and outside awareness of developments planned for each area. In addition, sub-committees of each group should be established to foster community stewardship regarding area identity/perception, beautification, and open space.

Streetscape Design/Engineering:

A next step in the area's improvement process should involve a comprehensive streetscape program including:

- Preparation of a coordinated streetscape design plan based on the Near West Side Area Land Use Plan.
- Meetings with the City, Alderman, local organizations, and business/property owners to review the streetscape design.
- Consideration of an additional Special Service Area to finance on-going maintenance of the streetscape improvements.

Capital Improvement Programming:

The Alderman and City have begun assessing potential funding sources for streetscape and infrastructure improvements. Funding will need to be allocated in phases due to the area's large size.

Public funding should be leveraged by commitments from area developers and property owners to install portions of the comprehensive streetscape program. Capital improvement costs will be estimated during the streetscape design/engineering process.

IMPLEMENTATION

Facade Rebate Program:

The City's Facade Rebate Program assists in revitalizing and stabilizing the City's commercial and industrial areas. The program, which is administered by DPD, provides rebates for building rehabilitation activities, including:

- complete facade renovation;
- exterior lighting;
- signage/graphics;
- windows and doors; window displays and awnings;
- passive security and energy conservation systems; and
- truck docks.

Commercial buildings are eligible for a rebate of up to \$5,000 per storefront unit. Industrial buildings are eligible for a rebate of up to \$10,000 per facade unit.

Consideration should be given to creating a TIF funded facade rebate program which provides higher rebate amounts and a more extensive scope of rehabilitation activities.

Micro Loan Program:

The City's Micro Loan Program provides business loans to eligible small businesses which create jobs for low or moderate income City residents by expanding in or relocating to Chicago. The program is administered by DPD.

Provide loans up to \$20,000 to Chicago's small businesses for projects that create jobs. Address the needs of businesses that cannot obtain conventional loans through traditional lending institutions. Loans are made at a flat 3% rate or 75% of the prime rate depending on the location and type of business. Funds can be used for machinery, equipment, renovation, or working capital.

Marketing materials for this and other City programs should be distributed to businesses in the area.

CitySpace Program:

The CitySpace Program is an intergovernmental initiative guided by the CitySpace Plan, which was developed jointly by the City, Chicago Park District, and Cook County Forest Preserve District. The Plan sets open space goals, and recommends programs/projects that create new open spaces in Chicago. The Program seeks to expand/improve open space through intergovernmental and community partnerships.

Program initiatives include:

- School Parks: conversion of underused school grounds into landscaped open spaces.
- Greenway Planning: creation of greenways along waterways and rail corridors.
- Neighborhood Parks: working with the Park District, local businesses, and community organizations to acquire property for new open space and recreation centers.
- Streetscape: planning/development of landscaping and street furniture in special commercial and industrial districts.

A sub-committee of local organizations should be established to work with the CitySpace Program to implement the open space initiatives outlined in the Area Land Use Plan, especially the neighborhood park concept for the northeast corner of Adams and Sangamon.

NEAR WEST SIDE

NeighborSpace Program:

The NeighborSpace Program is a non-profit corporation created by the City, Park District, and Cook County Forest Preserve District to support and expand small open spaces in Chicago neighborhoods. The open spaces can be community gardens, mini and neighborhood parks, greenways, river edge easements, wetlands and natural areas, plazas, and industrial area landscapes.

Program qualifications include:

- Commitment by a local entity to regular site maintenance through a management agreement.
- Proposed site should not contain any buildings.
- Playground structures are discouraged.
- Priority NeighborSpace projects are City-owned, tax delinquent, donated land, and/or river edges.

The program should be considered for new open space initiatives for the Near West Side.

Chicago Gateway Green Partnership:

The Chicago Gateway Green Partnership is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the beautification of Chicago area expressways through maintenance and landscaping. The program is marketed and managed by the Gateway Green Committee and funded through financial contributions of corporate sponsors. Expressway improvements include:

- Regular removal of litter and graffiti.
- Planting of flowers, vines, and other landscaping.
- Installation of participant recognition signs displaying Partnership and corporate sponsor logos.

The program should be considered for enhancements to the Kennedy and Eisenhower Expressways.

CTA Adopt-A-Station Program:

The program is an initiative whereby community groups can improve the physical condition of rail stations/sites. Groups and/or businesses "adopt" a local station and work closely with the CTA in determining and maintaining station enhancements. Program benefits include:

- More attractive stations and surroundings.
- Re-establishing stations as focal points of community pride and interest.
- Recognition of groups and businesses with strong community commitment.

Open Space Impact Fee Program

The City of Chicago Open Space Impact Fee requires new residential developments to contribute to a pool of money which is used to expand the supply and/or capacity of public open space within the community area in which it is collected.

Permitted use of fees include:

- Acquisition and development of land.
- Development of land surrounding public schools for parks including:
 - landscaping;
 - playground equipment;
 - sidewalks, paths, bikeways, overlooks, boat launches, and paved outdoor recreation areas; and
 - park furnishings such as benches, shelters, drinking fountains, and signage.

As noted earlier, a special committee should be established to assist in further identifying the needs and appropriate locations for new open space facilities. This could be the same committee that works with the CitySpace program.

Special Service Area Financing:

A Special Service Area (SSA) is a state-authorized financing program administered by the City that provides financial resources for a specific area. It is funded through a separate property tax levy paid by property owners within the designated area.

An SSA can be initiated by property and business owners wanting certain special services above those already available and/or not otherwise provided by the City or other government entities, such as advertising/marketing, parking, loan programs, capital improvements, and maintenance.

An SSA consists of all contiguous properties that will benefit from the special services and elect to levy an additional property tax to pay for the services. After approval by the owners and City Council, the tax would be levied annually and distributed to the SSA .

Local business or development organizations typically sponsor SSA applications and a Special Service Area Commission is formed to administer the services. Business and property owners usually make up the commission, administer the services, and hold public meetings to discuss the local benefits of an SSA.

Special Service Areas are useful implementation tools for improving, managing, and maintaining commercial districts. An SSA should be considered for the Randolph and Fulton Markets and to help pay for streetscape improvements and especially for combined parking programs, as well as on-going area maintenance. Greektown has an SSA in place for maintenance and marketing purposes.

Tax Increment Financing:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a state authorized program administered by the City that provides targeted financial resources for a specific redevelopment area. A TIF district may be designated according to two eligibility criteria as a "blighted area" and/or "conservation area".

Eligible costs include TIF studies, property acquisition, demolition, rehabilitation, infrastructure improvements, certain financing costs, relocation, job training, and environmental remediation. The versatility of TIF makes it a popular device to finance redevelopment activities.

As noted earlier in the Area Analysis, the Near West Side has three TIF districts - the Kinzie TIF, Near West TIF, and the Central West TIF. There may be potential to expand these districts or create additional TIF districts to assist redevelopment in the area.

A TIF district is structured as follows:

- Property values in the designated area are established at a base point in time (this is also known as the base value).
- All governments with property tax authority in the district continue to receive tax revenue generated at the "base value" tax rates.
- The additional value, also known as incremental value, created by new development, is taxed at the overall rate levied by the government.
- The tax revenue generated from the incremental property value is distributed to the area to pay for eligible redevelopment costs, financed either through bonds or other funding vehicles.

NEAR WEST SIDE

NEAR WEST SIDE PLAN

APPENDIX

NEAR WEST SIDE

PLANNING INITIATIVES

Central West Redevelopment Plan:

In 1969, the Central West Redevelopment Plan was prepared by Chicago's Department of Urban Renewal for an area bounded by Warren on the north, the Eisenhower Expressway on the south, Racine on the east, and Rockwell Street on the west. Its goals were to:

- provide new housing, especially for low and moderate income families;
- locate high-density development, especially residential, at points of transportation access;
- create convenient shopping clusters with priority given to local businesses;
- provide land for public spaces such as parks, schools, and pedestrian greenways;
- develop a street system that separates vehicular and pedestrian circulation; and
- minimize displacement.

Twelve amendments have been added over the last thirty years to update the Plan according to the area's changing needs. However, due to current development trends and community needs, many of the land use goals affecting the Near West Side east of Ashland are no longer relevant.

Madison-Racine Redevelopment Plan:

In May 1976, the City designated an area bounded by Lake on the north, Madison and Monroe on the south, the Kennedy Expressway on the east, and Ogden on the west as the Madison/Racine Redevelopment Area. In August 1979, the Department of Urban Renewal created a general Redevelopment Plan for the area with the following objectives:

- retain and strengthen businesses;
- remove obsolete and substandard structures;
- retain compatible sound buildings;
- provide marketable parcels of land for commercial and industrial development;
- provide land for parking, loading, and open space; and
- develop a street system that will improve safety and traffic flow.

In 1980, the Area was redesignated as a blighted commercial district by the Commercial District Development Commission. An amendment in 1987 updated the status of several buildings as potential sites for acquisition. Appropriate redevelopment and reuse opportunities within the area can be implemented using the Redevelopment Area designation.

West Loop Adaptive Reuse Analysis:

In 1983, Hasbrouck Peterson Associates completed an Adaptive Reuse Analysis for the West Loop Task Force of the Chicago Central Area Committee. The Analysis included an inventory of existing buildings in the area bounded by Kinzie on the north, the Eisenhower Expressway on the south, the Chicago River on the east, and Sangamon on the west.

The survey provided a first step towards implementing an adaptive reuse program in the West Loop. Further analysis and other implementation steps needed to be established.

West Loop Task Force Report:

In 1985, the Chicago Central Area Committee created a West Loop Task Force to study land use and economic growth in the West Loop.

The Task Force examined a large area bounded by Kinzie on the north, Roosevelt on the south, Wacker on the east, and Ashland/Ogden on the west. It prepared a report which focused mostly east of the Kennedy Expressway. It identified renovation opportunities for Greektown, specifically regarding streetscape enhancement.

Streetscape improvements were recently implemented by the City along Halsted Street.

Real Estate Market Trends Report:

In 1988, Applied Real Estate Analysis prepared a Real Estate Market Trends Report for DPD for the Near West Side bounded by Lake on the north, the Eisenhower Expressway on the south, the Kennedy Expressway on the east, and Ashland on the west. Development options were suggested for six sub-areas:

Greektown

(between Madison/Kennedy Expressway/Green/Van Buren)

- Increase the area's attractiveness as a restaurant/entertainment center.
- Consider new high rise development.
- Encourage new retail and office facilities.
- Establish cultural centers and organizations, especially those relating to the Greek culture.
- Consider a parking structure to accommodate new activities.

Residential/Institutional Area

(between Monroe/Eisenhower Expressway/Throop/Ashland)

- Redevelop vacant sites for new housing.
- Improve management of open space and park facilities.
- Increase crime prevention efforts specifically related to auto theft.

Westgate Mill District

(between Monroe/Van Buren/Green/Throop)

- Consider public funding for rehabilitation of large loft buildings.
- Assemble sites for long term development.
- Encourage residential and institutional uses.
- Improve public facilities, especially Skinner Park, for residents and Whitney Young High School students.
- Increase crime prevention efforts.

Mixed-Use Commercial/Light Industrial Area

(between Randolph/Monroe/Kennedy Expressway/Ashland)

- Establish a business/industrial park that can compete with suburban rent levels.
- Consider townhouse development.
- Establish a convenience retail area, including small grocery store, dry cleaners, etc.

Randolph Market

(along Randolph between Halsted and Ogden)

- Maintain and improve the area's attractiveness for food and related businesses.
- Improve streetscape, parking, and access.
- Consider a farmer's market during non-rush hours.

Lake Street Commercial/Industrial Area

(between Lake, Randolph, Kennedy Expressway, Ashland)

- Attract storage operations and other businesses suitable for an older industrial area.

Since 1988, several of the report's recommendations have been implemented such as improvements to Greektown and Skinner Park, crime prevention programs, and new residential development.

Physical improvements in the produce markets and industrial blocks are still needed as are additional neighborhood-level retail uses.

NEAR WEST SIDE

Corridors of Industrial Opportunity:

In 1992, DPD prepared a Corridors of Industrial Opportunity Study, noting the important role that industry has played in Chicago's history.

Included in the report was the Kinzie Industrial District bounded by Division on the north, Lake on the south, Halsted on the east, and Central Park on the west. Recommendations for the Kinzie District that have an impact on the Near West Side, especially in regards to stabilization of the Randolph Market, include:

- Industrial expansion in the Fulton Market;
- Increasing viaduct clearance to improve truck access; and
- Improving major traffic routes to alleviate congestion.

Near West Redevelopment Project Area Tax Increment Finance Program:

In 1996, the Madison-Racine TIF, originally bounded by Randolph on the north, Madison on the south, Peoria on the east, and May on the west was expanded and renamed the Near West TIF as an implementation tool for the Madison-Racine Urban Renewal Area.

The objectives of the TIF were to:

- encourage comprehensive area redevelopment;
- provide necessary public improvements; and
- provide public assistance to promote private redevelopment of the area.

The TIF was expanded to incorporate Greektown and the Randolph Market Area and is now bounded generally by Lake on the north, Van Buren on the south, the Kennedy Expressway on the east, and May on the west.

Chicago Food Wholesaling Market District Revitalization Feasibility Report:

In 1995, DPD prepared a study of the City's wholesale food distribution businesses. Its boundaries were Carroll on the north, Randolph on the south, Halsted on the east, and Ogden on the west. Included in the Study were the Randolph and Fulton Markets. It assessed the viability of food wholesaling and defined recommendations for accelerating its development.

Redevelopment assistance, vacant land, streetscape/identity features and transportation improvements were addressed including:

Fulton Market

- encourage/assist private redevelopment efforts;
- modernize wholesale facilities;
- consider a prototype multi-tenant facility;
- implement sidewalk and sewer improvements;
- organize an association of food businesses to work with the City;
- seek funding for improvement and development;
- establish guidelines for redevelopment;
- provide conflict resolution between businesses and City agencies, with a trained ombudsman in a business express office;
- arrange for liaison with the Randolph Street Market Association;
- work with appropriate City agencies to bring about street, curb, and drainage repairs;
- develop a guide to redevelopment incentives;
- arrange additional development incentives; and
- organize a Market promotional program.

Randolph Market

- accentuate the identity of the Market with exterior features like archways and historical markers;
- develop the eastern half of Randolph with diverse food service businesses;
- develop the western half of Randolph with wholesale food distribution with modern facilities; and
- solve parking problems with employee parking facilities under buildings and customer parking in garages.

These recommendations, which represent critical initiatives needed to stabilize and revitalize the Markets, need to be implemented.

Randolph Street Market Planning Report:

In 1995, Okrent Associates prepared a planning study of Randolph Street for the West Loop Gate Community Organization. The study addressed Randolph from Des Plaines on the east to Ogden on the west. It recommended:

- enhancing pedestrian amenities, activity, and safety;
- preserving the produce market function as the core of the street's identity;
- pursuing policies that encourage further private investment initiatives;
- encouraging preservation/enhancement of historic architecture;

- enhancing the physical definition of the market as a distinct district; and
- development of residential uses toward the west end of the street.

Since the study, the City has completed extensive street and streetscape improvements along Randolph.

Strategic Plan for Kinzie Industrial Corridor:

In 1996, the Industrial Council of Northwest Chicago (ICNC) prepared a Strategic Plan for the Kinzie Industrial Corridor. The study area was bounded by Grand on the north, Lake on the south, Halsted on the east, and Central Park on the west.

The Plan recommends improving the corridor as an urban industrial park that protects the industrial character of the area and promotes business retention, expansion and attraction. Five initiatives were recommended including:

- improving security and public safety;
- upgrading traffic and transportation access;
- preserving industrial uses and redeveloping available sites for industrial uses;
- creating a greater sense of identity and a positive image for the corridor; and
- initiating new and strengthening current business-community partnerships.

Several of the study's recommendations are applicable to the need to improve, stabilize, and develop the Randolph Market as a wholesale food distribution center. The 1996 study became a base for designation of the Corridor as a Planned Manufacturing District and Tax Increment Finance District by the City in 1998.

Central West Redevelopment Project Area Financing District:

The Central West TIF's generally bounded by Monroe on the north, Van Buren on the south, Morgan on the east, and Western on the west. The Central West TIF was created as an implementation tool for the Central West Redevelopment Area. The objectives for the Central West TIF are synonymous with the Near West TIF.

NEAR WEST SIDE

Kinzie Industrial Corridor Transportation Plan/Program (Draft):

In 1997, Barton-Aschman Associates prepared a Transportation Plan for DPD for the Kinzie Industrial Corridor that recommended:

- accessibility improvements for transit users and trucks;
- physical enhancements to improve area perceptions and personal safety/security;
- solutions for traffic and parking problems.

The key recommendations of the Plan/Program were incorporated into the Kinzie TIF and Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) plans.

Kinzie Planned Manufacturing District:

In 1998, the City designated the Kinzie Industrial District as a Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) bounded by Grand on the north, Lake on the south, Halsted on the east, and Sacramento on the west.

It addressed the encroachment on industrial uses by non-industrial uses and the demand for zoning changes incompatible with a manufacturing district. A PMD is designated to stabilize industrial environments and foster industrial development through restricting zoning. The Kinzie PMD is located adjacent to the Near West Side, and provides development opportunities for local industrial businesses which may need to relocate.

Kinzie Industrial Conservation Area Tax Increment Redevelopment Plan and Project:

In 1998, Camiros prepared a Kinzie Tax Increment Redevelopment Plan/Project report for DPD. The designated area is bounded by Grand on the north, Washington and Randolph on the south, Halsted on the east, and Kedzie on the west.

The Plan's goals included:

- creating a competitive, accessible, safe and attractive environment promoting industrial growth and investment;
- protecting existing industrial concentrations, from incompatible land uses;
- recycling polluted sites into marketable property for industrial use;
- enhancing the area's tax base; and
- employing local residents.

Tax increment financing (TIF) provides the City with a funding tool to facilitate area improvements and redevelopment. The Randolph and Fulton Markets are located in the Kinzie TIF district.

TOD Plans at Selected CTA Green Line Stations:

In 1998, the City engaged Camiros and Campbell Tiu Campbell to study the transit oriented development potential of the CTA Green Line. The following was recommended for the Ashland station:

- maintain industrial and residential land uses;
- strengthen the link between the Station and street level to draw more users;
- create a visual and physical link between the station and adjacent intersection;
- intensify and diversify neighborhood-level convenience retail south of the station;
- provide adequate parking;
- facilitate bus and taxi transfers;
- consider van shuttles to nearby businesses and institutions;
- maintain existing infrastructure to enhance safety and security;
- encourage pedestrian activity on the street;
- develop infill housing south of station; and
- improve nearby streetscape.

Real Estate Needs Assessment for the Randolph/Fulton Market Area:

In February 2000, Arthur Andersen completed a Real Estate Needs Assessment for the Randolph/Fulton Market Area for DPD for the area bounded by Carroll on the north, Randolph on the south, Halsted on the east and Ogden on the west. Significant redevelopment pressures occurring in the area prompted DPD to investigate the real estate needs of the existing businesses in the Market Area as well as the other uses that are proliferating.

The study determined that:

- Of the companies that were surveyed, 59% of the companies were likely to stay in the Market Area and 41% of the companies were likely to relocate from the area.
 - The City should review the infrastructure that is needed and begin a schedule of capital investment. Problems relating to the Market's aging infrastructure will be exacerbated by the increased density of redevelopment.
 - The City should review opportunities to provide shared parking facilities. The Area is under-parked for companies and the Area's other commercial uses.
 - The City should review and possibly increase parking requirements for newly developed residential units. This would further address the area's lack of parking.
- The area's traffic patterns should be reviewed to develop a strategy to minimize conflicts between truck and other commercial traffic and residential traffic.
 - The City should work with merchants, businesses, and residents to return full functionality to the Randolph arterial, while retaining its intended beauty.
 - The City needs to continue to monitor proposed redevelopments in the Market Area to determine the potential conflicts to area businesses and parking/street capacity. A cooperative forum that includes the Alderman's office, the merchant's association and others will be important to address issues as they arise.