

# INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR MODERNIZATION

## Ravenswood



## PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY

April 19, 2018



CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



## BACKGROUND

Under Mayor Rahm Emanuel's direction, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) initiated a public review process in spring 2016 to evaluate and refine land use policies for continued growth and private investment in the City's Industrial Corridor system.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the public input that has been received during the community outreach process which included working group and public meetings, and an inline survey, and to make this information available to all interested parties.

## MEETINGS

City staff from the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the City of Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), along with their team of consultants hosted two meetings; a working group and public meeting.

The working group meeting was held on February 28, 2018, at the Ravenswood Lofts, located at 4437 N Ravenswood Ave, Chicago Illinois. Fifty individuals were selected to represent the interests of their sectors, ranging from manufacturing, business support services, government, information and technology, finance, insurance, real estate, leisure and hospitality, and residential groups. The purpose of the working group is to collaborate with the project team to develop concepts and provide input and feedback. The purpose of this meeting was primarily to kick-off the Industrial Corridor Modernization initiative in Ravenswood with the working group members and the project team, to review the project scope, roles, and projected timeline, and to review existing conditions within the Ravenswood Industrial Corridor.

The informational presentation slides shown at the working group meeting were revised based on feedback for use at the public meeting held on March 21, 2018 at McPherson Elementary School, located at 4728 N Wolcott Ave. The public meeting was advertised on DPD's website, as well as in the 47th ward and GRCC's newsletters. There were 134 stakeholders who attended the public meeting, including residents of Ravenswood, business and property owners, and community group representatives.

## PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Staff and meeting participants reviewed information regarding the Chicago Industrial Corridor System and the Industrial Corridor Modernization process, existing conditions within the corridor, and next steps in the planning process:

### Chicago's Industrial Corridor System

- The history of city's industrial corridor system was presented, which began with the Union Stockyards. Industrial corridors were officially established in the 1990's. Currently, there are 26 Industrial Corridors within the city.
- Several recent studies and plans were identified, including Chicago Sustainable Industries (2013), Fulton Market Innovation District (2014), and others.

### Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative

In 2016, DPD began evaluating Chicago's 26 Industrial Corridors to:

- Better understand the industrial marketplace
- Evaluate the need for updates to land regulations necessary to promote job creation
- Respond to changing employment trends

Eventually, each corridor study will result in:

- A land use framework reflecting unique trends
- Design guidelines (where applicable)

## Employment Trends

- Employment trends were identified for the citywide Industrial Corridor system, and specifically for the Ravenswood corridor.
- The northern portion of the Ravenswood Industrial Corridor is primarily manufacturing, with a total of 775 jobs.
- The southern portion is experiencing a range of land use changes, with a total of 3,559 jobs. High concentrations of people who work in the south portion live in the adjacent zip codes.
- DPD will continue to meet with stakeholders in the northern section.
- Additional focus is needed in the southern section due to changing employment trends.

## Study Area Discussion

Four topic areas were presented to the working group:

- **Land Use and Zoning.** Evaluate employment and land use trends and relevance of current industrial corridor boundary
- **Historic Character.** Assess historic resources and preservation strategies
- **Transportation.** Maximize the transit-served location; Identify opportunities to improve access and safety; evaluate opportunities to accommodate changing automotive technology.
- **Sustainability.** Identify opportunities to incorporate best practices for stormwater management; evaluate opportunities for using solar power.

## INPUT HIGHLIGHTS

Following the public meeting, an online survey was made available to stakeholders from March 22 through March 31, 2018. A total of 192 individuals participated in the online survey, responding to several open-ended questions on the project's topic areas including land use, historic character, transportation access and safety, and sustainability. The results of the survey and input received as part of the working group and public meetings are summarized below, with project team responses to questions in italics where applicable.

### General

Respondents appreciated the opportunity to be involved in this planning process to modernize the industrial corridor. Several positive attributes were noted in the neighborhood relating to diversity: mixed-use development, varying levels of income, mix of business, housing choices which are affordable to different income levels.

Residents, businesses, and transportation infrastructure are near each other which makes the neighborhood easily walkable, but sometimes presents challenges with quality of life issues including: traffic flow on streets, safety, aesthetics, construction inconveniences, and noise.

### Land Use Findings

The area is currently transitioning from primarily light industrial to a mix of smaller manufacturers, office, retail, and some residential uses. The area's unique features include an established public transportation network and an inventory of buildings suitable for a variety of uses. These assets should be maximized to allow the area to continue to evolve into an active hub for jobs, commercial, and entertainment options.

*Survey question: Are you noticing land use changes within the study area? If yes, what and where?*

Highlights:

- Provide an opportunity for the area to grow into a hub of activity, transitioning from a sleepy industrial corridor into a mix of uses that provide jobs, including studio spaces for craftsmen or boutique industry (schools, commercial design, athletic/fitness), finance, tech and creative offices with entrepreneurs who need access to workshops for prototyping.
- The study area is surrounded by a vibrant community of restaurants and diverse family-friendly neighborhoods.
- More restaurants, brewery's, condo's, and non-manufacturing jobs are coming to the area, making the area more dynamic and increasing foot traffic.
- Street fests are becoming popular and create spaces for people to gather and socialize.
- Re-use industrial buildings with mix of small businesses and light manufacturing.
- 50 answered "No land use changes noticed".

*Survey question: What are the most important issues concerning land use & zoning in the study area?*

Highlights:

- Optimize the areas proximity to public transit by allowing more density for offices, jobs, and residents.
- Maintain a balance of current business needs, new business/entertainment and housing.
- Increase affordable housing to create a vibrant urban density.
- Current zoning restrictions make it difficult to attract new businesses into the area and prevents a mix of uses. Need to make it easier to do business in the corridor.
- Zoning should not be used to prohibit existing and future manufacturing in the corridor.
- Consider the context and character of the surrounding area when deciding new building appearance / heights, and preserve the charm of the corridor.

- The Metra track embankment prevents the canyon-effect that tall buildings typically create, which provides a good opportunity to build new taller buildings.
- Maintain the industrial jobs within the corridor.
- Maintain a space for small scale manufacturers and independent retailers to establish and grow.
- Preserve truck access and loading zones for existing industrial users.
- Be respectful of the residential areas surrounding the corridor by controlling noise, traffic, safety, trash, and odors within the industrial corridor.
- Attract more businesses that people in the surrounding neighborhood can walk and bike to.
- Promote more activity on the streets in the evening.
- Consider the parking and traffic impacts of all new development.
- Evaluate truck traffic routes and reduce congestion on Ravenswood by encouraging trucks to use Ashland and Damen instead.
- Maintain the green space adjacent to the Metra tracks and keep it accessible to the public.
- Business and residential rent increases as the area becomes more popular (gentrification), which prevents access to new businesses and new residents.

General questions:

- What is the outcome of this study: to change zoning, or make physical changes? *The product is a framework plan that the Alderman, City and neighborhood groups can use to guide future development in the corridor – a basis for decision making. It could include recommendations for land use zoning changes, but also guidelines for how private development and investments in the public way should look and function.*
- How does green space fit into project? *We don't anticipate creating new parks in this industrial corridor as there isn't enough vacant space. Rather, we will focus on amenities in the public right of way.*

## Historic Character Findings

The charm of the Ravenswood Industrial Corridor should be maintained while adapting to market changes by encouraging re-use of unique industrial buildings and considering the context of the area when modernizing the corridor to preserve the corridor's authentic character.

*Survey question: What features contribute to the historic character of the study area?*

Highlights:

- Leverage all available tools (law, tax credits, creative rehabs that preserve as much as structurally possible, etc.) to encourage developers to preserve historic buildings.
- Consider high quality architecture and site design when redeveloping non-historic buildings. Attempts to replicate the historic architecture are not considered genuine.
- Transportation access is the historical foundation of the industrial corridor, allowing access to jobs.
- Repurpose warehouse/industrial buildings to fit modern uses while keeping the character of the building.
- Maintain and preserve the brick streets.
- Brick facades, large windows, varying heights, art deco details, and features on top of old buildings (including the clock tower and signs from the original business) are important architectural characteristics in the industrial corridor.
- There are many good examples of buildings which demonstrate the industrial architecture (see list below).
- Many buildings in the industrial corridor do not have historic character.

*Survey question: What are the most important issues concerning historic character in the study area?*

Highlights:

- Preserve the current buildings/ style and re-purpose buildings when possible, instead of new development with modern, generic-looking architecture.
- Modernize the industrial corridor without losing the charm and character that has attracted the businesses and people to that area.
- Create a walkable, unique area for all visitors by adding neighborhood identifying signage, good lighting, better walkways, bike paths, and historical markers.
- Maintain and preserve the brick streets.
- Increase green space along the tracks.
- Consider building height and its impact on sunlight within the corridor.
- Low-rise brick buildings contribute to the industrial streetscape, but not all are worth preserving.
- The train lines unify the corridor and have distinctive features.

*Survey question: Are there any buildings in study area that have particularly special or unique historic character? Please provide an address, if possible:*

- Airstream (on roof), 1807 W Sunnyside
- Architectural Artifacts, 4325 N Ravenswood
- Band of Bohemia, 4710 N Ravenswood
- Begyle Brewery, 1800 W Cuyler Ave
- Billboard Factory, 4043 N Ravenswood
- Bowman Dairy, 4256 N Ravenswood
- Bulldog Lock Co, 4636 N Ravenswood
- Condo building, 4745 N Ravenswood
- Deagan, 1770 W Berteau
- Domestic Linens, 4131 N Ravenswood
- Dovetail Brewery, - 1800 W Belle Plaine
- Evanstonia - 4555 N Ravenswood

- Gabel & Schubert, 4500 N Ravenswood
- Golden Nugget, 1765 W Lawrence
- Industrial building, 4321 N Ravenswood
- JARC, 4400-28 N Ravenswood
- Julius Meini, 4115 N Ravenswood
- Lillstreet Arts Center, 4401 N Ravenswood
- Manz Building, 4001 N Ravenswood
- McBride Bros / Knobbe Ice Cream, 4617 N Ravenswood
- Old Newark Electronics, 4541 N Ravenswood
- O'Shaughnessy's / Pickard, 4557 N Ravenswood
- Ravenswood Event Center, 4021 N Ravenswood
- Schulman's plumbing, 4700 N Ravenswood
- Singer Needle, 4355 N Ravenswood
- Skol, 4444 N Ravenswood
- Spacca Napoli, 1769 W Sunnyside

Out of RIC boundary:

- Abbot labs home, 4605 N Hermitage
- All Saints Church, 4550 N Hermitage
- Bob Fosse home, Paulina and Hermitage
- Carl Sandburg home, 4646 N Hermitage
- Charlie Chaplin movies studio, Ravenswood between Irving Park and Wilson
- Converted fire station home, 3921 N Ravenswood
- Old Painted Lady homes

General question:

- Is the brick-paved street going to stay? Please consider maintaining it. *Alderman's office rep – we have taken great care to preserve and protect the brick paving (ex: during Metra construction); there is always the challenge of ongoing maintenance.*

## Transportation Findings

The transportation network of rail, bus, bike lanes, parking areas, roads, and sidewalks should accommodate the needs of *all* existing and future users in a safe and efficient way.

*Survey question: As transportation technology advances and potentially reduces the need for personal cars on the road, how willing would you be to replace existing parking with open space along the right-of-way? (scale: 0 = not willing, 100 = very willing):*

Highlights:

- Of the 189 responses, the ranges of 0-10 and 90-100 received the greatest number of responses. Many responses had varying degrees of willingness.

*Survey question: Have you noticed an increase in congestion due to shared vehicle (Uber, Lyft, taxi, etc.) drop-off and pick-up? If yes, please tell us where and be as specific as possible.*

Highlights:

- Increased rideshare traffic was reported at Mariano's, the breweries, Metra stations, and along the arterial roads adjacent to the corridor. These areas could benefit from designated drop off / pick-up zones.
- Both rideshare and delivery drivers were observed not adhering to existing traffic laws (parking in bike lanes, dropping customers in the middle of the road, blocking loading zones, trolling/waiting for customers on residential streets).
- All businesses rely on the road network to access their business, and cause congestion in the area at varying times; i.e. schools, daycare (kids/pets), special events, restaurants, commuters, which could all benefit from designated drop off areas.
- Many respondents reported no increase in rideshare traffic congestion, with some reporting decreased congestion in the area.

- GPS transportation apps (Waze, Google maps) may also contribute to increased use of Ravenswood and side streets as drivers seek alternative routes to their destinations.
- Any reduction in parking spaces needs to be carefully studied, since impacts of technology are unknown and would occur in the distant future.

*Survey question: What are the most important issues concerning transportation access, safety & technology in the study area?*

Highlights:

- Review the effectiveness of the parking system, including the Industrial Parking Permits time restrictions, metered parking, and drop-off areas, to ensure the needs of users (workers, customers, visitors, residents) are being met.
- Evaluate the road network and develop solutions to improve safety and access, including smart signals, and coordinated street directions (ex. Green wave on Wells St).
- Cars and trucks have low visibility when backing out into the street, causing a safety concern for pedestrians and bikes.
- Repair and maintain existing transportation infrastructure (viaducts, roads, bike lanes, sidewalks. Lighting, plowed snow piles).
- Maintain a well-functioning public transit system.
- Evaluate improving the bicycle route on Ravenswood by separating bikes and pedestrians from automobiles and trucks, and keep the bike lanes in good repair. Brick roads are difficult for bicyclists to navigate.
- Provide adequate road width for trucks.
- Improve safety near transit stations by improving lighting, removing trash, and discouraging loitering.
- Curb bump-outs are problematic for trucks to navigate and difficult to maintain.
- Design roads and intersections to promote pedestrian and bike safety. Note that new configurations confuse drivers

and cause accidents (ex. Lincoln/Southport, and road diet at Lawrence causing trucks to use alternate routes on residential streets).

- Enforce exiting traffic laws (blocking roads, speeding).
- Be adaptable and realistic when planning for future automotive technology – people will continue to use their own cars for a long time into the future.

General question:

- Why is there special mention of electric vehicles – is there a design and policy implication? The only physical implications are considerations about providing parking with charging stations.

## Sustainability Findings

Sustainability principles relating to solar power, stormwater, open space, and recycling should be encouraged within the corridor. Further collaboration with interested stakeholders would be helpful to explore ways to reduce obstacles and promote sustainability in the study area.

*Survey question: Please describe any solar improvements you've made to your property:*

Highlights:

- Solar power is not currently used by any of the survey respondents. However, most respondents have considered using solar, and cite several constraints.
- Installation of solar power is cost prohibitive.
- Tenants who rent commercial, industrial, and residential buildings do not have the authority needed to install solar in their building.
- Seek opportunities to use solar in public gathering areas and under viaducts to increase safety.

## Sustainability Findings (continued)

*Survey question: What are the most important issues concerning sustainability in the study area?*

Highlights:

- Promote on-site stormwater retention using additional green space and other techniques in the right of way and on private property. Examples include using permeable bump outs, rain barrels, and green roofs.
- Advocate for sound federal environmental protection laws and city-wide sustainability initiatives.
- Achieve a balance of land uses for residents and jobs to maximize the existing public transportation infrastructure.
- Continue to preserve access to all transportation opportunities (rail, bus, bike, pedestrian, car).
- Utilize sustainability principles in design of new buildings including stormwater and building materials.
- Encourage the re-use of old buildings.
- Create new opportunities for green space.
- Properly maintain existing stormwater facilities including catch- basins and bio-swales. Consider local stewardship opportunities (adopt-a-bio swale), and careful use of weed control efforts.
- Consider providing fiber internet access on the west side of Ravenswood to promote the expansion of high-tech offices, co-working spaces and industrial workshops.
- Investigate ways to locally re-use and recycle waste generated by the businesses within the corridor (ex. grain from breweries used to de-ice roads/sidewalks).

General question:

- Where can I find the information about the State of Illinois solar incentives program? *Details will be provided.*

## NEXT STEPS

DPD and their team of consultants will meet with the working group to discuss results of the community input, and begin to develop guidelines for the study area. The conceptual guidelines will be shared during a public meeting targeted for June 2018.

DPD will also continue to meet with groups and individuals if they have questions or wish to discuss their views.

## STAY INFORMED

DPD will post upcoming meeting dates and presentations on our website:

<https://www.cityofchicago.org/dpd>

Please email DPD with any questions, or if you would like to be added to our contact database:

[DPD@cityofchicago.org](mailto:DPD@cityofchicago.org)



Working group meeting 2/26/18, Ravenswood Lofts, 4437 N Ravenswood Ave



Public meeting 3/21/18, Mc Pherson Elementary School, 4728 N Wolcott Ave