

# BLOOMINGDALE TRAIL AND PARK



**FRAMEWORK PLAN**



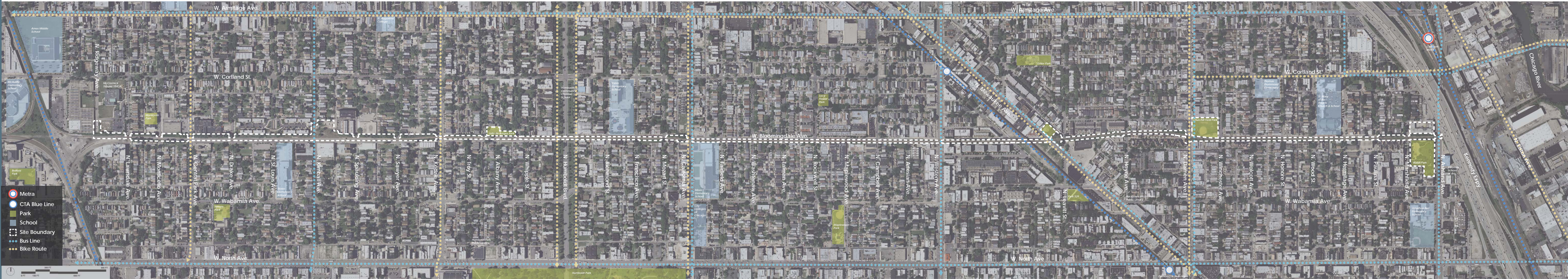
Fig. 0.a: The Bloomingdale in Chicago's Networks

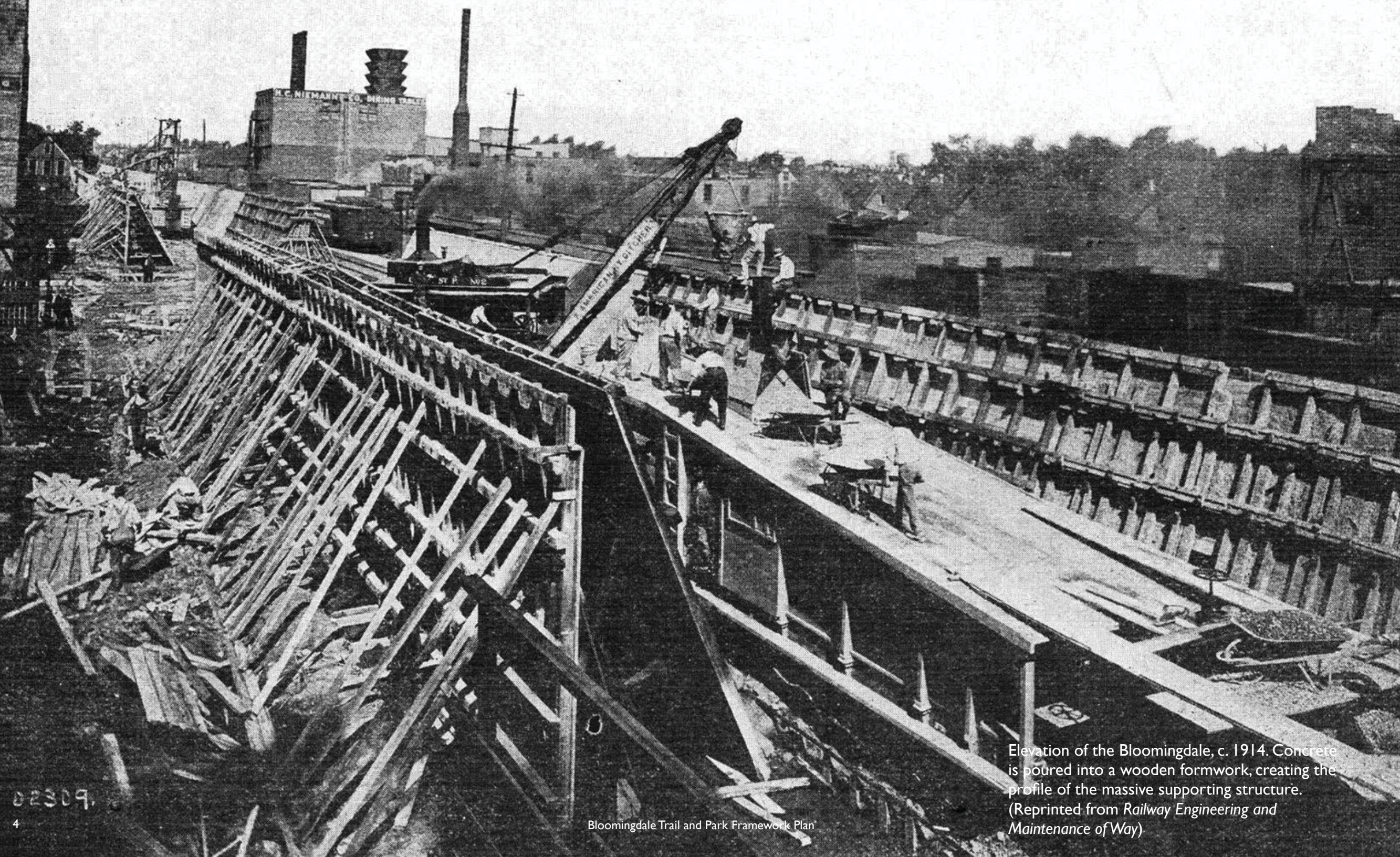


Bloomingdale Trail and Park Framework Plan

Bloomingdale Trail and Park Framework Plan

Existing Site Map





Elevation of the Bloomingdale, c. 1914. Concrete is poured into a wooden formwork, creating the profile of the massive supporting structure. (Reprinted from *Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way*)

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Bloomingdale Trail and Park Framework Plan

Rendering 2: The Bloomingdale Trail and Park's Connection to Kimball Avenue



# Office of the Mayor City of Chicago

121 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602  
[www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org), @chicagosmayor

Dear Fellow Chicagoans,

I am proud to announce the completion of this Framework Plan for the Bloomingdale Trail and Park. This plan represents a vision to convert a landmark of our industrial heritage, an elevated rail line on the northwest side of Chicago, into a world-class trail and park integrated into the Logan Square, Humboldt Park, Wicker Park, and Bucktown neighborhoods.

Through an extensive community process, the City of Chicago and its partners have hosted design workshops and public meetings to guide the future of 13 new acres of open space for Chicago, allowing residents and visitors new opportunities to play, commute, and relax. As an innovative new link in our transportation and open space infrastructure, the Bloomingdale will help grow and connect our communities through improved access to active transportation options and a unique park experience in the heart of the City.

This framework plan summarizes the ideas and vision of Chicagoans for the Bloomingdale, and will be used to guide the design and stewardship of the trail from the initial phases of construction to the opening of the new park and beyond. I invite you to explore this document and the future of the Bloomingdale Trail and Park, and learn how you can become involved with the project at [Bloomingdaletrail.org](http://Bloomingdaletrail.org).



Rahm Emanuel  
Mayor



Public charrette at the McCormick Tribune YMCA,  
October 1, 2011  
(Kate Joyce Photography)

# Foreword

The Bloomington Trail and Park Framework Plan represents a critical juncture in the development of the project. Balanced between the efforts of the past and the development of the future, it strives to capture and harness the momentum and history of the project while defining a vision for the Bloomington's initial development and long-term stewardship. Stretching 2.7 miles through four vibrant Chicago neighborhoods, the conversion of an elevated railroad line into a trail and park provides unprecedented connections to and among these communities, and inspires us to connect to each other through a shared urban experience.

The Chicago Department of Transportation, in conjunction with our partners from the Chicago Park District, the Department of Housing and Economic Development, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, The Trust for Public Land, and, most importantly, the community, has established a set of guidelines to design, implement, and manage a local trail and park with global appeal in the heart of Chicago's neighborhoods.

The Bloomington Line, located on Chicago's northwest side, has inspired many to dream of a unique urban oasis. Its industrial structure, lifted landscape, and inspiring views create a journey both profoundly public and intimate. The Bloomington runs through several vibrant communities along Bloomington Avenue, adjacent to numerous private properties, and crosses over major arterials, an historic boulevard, bus and bicycle routes, and the CTA Blue Line. The Framework Plan builds on this unique experience, blending a safe and attractive trail, accessible to all, uninterrupted by motor vehicles, and designed for all users from children to seniors, with thirteen acres of open space to create a place to play, commute, and relax.

The Bloomington Trail and Park will influence social and cultural activities and become an environment that fosters education, recreation, reflection, and community. Furthermore, like any place of meaning, it must be cared for and allowed to develop over time, reflecting the people who live around it and use it. It must be sustainable in all senses of the word, reflecting the culture of its community. It must be a living work of art that inspires stewardship and nourishes the people who use it.

The Framework Plan reflects and refines the goals of earlier plans and efforts and would not have been possible without the continued vision of Friends of the Bloomington Trail and other community organizations who have worked tirelessly to celebrate the Bloomington and inspire others to share the dream. It is our shared hope that this Framework Plan sets the stage for these goals and visions to be achieved and that it continues to be a meaningful guide for the Bloomington Trail and Park over time.



Fig. 0.b: Concept for a Typical Segment of the Bloomingdale, with Elevation Changes and Street Access

# Vision

The Plan explains how the Bloomingdale will reuse industrial infrastructure, enhance the urban environment as a space to socialize, contribute to public health by encouraging walking and bicycling, and connect communities. It will bring the natural world closer to residents of dense urban neighborhoods. It will bridge and connect these neighborhoods with transportation networks, and be an elevated landscape that creates a new and dynamic urban experience.

## Values

The Bloomingdale will embody the following values in all aspects of its design. It will be:

- Financially sustainable;
- Environmentally sustainable;
- Fully accessible for all types of users, with special attention to the varied needs of the most vulnerable – children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities;
- Designed for durability and with a stewardship plan to ensure a high-quality, maintainable project; and
- Developed with full community involvement.



Pedestrians traversing an unprotected at-grade rail crossing along Bloomingdale Avenue, c. 1912 (Chicago History Museum)

# Origin

Before the elevated structure that we know today was built, several miles of track ran down Bloomingdale Avenue at street level – part of the extensive train network that established Chicago as the Midwest’s industrial capital in the late 19th century. This at-grade Bloomingdale Line created a significant hazard for pedestrians and people were routinely killed at rail crossings. In response, in 1910 the City passed an ordinance which required 140 miles of railway, including the 2.7 mile stretch along Bloomingdale Avenue, to be elevated above street level by 1914.

## Historic structure

Undertaken with the aim of minimal disruption to surface traffic or rail service, the elevation of Chicago’s railroads was an engineering masterpiece. The Bloomingdale Line, in particular, was a feat of remarkable ingenuity, and was featured in contemporary professional engineering journals. The line was raised 16 feet above street level on a 30-foot wide right-of-way. The structure is comprised of oversized, reinforced poured-in-place concrete “boxes,” filled with soil and crushed rock, in between cross streets. The concrete walls are battered, with a seven-foot wide base that tapers toward the top. Each box is connected to the next one by a bridge, clearing the street grid, below. The bridges are mostly reinforced concrete, with a few steel structures.

## Rail use

Elevating the Bloomingdale Line had long-term effects. During its peak use, it connected local manufacturers to the world. It facilitated distribution of products fabricated along the line, including Schwinn bicycles, Hammond organs, grain elevators, and musical instrument cases. At the neighborhood level, however, the line was a barrier, separating neighbors on opposite sides of the street. The City of Chicago recognized the Bloomingdale Line as a border, with Logan Square and Bucktown to the north and Humboldt Park and Wicker Park to the south. As Chicago’s manufacturing economy changed, so did traffic on the Bloomingdale Line, with significant decline in the 1980s and 1990s.



# Origin and Transformation of the Bloomingdale

# Origin and Transformation of the Bloomingdale

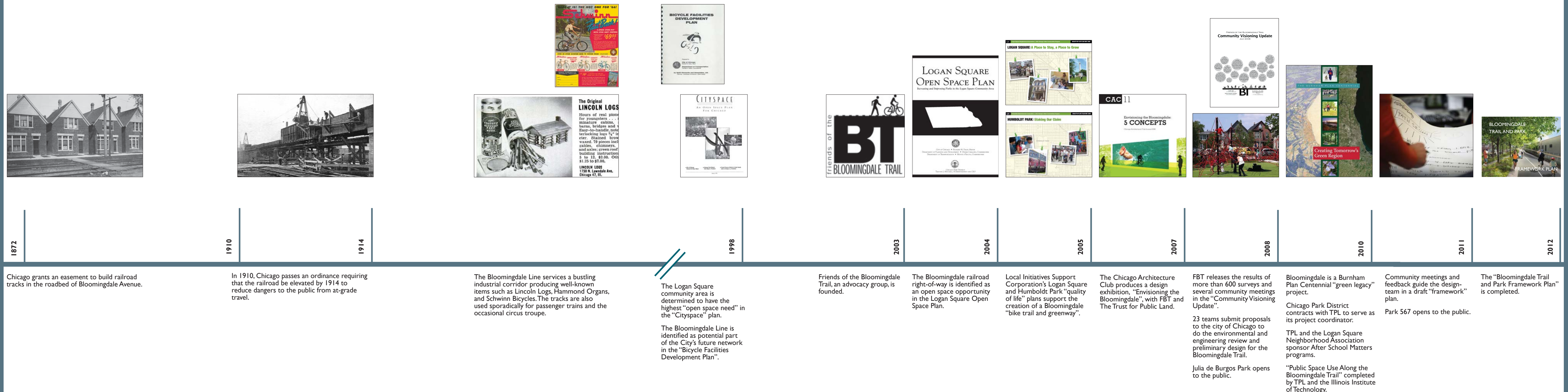


Fig 0.c: Bloomingdale Trail and Park Timeline

## Precedents



Sauganash Trail, Chicago, IL

The Sauganash Trail is like many railroad right-of-ways converted to recreational trails (“rails-to-trails”). There are thousands of miles in the United States. The first segment of the trail opened in 2008 on Chicago’s far Northwest Side, in a low population density residential neighborhood. The trail is anticipated to continue further south into Chicago and north, into the suburbs.

1.1 miles;  
Former elevated railway (earthen embankment);  
Adjacent to Sauganash Park;  
Bicycling is permitted;  
Ramp access;  
Located in a low population density (6,000/square mile); and  
Low level of use of the compared sites.



High Line, New York City, NY

Arguably the best known conversion of an elevated railroad right-of-way in the United States, the first segment of the High Line was opened in 2009 in Manhattan. The number of visitors reached more than two million in the first ten months, averaging more than 6,000 per day.

1.45 miles;  
Former elevated railway (30’ in elevation; constructed of steel and concrete);  
Near, but not connected to, other parks;  
Bicycling is prohibited;  
Stair and elevator access;  
Located in a densely populated (69,000/square mile in Manhattan) and visited urban area; and  
High level of use



Promenade Plantée, Paris

The Promenade Plantée is a converted railroad right-of-way, partially elevated and partially below grade. It was converted to a park in 1993 after being abandoned in 1969. The Promenade is thought to be the first park of its kind and served as a model for the High Line.

2.8 miles;  
Former railway right-of-way (elevated on masonry construction and below grade);  
Bicycling is permitted in certain locations;  
Stair and elevator access; and  
Located in one of the most densely populated (54,000/square mile) cities in the world.



Chicago Lakefront Trail, Chicago, IL

Begun in the 19th century, with the development of Lincoln and Grant Parks, the Chicago Lakefront Trail is 18 miles in length and continues to expand. It is one of the most heavily used recreational facilities in the city, largely because of its location between Lake Michigan and some of the most densely-settled neighborhoods in Chicago.

18 miles;  
Located primarily on landfill;  
Located within several large parks;  
Bicycling is permitted;  
Ramp and stair access over and under Lake Shore Drive;  
Located in some of the most densely populated neighborhoods in Chicago (up to 32,000/square mile); and  
A high level of use (more than 2,000 per hour, peak times).



Bloomington Trail and Park, Chicago IL

The Bloomington Line was elevated by 1914 and served adjacent businesses until the last decade. It is located in a dense part of Chicago’s Northwest Side, of approximately 21,000/square mile (the average for Chicago is 12,000/square mile).

2.7 miles;  
Former elevated railway (16’ in elevation; reinforced concrete and gravel);  
Adjacent to several parks;  
Bicycling will be allowed;  
Ramp and stair access; and  
Located in densely populated neighborhoods (approximately 21,000/square mile).

## Precedents

What could the Bloomington become? It has a combination of characteristics that have rarely been found together: an elevated railroad right-of-way in a large city that will accommodate bicycles and recreation typically found in parks. The Bloomington will be an exciting synthesis as there is not a completely replicable existing example. Some of the trails and parks that come closest to the Bloomington’s condition serve as models (left).



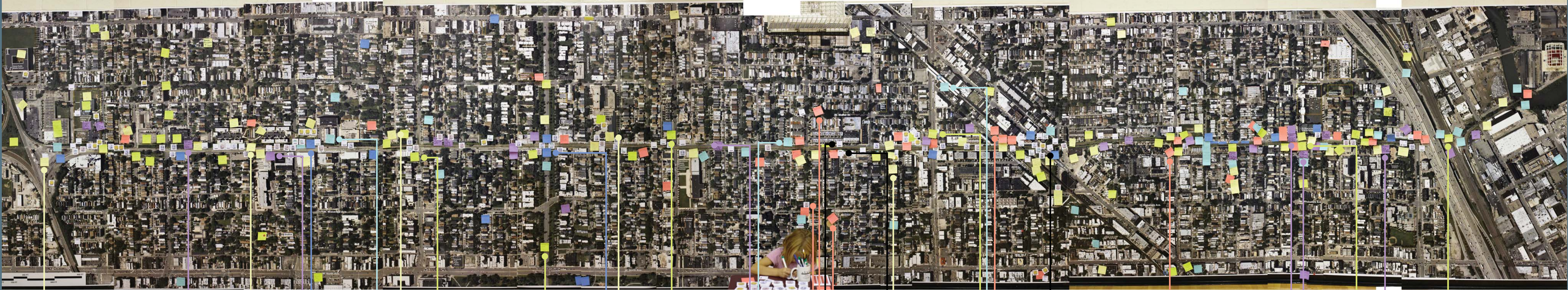
Bloomington public meeting September 8, 2011, at the Congress Theater  
(Kate Joyce Photography)

# Involving Communities

Community input has been a cumulative effort in the Framework Plan's development. A "kickoff" meeting was held in September 2011, followed by a design charrette in October 2011, a community meeting in December 2011, and the final presentation in March 2012.

The public design charrette on October 1-4, 2011, at the McCormick Tribune YMCA in Humboldt Park facilitated a comprehensive discussion of the vision for the Bloomingdale. During these four days, over 200 people worked in small groups to examine topics that ranged from access and programming to landscaping and art, went on site tours, and attended open-house meetings.

More than 500 community members attended one or more of the meetings, while thousands more kept track of progress, some submitting comments online. This remarkable level of input laid the groundwork for a deeper community involvement in the Bloomingdale as the start of work approaches. With ongoing community support, its amenities will be strengthened through stewardship so that it forms an integral and essential part of the local communities.



- Food vendors and ice cream carts
- Keep it low-tech
- Stair case
- Park with major water element
- Sledding hill
- Major connection to Humboldt Park
- Restore pedestrian access from California to Mozart
- Make it easy for families to get from the park to trail
- Block Bloomingdale to automobile traffic and build access here? Western Blue Line access is here
- Fun sculpture hanging from Blue Line
- Small theater space overlooking the street
- Wide enough to punch a hole (in the bridge deck)
- Privacy should be handled no differently than at street level
- No lights - there's plenty of ambient light already
- Tunnel under or bridge over tracks, connect to Elston
- Leave this abandoned rail car here and fill it with soil and trees - or something else neat
- Safe biking transition from the trail to Kedzie
- Overhang look out onto Humboldt
- This trail was beautiful... before they cut it all down (a reference to the overgrown state of the Bloomingdale Line and the railroad's subsequent pruning) As many trees as possible
- Preferably no community convening area here please - thanks!
- Extra trees would be nice here so people aren't always looking in my bedroom
- Connect CTA station via Winnebago, Western, or Campbell access points
- Flare bridge at Western to create plaza
- Connect to Ames Elementary and the Metra
- Central Park has to have an access point to tie in West Logan community
- Where can we play soccer?
- Sculptural seating areas along entire trail
- DJ booth
- I live here - security/privacy/noise/lights/walls/railings? Police 24/7?
- "East end" hysteria on "privacy" and "security" issues should be taken with a grain of salt

**“Post-it” Exercise**  
 At the charrette, people were asked to write down their thoughts and place them on an eight-foot tall image of the Bloomingdale and surrounding neighborhoods. Some of the comments are highlighted here. Comments on the bottom of the page are from similar activities at other public meetings.

Fig 0.e: “Post-it” Exercise



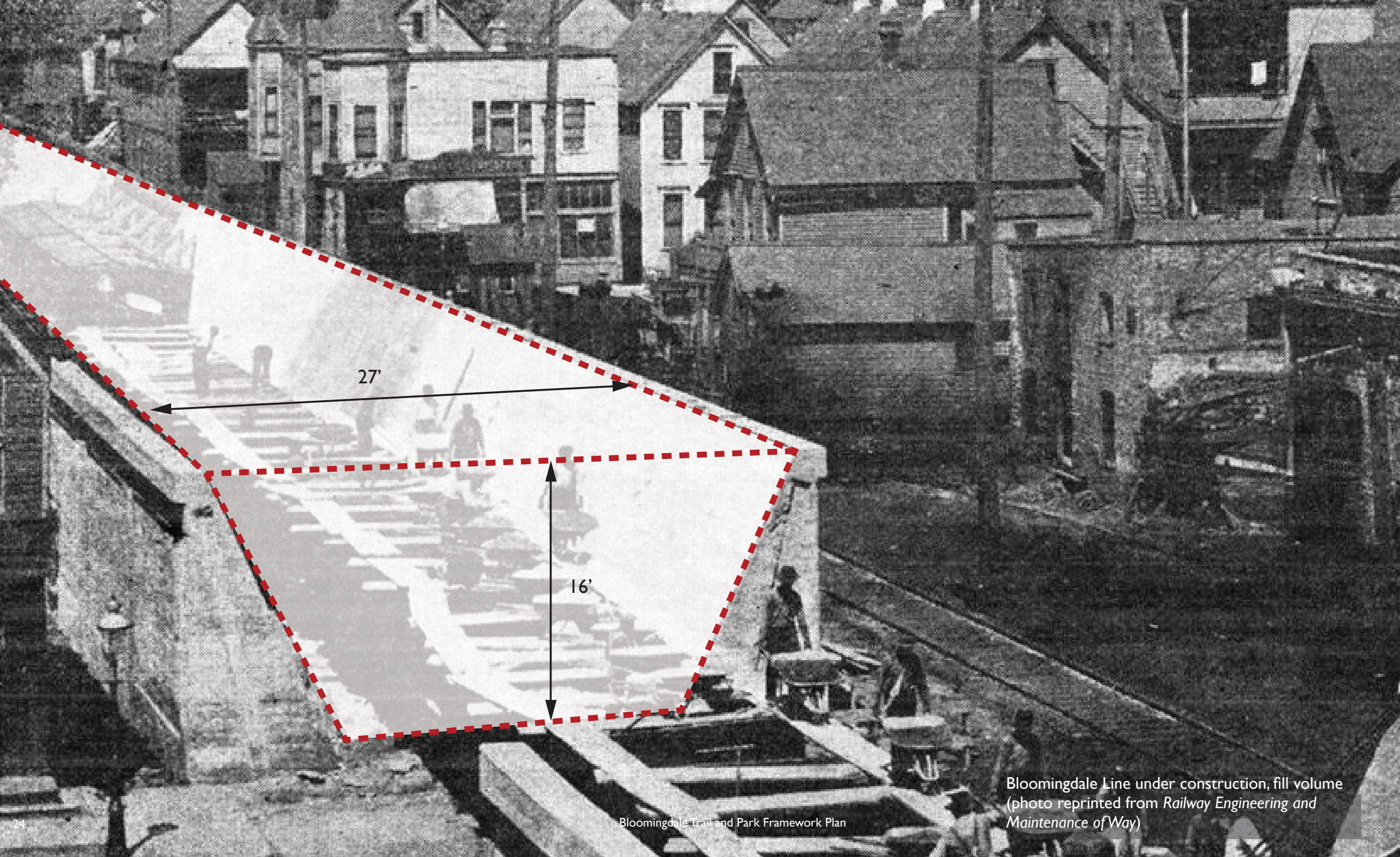
Community members at the public charrette,  
October 1, 2011  
(Kate Joyce Photography)

# Method

Meetings have been held throughout the neighborhoods that surround the Bloomingdale, and this remarkable level of community attention and input has laid the groundwork for continued and deepening involvement through its construction and opening.

Seven objectives for the Bloomingdale were developed by synthesizing the input and feedback of hundreds of people, including participants in community meetings, city agencies, local stakeholders, residents, and the design team. The detailed objectives, and how they were developed, follow. These objectives will guide the future development of the Bloomingdale Trail and Park through design, construction, and stewardship.

The detailed recommendations that accompany each of the objectives allow for a broad range of interpretation. As the Bloomingdale develops, specific outcomes will be determined, to create a consistent and unique project.



Bloomingdale Line under construction, fill volume  
(photo reprinted from *Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way*)

# Objective 1

## Honor and enhance the Bloomingdale's unique attributes:

- Capitalize on the variety of experiences created by the elevated structure and its separation from cars.
- Preserve the sense of discovery on the site.
- Enhance the connection to the natural world that is experienced along the top of the trail.
- Highlight the unique construction methods and scale of the existing retaining walls.
- Restore and rehabilitate the industrial infrastructure to meet current standards and allow for long-term use as a public trail and park.

At the October 2011 design charrette, members of the public expressed excitement about the variety of experiences that would become available to them by virtue of the Bloomingdale's 16-foot elevation above the surrounding streets. This creates new potential for elevated vantage points, separation from the noise of traffic, a continuous connection for bicycles and pedestrians, and an unhurried experience of urban nature. Given the consistency of the existing site there is also the opportunity to increase ecological connectivity along the Bloomingdale, strengthening the resilience of the introduced plant communities and supporting the transformation of the Bloomingdale Line into a trail and park.

Unlike other elevated rail structures built on bridge platforms, the Bloomingdale is supported by massive concrete retaining walls filled with soil and crushed rock. The design of the park can call attention to this original construction by lowering the path and exposing the sides of the retaining walls. Measures like this, and others, can be developed through the inclusion of public artists, emphasize the original construction and the human history of the railway, and can contribute to a diverse range of landscape experiences along the length of the Bloomingdale.

By restoring and showcasing this unique artifact of the city's industrial past, the Bloomingdale will continue to serve Chicago for many years to come.

## Existing Site Infrastructure

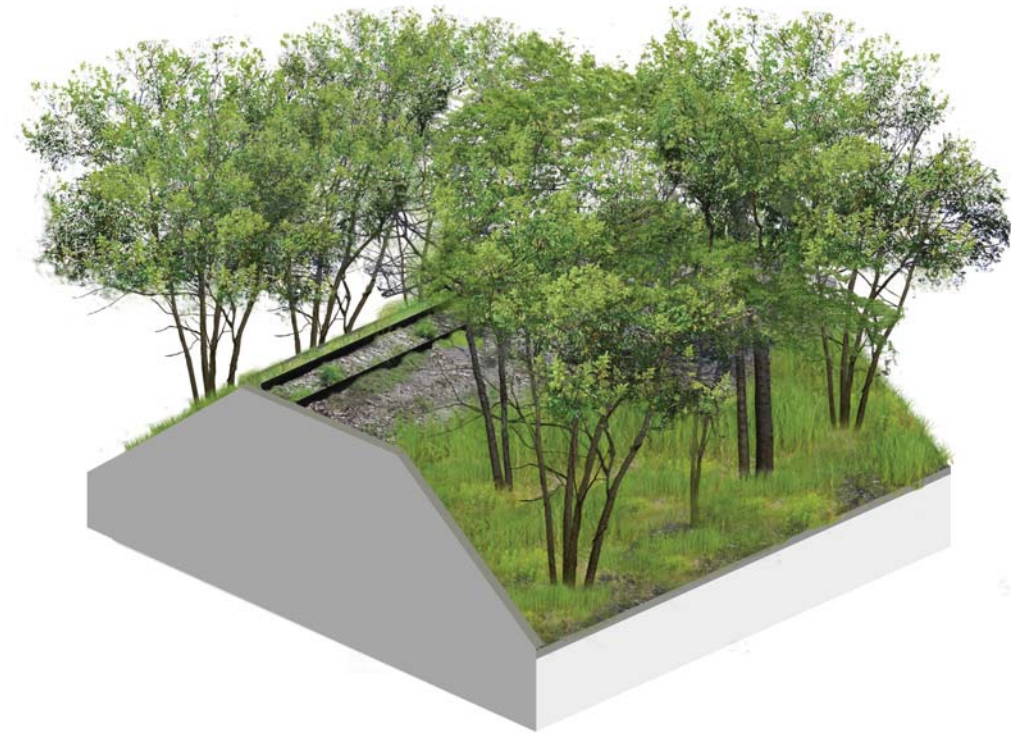


Fig. I.a: Axonometric Diagram of Typical Embankment

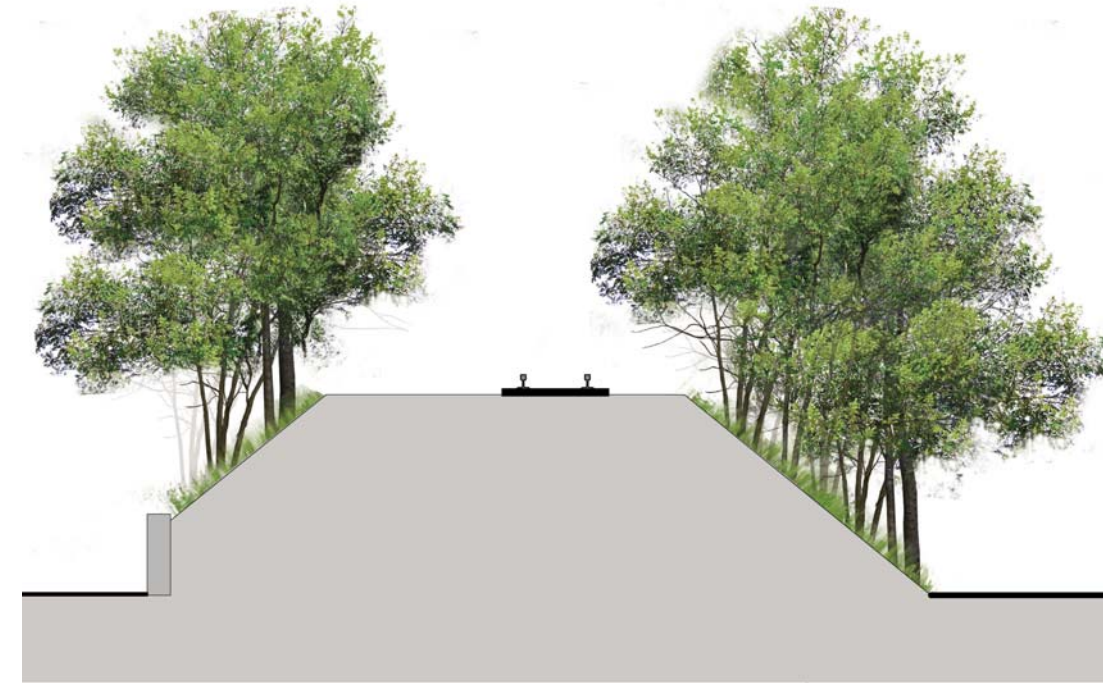


Fig. I.b: Section of Typical Embankment

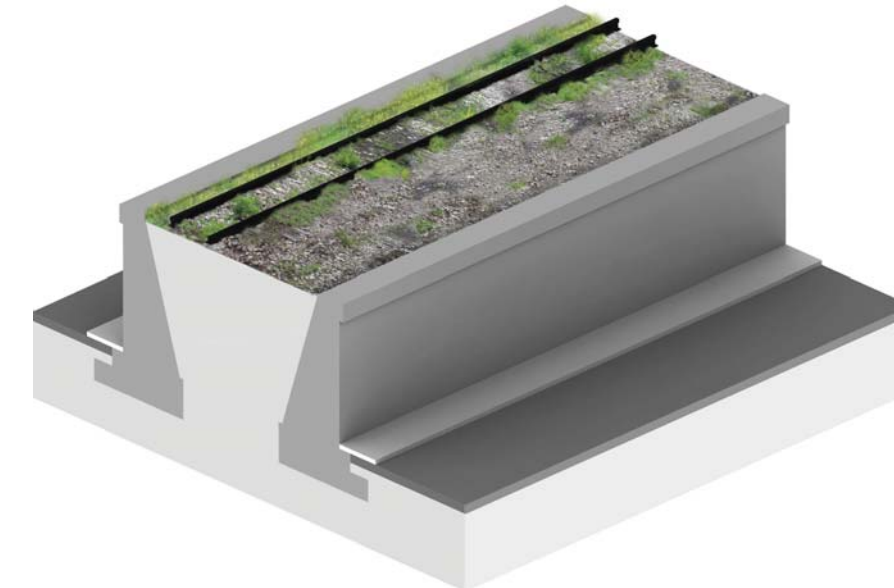


Fig. I.c: Axonometric Diagram of Typical Retaining Wall



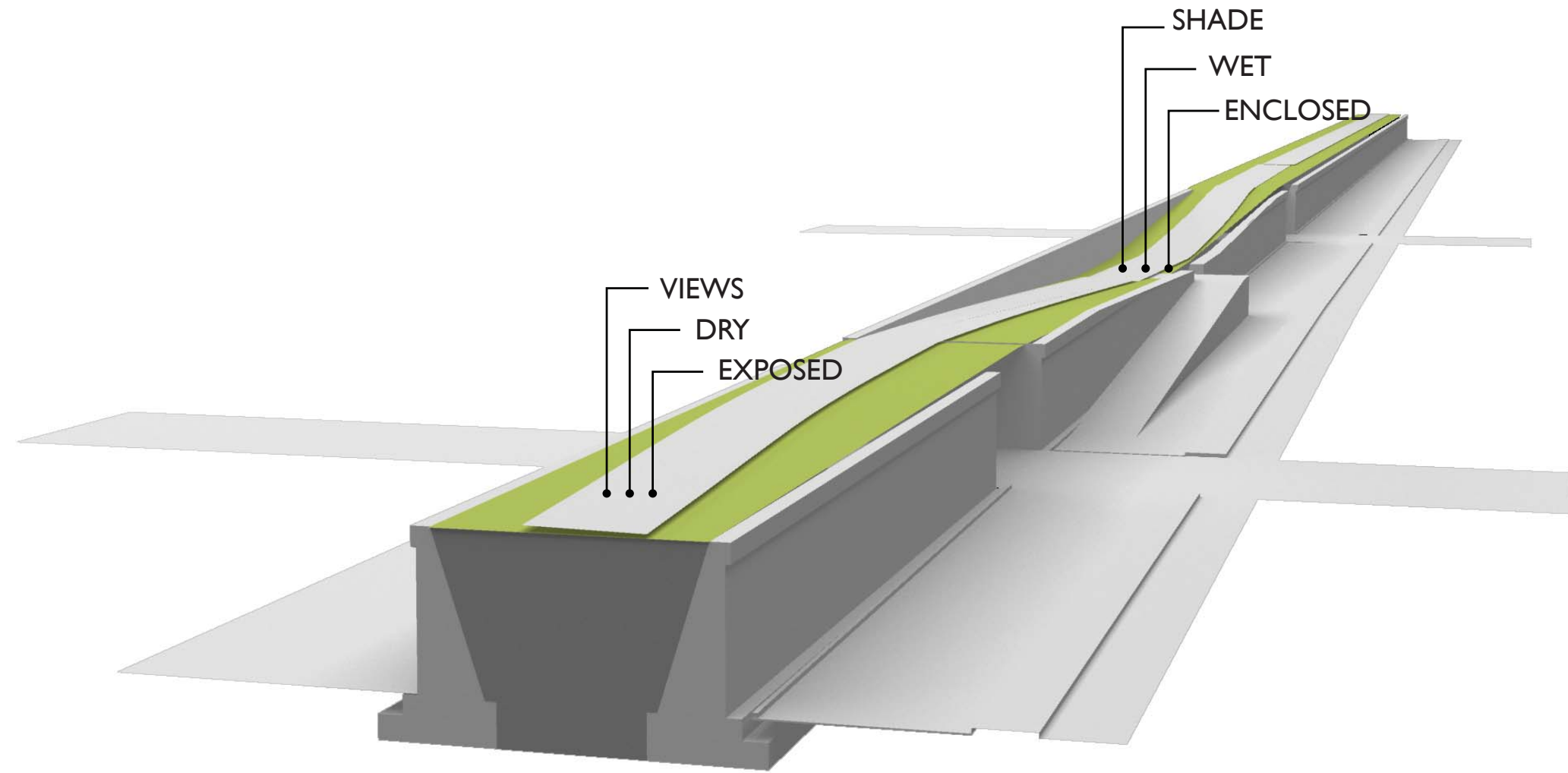
Fig. I.d: Axonometric Diagram of Typical Viaduct

## Existing Site Infrastructure

During 2011, Bridge Condition and Wall Condition Reports detailed the integrity and stability of the 37 viaducts and over 3.5 miles of retaining walls on the site. This inventory revealed that the condition of the walls and bridges along the Bloomingdale vary from very good to relatively poor. All structural concerns will be addressed before the construction of the park begins.

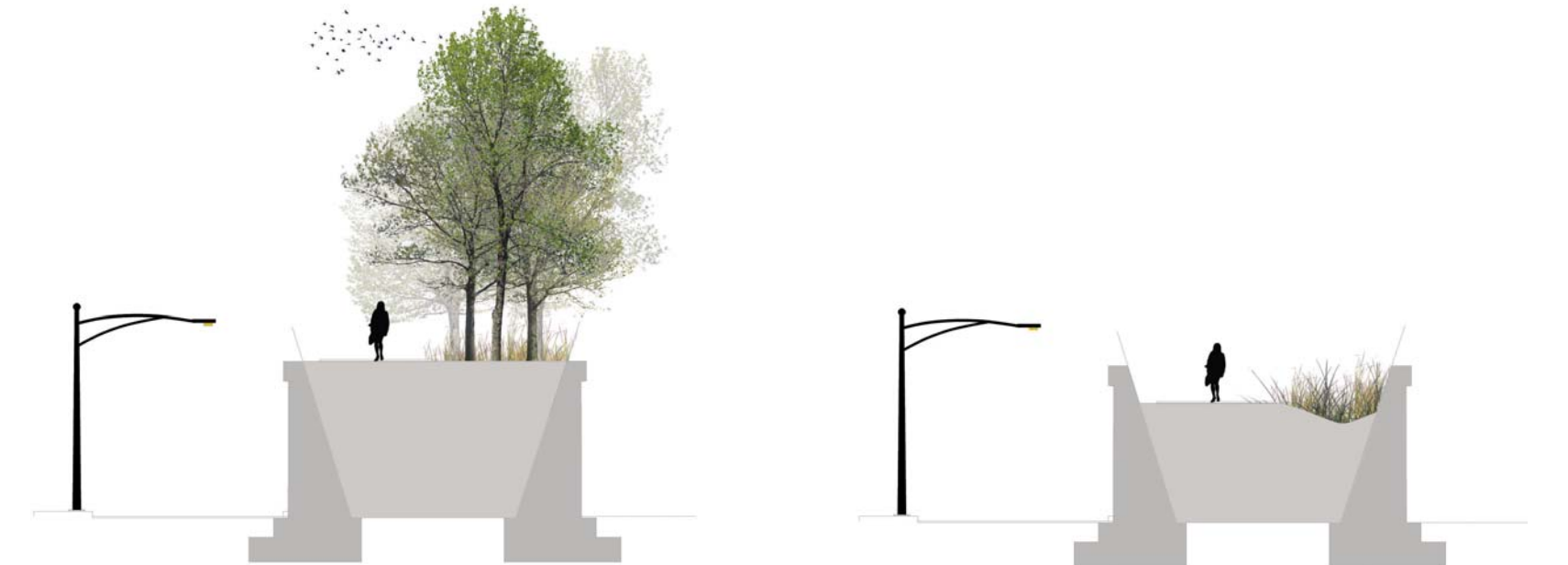
In addition, along portions of the Bloomingdale there are sloped embankments from the trail elevation down to the street elevation. The sloped embankments are thickly vegetated with pioneer trees and perennial species. Although the tree canopy has the positive effect of extending the visual experience of the trail and park landscape, strategic thinning and interplanting of a more diverse plant palette will enhance the ecological health and visual quality of the embankments.

## Topography



Variation in topography can create a range of experiences, diverse ecological conditions, and facilitate access.

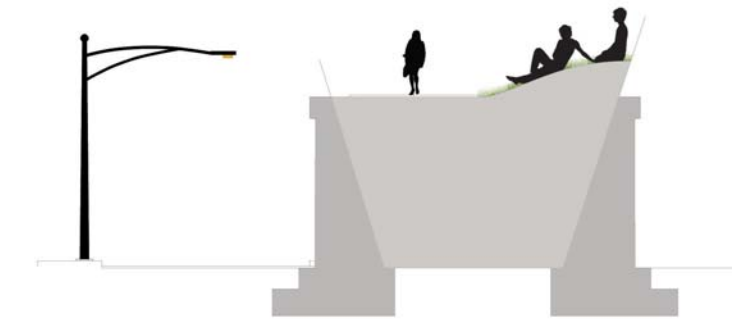
Fig. 1.e: Axonometric Concept Diagram at Access Point



At the elevation of the trail, there is the unique experience of moving through the elevated landscape.



Drainage can be directed to lowered areas, allowing for variation in planting along the path.



Raised areas can take advantage of views.



Lowered areas can provide a sense of enclosure and privacy.

Fig. 1.f: Conceptual Site Sections Showing Topographic Variation

## Topography

Given the unique construction of the elevated site, the pathway can be lowered in strategic locations to achieve multiple project goals. There are many ways in which topography can influence the design of the trail and park:

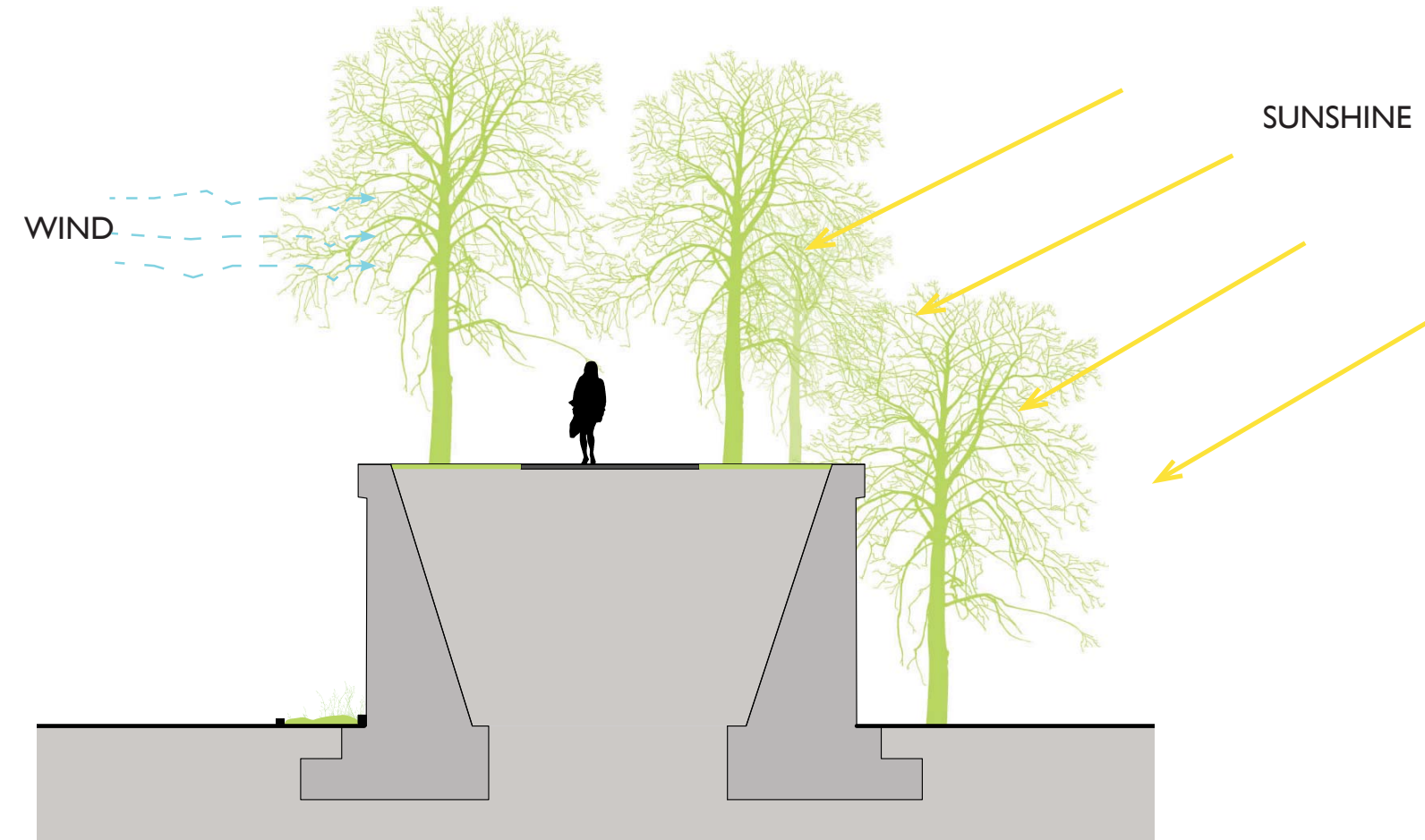
Recommendations:

- 1.1 Transform the flat, even grade required for railroad operations into a more diverse topography that will set the stage for a more spatially complex trail and park.
- 1.2 Create diverse ecological conditions through varying the topography and drainage on the site.
- 1.3 Lower the path to create an enclosed landscape that provides additional privacy for adjacent neighbors.
- 1.4 Raise the path to create the sense of an elevated open landscape that provides viewing opportunities.
- 1.5 Lower the path at mid-block access points to reduce the length of access ramps and paths.
- 1.6 Where the path is lowered, the adjacent retaining wall can also be lowered to reveal the design and construction of the existing structure.
- 1.7 Where the path is lowered to meet an access point, the retaining wall on the side of the access point should be lowered to connect the Bloomington to adjacent parks and streets (see figure 1.e).



## Landscape Infrastructure

The transformation of the Bloomingdale Line into a public open space is an opportunity to support positive environmental change within the City of Chicago, such as improvements to storm-water management and air quality, reduction of the urban heat island effect, and increased habitat for wildlife.



Planting canopy trees on the trail top and adjacent to the trail will provide shade, improve air quality, and reduce wind on the site.

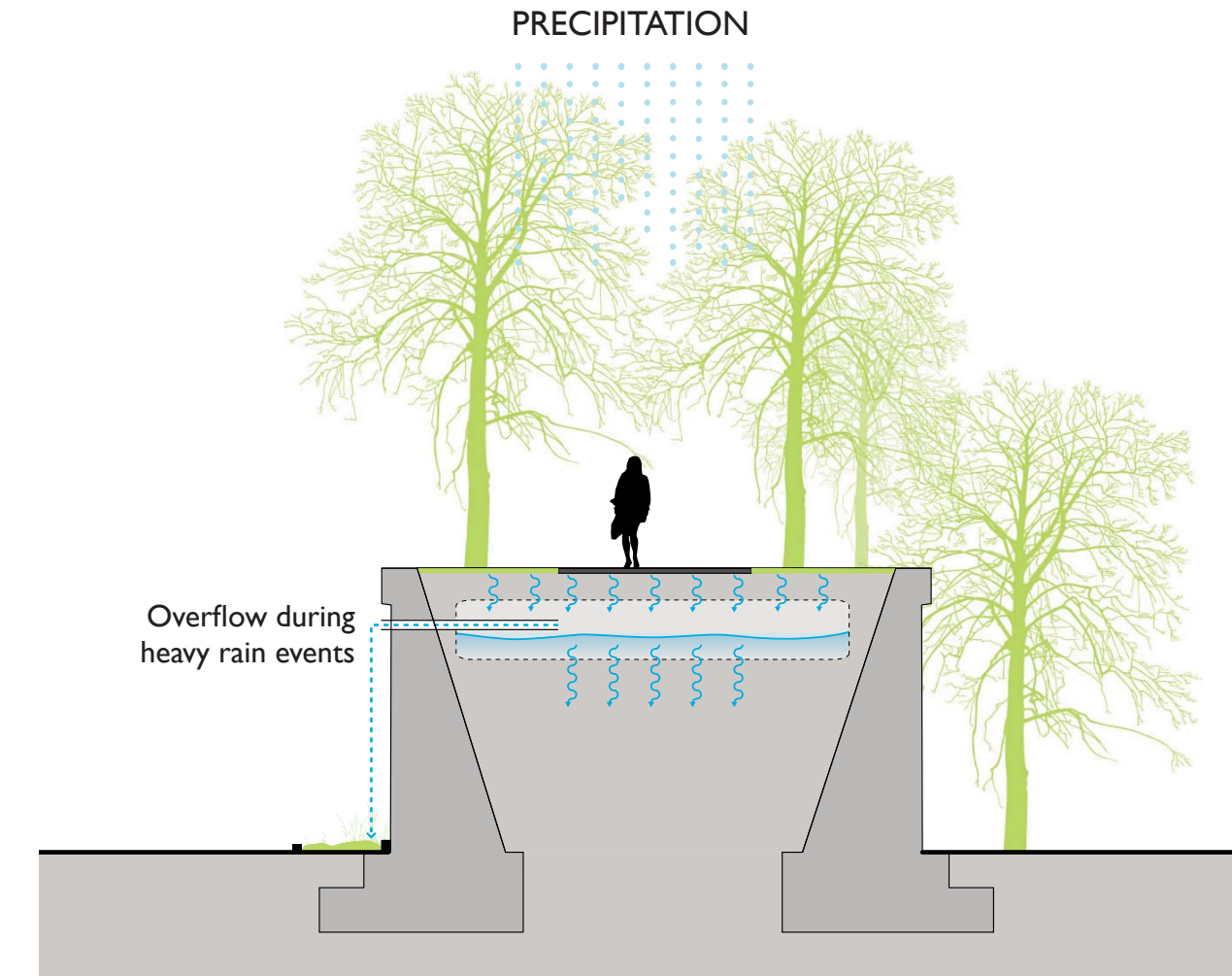
Fig. 1.g: Diagrammatic Section of Landscape Infrastructure

## Drainage

## Drainage

Currently the rain that falls on the structure either infiltrates into the ground or ends up in the city sewers. The use of porous material below the planting beds and paths can detain storm-water during heavy rain events, reducing the amount of water entering the city sewer system during times of peak storm flow.

1.8 Provide storm-water detention for a minimum of a 10 year storm.



On-site stormwater detention will reduce the amount of water entering the city sewer system during times of peak storm flow.

Fig. 1.h: Diagrammatic Section of Site Drainage



Rendering 3: The Bloomingdale Trail and Park's Connection to Churchill Field Park and Damen Avenue

## Objective 2

### Balance trail and park aspirations:

- Create an environment where both pedestrians and cyclists feel safe and welcome.
- Use design and signage to communicate expectations about speed on, and appropriate use of, the path.
- Provide separate paths, where appropriate, to maximize enjoyment of the Bloomingdale by different users.
- Remove retaining walls at access parks to create a continuous park landscape.

While some public design participants expressed a desire to “keep people moving” along the trail, many others wanted a “slower” park experience. The Bloomingdale Trail and Park will do both. It will enable uninterrupted bicycle and pedestrian circulation through the city, provide for an experience in a natural environment, and create opportunities for seating, socializing, playing, and appreciating the surrounding views.

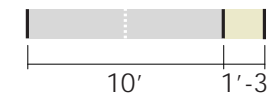
One of the project goals is to encourage non-motorized transportation; indeed, this is the primary reason for its federal funding. Providing a designated shared-use path separated from vehicles has the potential to increase bicycling and walking in the city, thereby decreasing motor vehicle use and ultimately improving the urban environment through reduced pollution, noise, and traffic. In addition, the shared-use path will be designed for pedestrians who wish to stroll with friends, jog the length of the site, or explore new neighborhoods. Existing standards for the design of shared-use paths will guide its design.

In addition to the shared-use path, a separated pedestrian path will be provided at various points along the Bloomingdale Trail and Park. Factors influencing the location of the separated path include areas where the structure widens to provide additional space for a secondary path, areas where there are significant views, and access points where there is expected to be higher volume of users. The separated pedestrian path will allow users to have a quieter park experience, more closely surrounded by the natural planting, with opportunities for discovery and play.

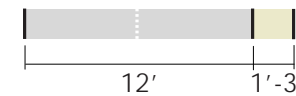
## Path Design Standards and Precedents



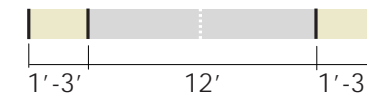
**CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL**  
 Location: Washington, DC and Maryland  
 Length: 12 miles  
 Type: Rails-to-trails  
 Average two way volume per hour: 159 users  
 Path width: 10' wide shared-use path with an intermittent running path on one side that ranges from 1'-3' wide.



**MINUTEMAN TRAIL**  
 Location: Suburban Boston  
 Length: 10 miles  
 Type: Rails-to-trails  
 Average two way volume per hour: 442 users  
 Path width: 12' wide shared-use path with an intermittent running path on one side that ranges from 1'-3' wide.



**SAUGANASH TRAIL**  
 Location: Chicago  
 Length: 1.1 miles  
 Type: Rails-to-trails  
 Average two way volume per hour: Not available  
 Path width: 12' wide shared-use path with 1'-3' wide running path on both sides.



**CHICAGO LAKEFRONT TRAIL**  
 Location: Chicago  
 Length: 18 miles  
 Type: Lakefront beach trail  
 Average two way volume per hour: 2,320 users  
 Path width: 12' - 17' wide shared-use path with 4' pedestrian path on both sides.

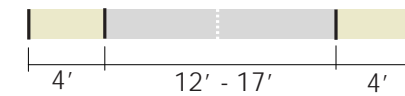
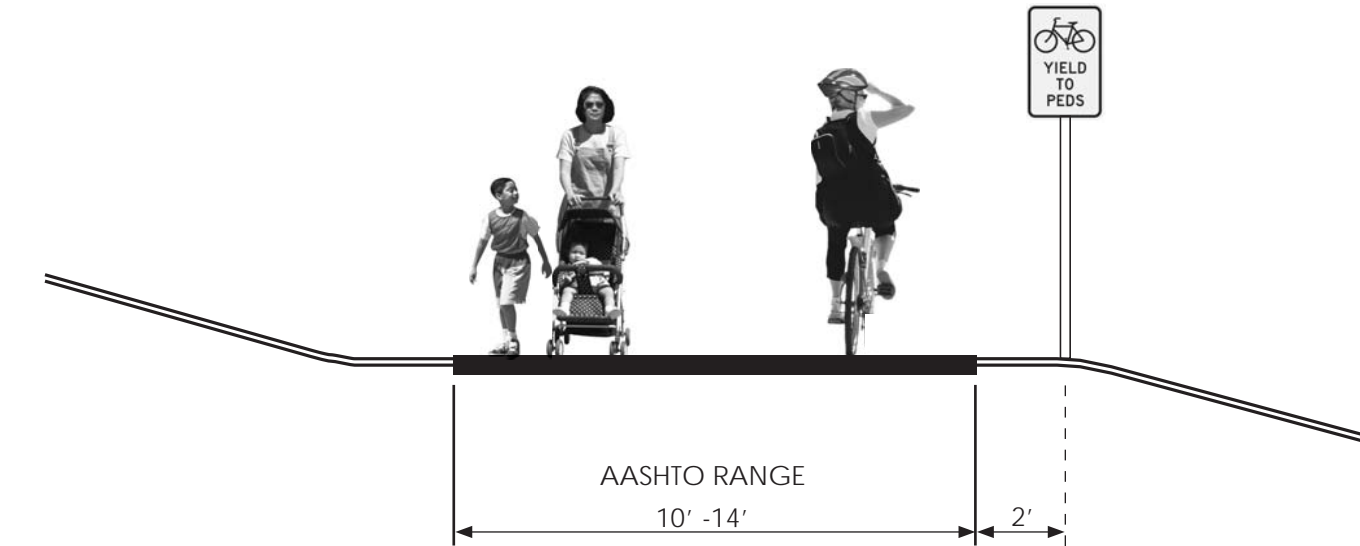


Fig. 2.a: Examples of Shared-use Paths

## Path Design Standards and Precedents

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has existing guidelines for the planning, design, and operation of shared-use paths. These include standards for path width, setbacks, and the path's horizontal and vertical alignment. All path design elements presented in the Bloomingdale Trail and Park framework plan meet the standards presented in the AASHTO guidelines.

In addition, the path design is based on successful shared-use paths in Chicago and nationwide. By contrast, the Lakefront Trail, the most familiar Chicago example of a shared-use path, has significantly higher user volume than is anticipated for the Bloomingdale.



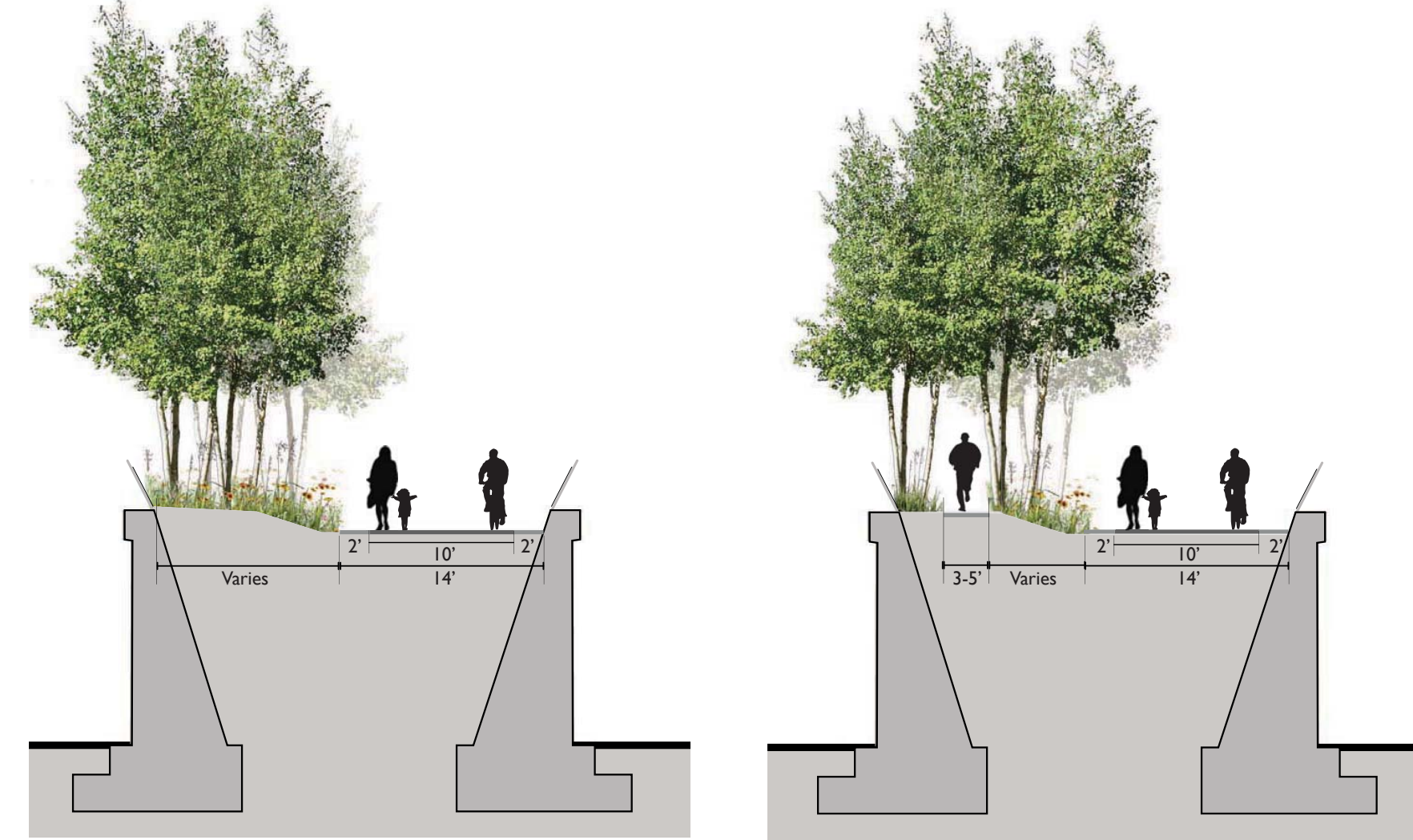
According to AASHTO guidelines, appropriate path width will range from 10'-14', depending on context, volume, and mix of users. All vertical elements, such as sign posts, fences, and guard rails, must be set back from the shared-use bike path by a minimum of 2'.

Fig. 2.b: Diagrammatic Section of AASHTO Standards

## Bloomington Path Design



Rendering 1: Shared-use Path with Separated Nature Trail



A shared-use path will connect the length of the 2.7 mile site. The central 10' zone of the path will be shared by bicyclists and pedestrians while the exterior 2' zone on each side will be dedicated to pedestrian use. At various points along the Bloomington, an additional 1.5 miles of separated pedestrian trail will be provided to allow pedestrians to have more options for relaxation along the elevated structure.

Fig. 2.c: Typical Path Sections

## Bloomington Path Design

The trail's grade separation from motor vehicles increases the safety and convenience of urban cycling, walking, and running. With this in mind, it is unnecessary to enable higher bicycling speeds at the expense of park experience and engagement with the natural world.

Recommendations:

2.1 For the safety and enjoyment of the greatest number of users, the path should be designed for a maximum bicycling speed of 20 MPH.

2.2 The speed of bicycle traffic can be moderated through path curvature, horizontal and vertical curvature and changes to its perceived width.

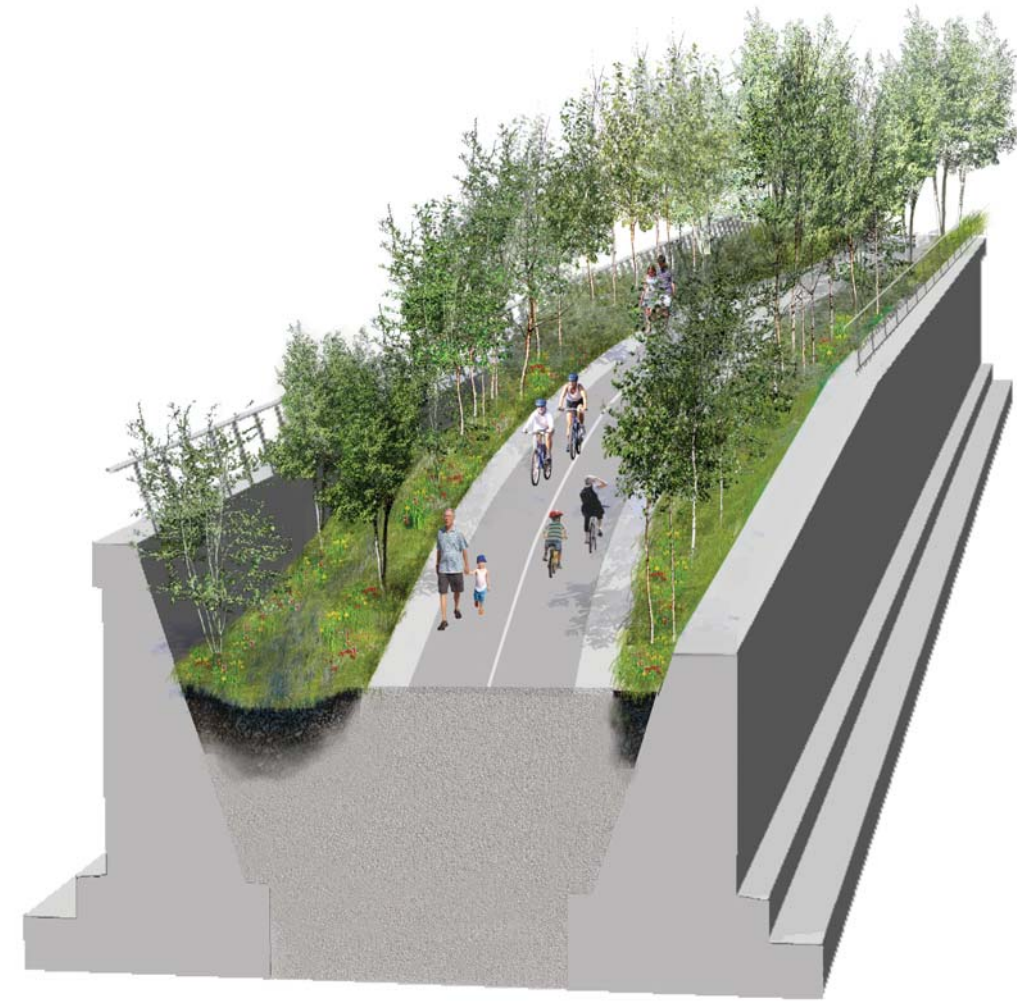
2.3 Additional safety measures, such as signage, should be used to communicate the need for reduced speeds.

2.4 Clearly differentiate pedestrian from shared-use paths through material change, striping, and signage.

2.5 Path circulation should be clearly communicated through a center stripe on the shared-use path and varying its shade, color, or material.

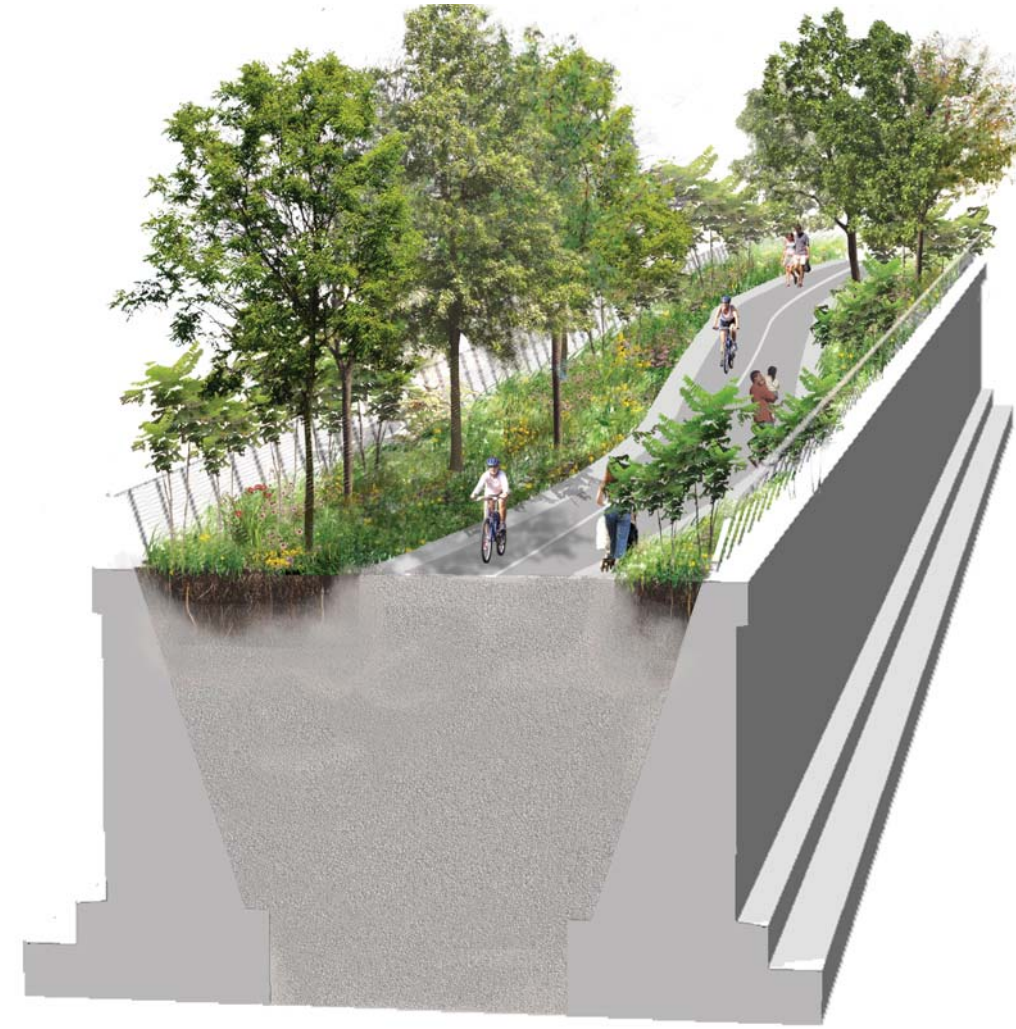
2.6 Widen the multi-use path at access points to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians entering the path.

## Planting



Through topography and drainage, diverse ecological conditions can be created on the site that will contribute to the range of park experiences. Lower areas will be wetter and have species that thrive in moist conditions.

Fig. 2.d: Axonometric Diagrams of Planting Strategy



Higher areas will be relatively dry, providing the right conditions for a different community of plants.

## Planting

Planting on the Bloomingdale should create the opportunity for rich engagement with the natural world. Planting design along the trail will mimic certain aspects of natural systems, most notably the placement of plant communities in conditions that support establishment and growth.

Recommendations:

2.7 To provide the greatest impact in a narrow corridor, a “hyper-nature”, or pronounced naturalism that is clearly constructed, can be created through strategic density and diversity of planting.

2.8 Select species that offer the greatest variety and sensory interest throughout the year, while also providing important microclimatic protection from sun and wind.

2.9 Use the varying moisture conditions on the site to help establish a structural logic for more diverse ecological conditions.

2.10 Incorporate information about plants and ecology into signage.



Lurie Garden, Chicago, IL



Brooklyn Bridge Park, NY



Lake Whitney Water Treatment Plant, New Haven, CT



High Line, New York, NY

Fig. 2.e: Examples of Planting Strategies

# Planting

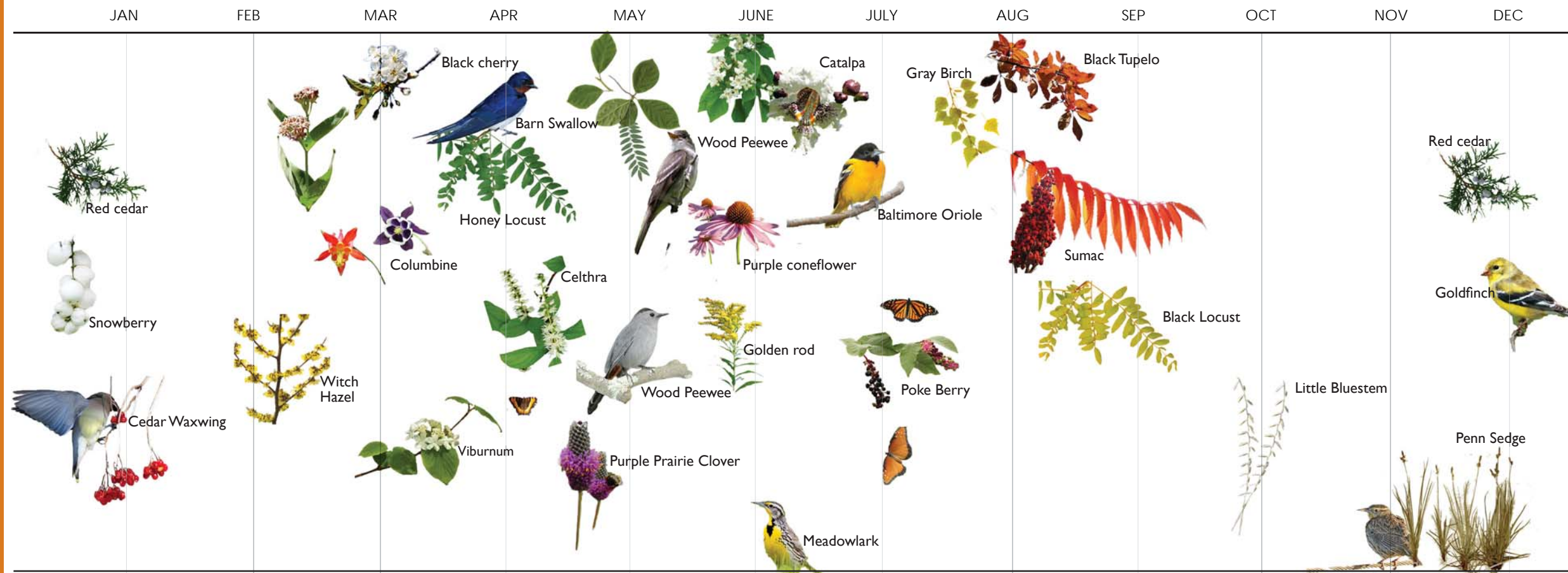


Fig. 2.f: Seasonal Habitat Diagram

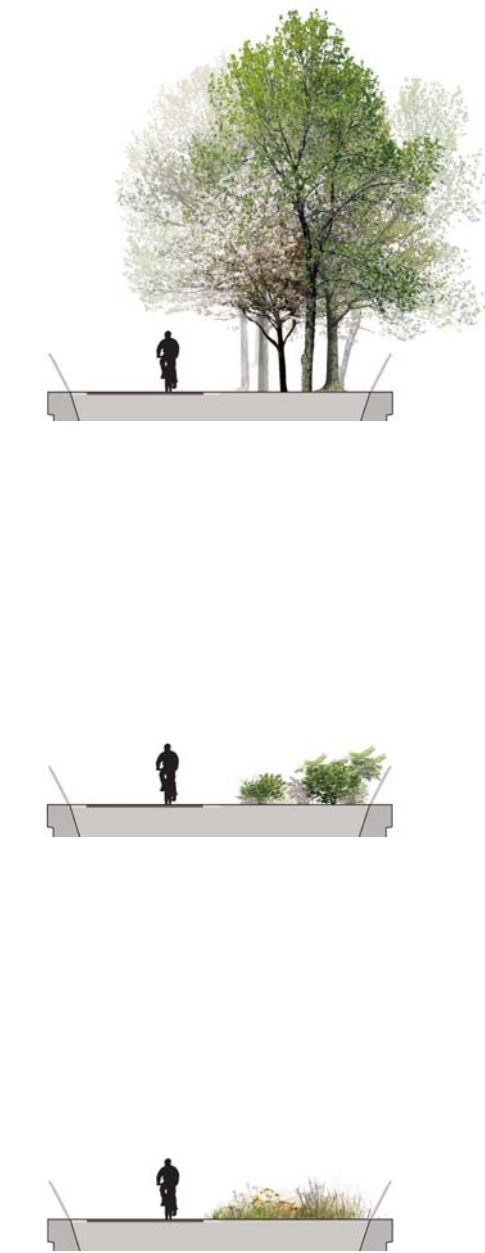


Fig. 2.g: Sections of Planting Layers

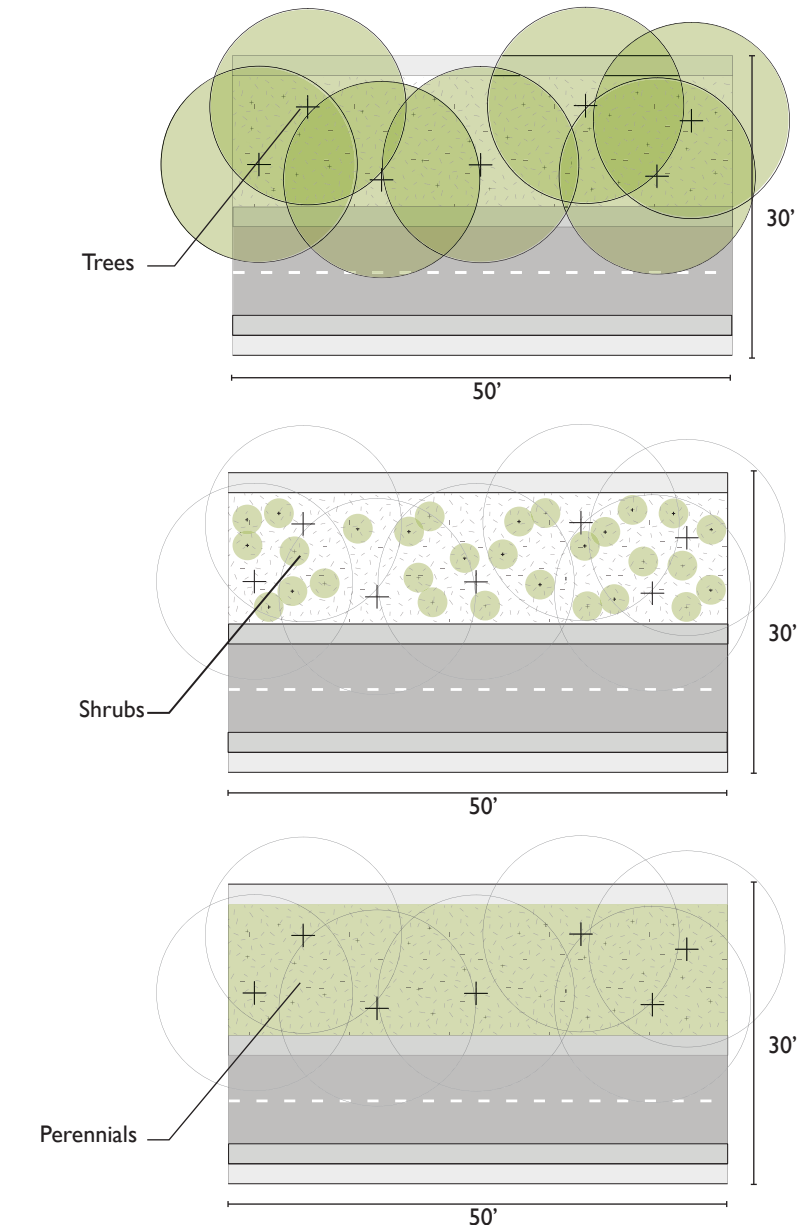


Fig. 2.h: Planting Diagrams

# Planting

2.11 Select canopy trees for their ability to create shade, provide seasonal color and thrive within the microclimatic conditions on the site. Selectively use understory and evergreen trees to add density and seasonal diversity to the deciduous canopy. Possible tree species may include: Scarlet Oak, Gray Birch, Catalpa, Red Cedar.

2.12 Maintain open views at eye level by selecting understory shrub species that are predominately low growing cultivars. In addition, species selection should consider seasonal interest, wildlife benefit, and salt tolerance. Possible shrub species may include: Winterberry, Viburnum, Snowberry, Sumac, Sweet Pepper Bush, Inkberry.

2.13 Provide continuity across the landscape through the use of understory perennials and grass species. Criteria for inclusion should include persistent winter foliage, showy spring flowers and wildlife benefits, among others. Species should be hardy, salt tolerant and low maintenance. Possible perennial and grass species may include: Golden Rod, Gayfeather, Black-eyed Susans, Purple Milkweed, Purple Prairie Clover, Pennsylvania Sedge

2.14 Special consideration should be given to plant species that will attract and provide habitat for birds and beneficial insects, while also providing seasonal color and interest.

## Seating & Viewing

While movement is an important function of the upper level of the park, opportunities for more contemplative enjoyment will also be vital to the park's social success. Efforts should be made to create circumstances where quiet reading, small discussions, and people-watching can occur without creating conflicts with path users.

Recommendations:

- 2.15 Provide a variety of formal and informal seating from benches to rocks and lawn to provide park users with a range of seating options.
- 2.16 Seating should respond to the site adjacencies, taking advantage of views and taking into account sight lines and proximity to private property.
- 2.17 Frame views in seating areas to highlight local landmarks. Views that should be highlighted, include:
  - Downtown (from Milwaukee Avenue);
  - Humboldt Boulevard;
  - CTA Blue Line station (from Western Avenue);
  - CTA Blue Line tracks (from Milwaukee Avenue); and
  - St. Mary of the Angels (from Damen and Hermitage Avenues).
 (See figure 2.1)



Fig. 2.i: Examples of Possible Seating Strategies



Fig. 2.j: Axonometric Diagrams of Seating Strategies

## Seating & Viewing

2.18 At viaducts with notable views (see figure 2.l), provide “miradors”, projections over the street.

2.19 Use planting to separate pedestrian seating areas from the shared-use path to reinforce the park-like feeling of the site.

2.20 Provide seating that is both inwardly and outwardly focused.

2.21 Where possible, integrate seating into the landscape.

2.22 Use the landscape or art to frame views.

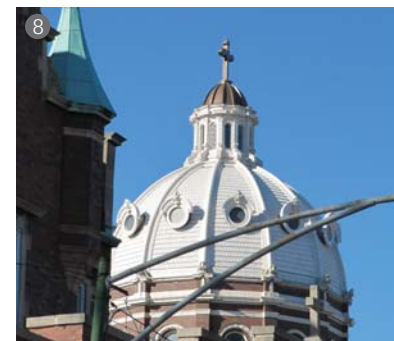
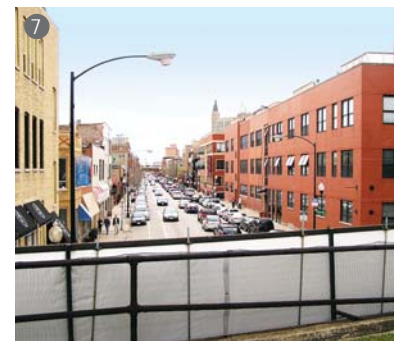
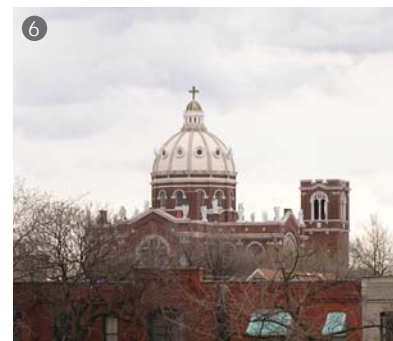
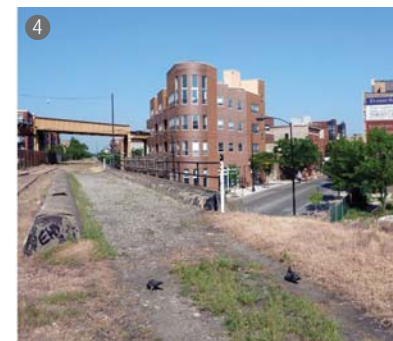
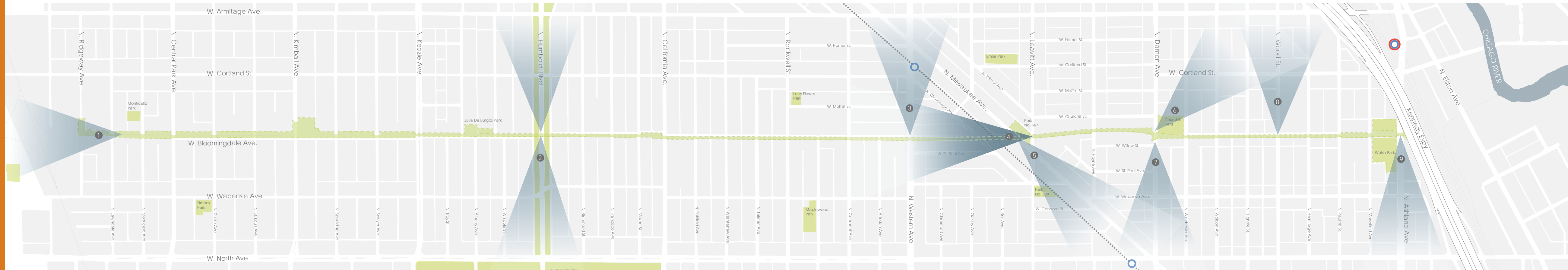
2.23 Provide opportunities to connect the city street level and upper park level through the use of skylights in bridges (see figure 2.k).



Fig. 2.k: Skylights in Bridges

# Important Views

# Important Views



- METRA
- CTA BLUE LINE
- SITE BOUNDARY
- PARK

New views of the city become available 16-feet above ground. They are celebrated with seating and miradors, projected viewing areas.

Fig. 2.1: Noteworthy Views





Rendering 4: Park at Kimball Avenue

## Objective 3

### Create a signature public space that is integrated into the community while honoring the need for separation between the public and private realm:

- Concentrate group gathering spaces and activities in broad embankments and nearby parks.
- Allow for the top of the trail to be dedicated to linear movement and smaller group activities.
- Create unique experiences when transitioning from the street level to the top of the viaduct.
- Respond to privacy desired by neighbors while also providing eyes on the trail.
- Provide a unified experience across the length of the site through consistency in site elements. Introduce variety at access parks to distinguish them.

During the public design process there was a clear desire for the Bloomington to provide diverse experiences for multiple users. Many participants were drawn to it as an opportunity for “communities to gather”, particularly in neighborhoods with little green space. Because of the limited width and the fact that the Bloomington will also serve as a trail, gathering places should be concentrated where space is most generous in order to reduce conflict between users. Typically this is where the Bloomington abuts adjacent parks and transitions to the street below. These locations also offer unique experiences by creating vertical variety in a flat city.

Others at public meetings saw how the Bloomington Trail and Park could offer an opportunity for cyclists, runners and walkers to make regional connections while also experiencing the city from a unique perspective. The Bloomington can serve multiple goals. It will have places for large gatherings and moments of solitude. It will be a place for moderately-paced bicycle commutes and for young children to learn and experience the diversity of nature around them.

The Bloomington runs along a public right-of-way adjacent to both businesses and residences. The immediate neighbors, many of whom have been involved in the project’s development have benefitted from the disappearance of the train traffic through the reduction of noise and exhaust in close proximity to homes and businesses. The increased use by the general public will create a different social context with the potential for feeling that the public space is uncomfortably close. While the oversight of nearby neighbors can make the Bloomington safer, the design must in turn be sensitive to adjacent property owners. Efforts should be taken, through layout, planting, programming, and grading, to preserve the privacy of the park’s neighbors.

## Program

The use of the elevated portion of Bloomingdale is derived from being a lifted landscape in a city. The transformation of the site into a trail and park will allow visitors the opportunity for uninterrupted bicycling and walking through the city and create opportunities for seating, socializing, and appreciating views. Where the trail widens into parks, there is an opportunity to provide additional amenities, such as playgrounds, outdoor classrooms, and skate parks.

### Recommendations:

3.1 Activities on the elevated trail should serve individuals and small groups.

3.2 Neighborhood level access parks should be used to accommodate larger groups and more diverse activities.

3.3 Programming on the Bloomingdale Trail and Park should intentionally seek opportunities to bring the community together.

3.4 The design should strive to provide information about site history, sustainability, art, and other aspects of the trail and park to educate about Chicago's past and future. This could be included in signage, park walks with experts, information kiosks, or elements of the physical design.

3.5 Power outlets should be provided at regular intervals to facilitate art and other programming.



Site amenities



Mobile food vendors



Seating

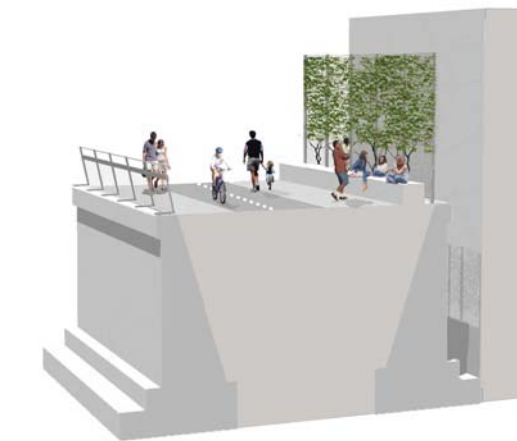


Farmers market

Fig. 3.a: Examples of Possible Program



Densely Planted Areas



Vegetated Screen Structure



Lowered Path with Adjacent Planted Area



Elevated Seating Structures

Fig. 3.b: Axonometric Diagrams of Privacy Strategies

## Privacy

Given the proximity of adjacent private property, privacy is a central concern for the design of the Bloomingdale Trail and Park. Path alignment and other design strategies such as planting and seating should be used to provide privacy for neighboring property.

### Recommendations:

3.6 Where private property abuts the trail, and there is a single shared-use path, the path should be located on the opposite side of the elevated structure.

3.7 Where private property abuts the trail, and there is both a shared-use path and a pedestrian path, the shared-use path should be located closer to, and the slower-moving pedestrian path should be away from, the property.

3.8 Seating should be placed away from, and not provide views into, private property.

3.9 Where possible, lower the trail elevation to create additional privacy.

3.10 Use planted areas and site structures to screen adjacent private property.



Rendering 5: Access and Mirador at Damen Avenue

## Objective 4

### Integrate access to the Bloomingdale into the city's transportation, park, and social infrastructure:

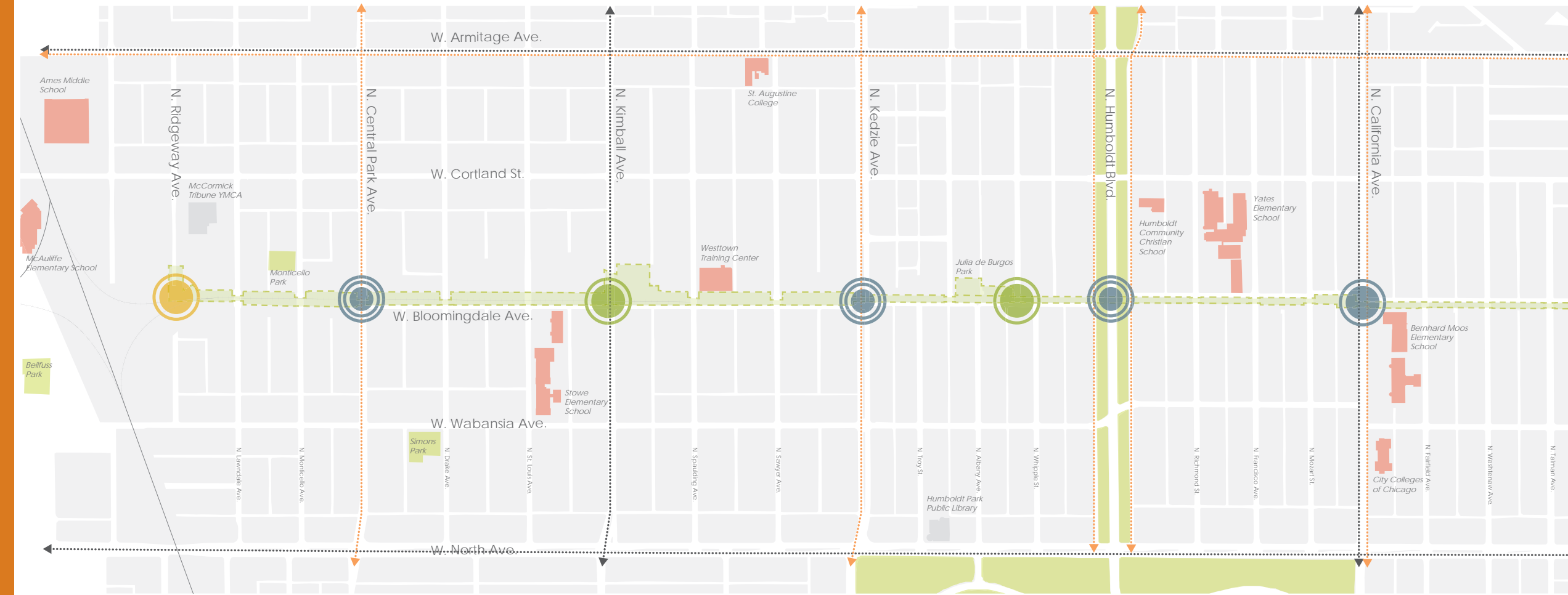
- Provide a variety of access point types that respond to a range of trail and park users.
- Enable safe, shared use between cyclists and other users at access points.
- Use existing city and social infrastructure to locate access points and improve routes to them along the trail.

The greater the integration of the Bloomingdale into the existing life of the city, the more each will benefit the other. The Bloomingdale Line was originally built to separate trains from the city. The height difference, which made this possible, now serves as an asset for the trail and park.

Members of the public emphasized the role the Bloomingdale will play as a “connecting corridor”, linking previously separated amenities. Meeting participants requested more access points, to provide connections to school locations, transit lines, and bicycle routes.

A variety of access points are envisioned that will provide connections to existing networks within the community. Access at parks will expand the city's open space network. Connection to bicycle routes and transit will integrate the trail into citywide transportation systems. By providing access at even distances, the Bloomingdale Trail and Park will connect to all neighborhoods through which it passes.

## Access Point - Distribution



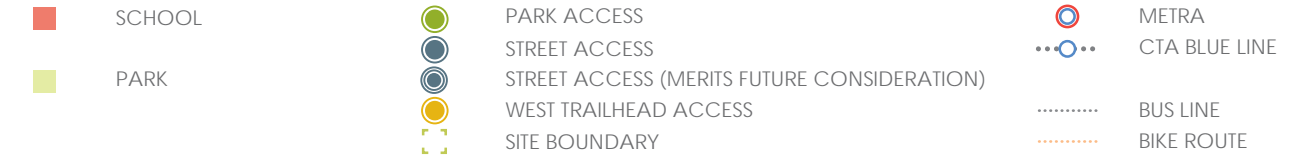
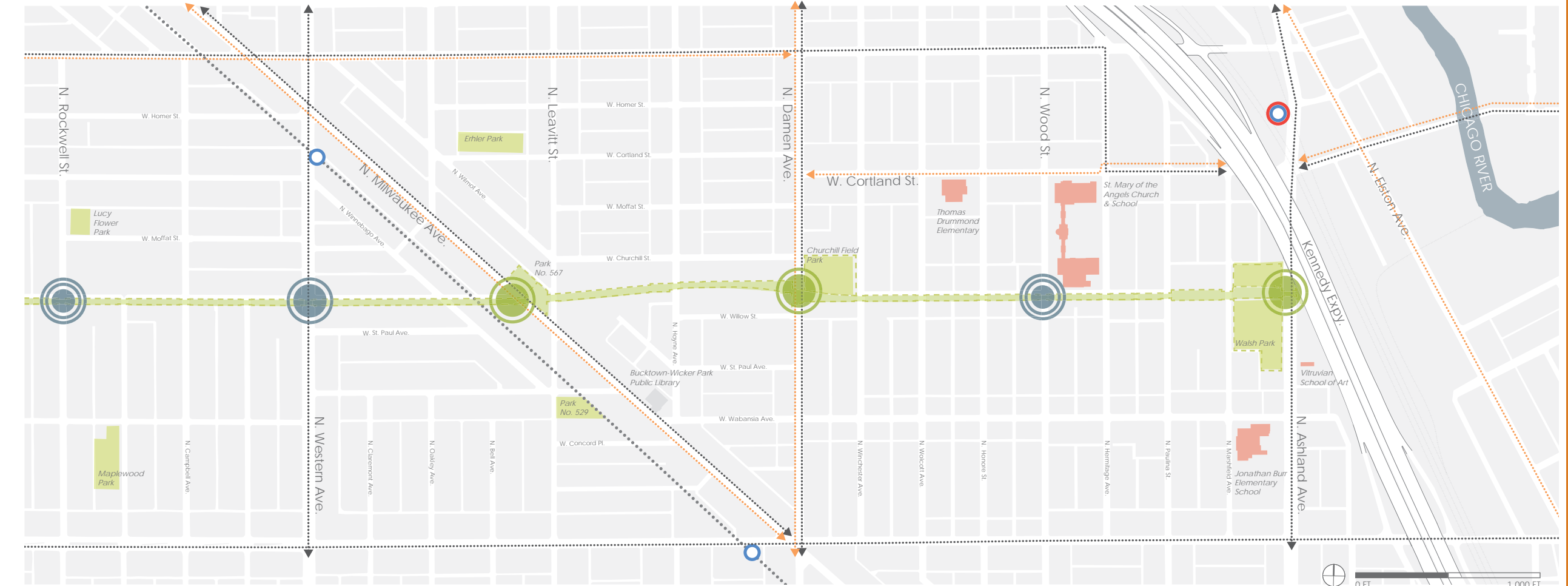
The Bloomingdale requires specific and considered entry locations along its 2.7 miles to preserve a feeling of uninterrupted movement, provide access for people with disabilities, and take advantage of the adjacent parks and the Bloomingdale Avenue right-of-way. As the Bloomingdale is transformed for recreational use, it will be integrated into the adjacent neighborhoods and numerous existing transportation and open space networks. The location of access points for the Bloomingdale will be directed by the design recommendations below, listed in priority. Eight sites are prioritized and five merit further consideration (above map). Any future access locations must meet the following criteria.

### Recommendations:

4.1 Provide access in existing or planned parks adjacent to the Bloomingdale. Along the length of the Bloomingdale adjacent parcels have been acquired for neighborhood parks. These locations are the priority for integrating the Bloomingdale into the city.

4.2 Provide access every 1/2 mile, ensuring equitable distribution the length of the Bloomingdale supporting reasonable walking distances between access points, no more than 1/4 mile.

## Access Point - Distribution



4.3 Provide access where the Bloomingdale crosses transit, bicycling, and pedestrian transportation networks.

4.4 Provide access near area parks and schools.

4.5 Provide access every 1/4 mile where feasible, to allow for shorter walking distances for pedestrians, no more than 1/8 mile.

Fig. 4.a: Access Points, Transit Networks, and Adjacencies

## Access Points - Characteristics

The following recommendations apply to all access points, whether they are in parks or streets. Consistency in treatment is important, since access will be the Bloomingdale's invitation to the public. Some recommendations may be more appropriate for particular situations than others.

4.6 Access points should respond to site-specific conditions while maintaining a consistent and recognizable aesthetic, serving as an advertisement for the entire Bloomingdale.

4.7 Access points should be located at intersections. Where there are mid-block access points, wayfinding and street improvements should guide people to the closest stop-controlled crossing.

4.8 Adjacent street crossings should be improved with bulb-outs and markings.

4.9 Place access points on both sides of streets that are difficult to cross. California, Western, Milwaukee, Damen, and Ashland Avenues and Humboldt Boulevard are examples of such streets.

4.10 Place access points on the side of the street closest to anticipated attractions. Access should be placed on the east side of Kedzie Avenue and Rockwell Street because of the location of nearby parks, and on the east side of California Avenue and Wood Street because of schools.



Rendering 6: Central Park Avenue Ramp, north-east



Rendering 7: A Skate Park at Ashland Avenue, north of the Bloomingdale

## Park Access

Access points within parks are an opportunity to enrich both experiences. The level change can provide space for programming and expand the Bloomingdale and the park.

4.11 Access at parks should capitalize on the embankment width and adjacent park in order to create a continuous, sloped landscape. Where the path is lowered adjacent to a park, the retaining wall on the side of the park should be cut down to allow the creation of the slope.

4.12 Access at parks should incorporate unique experiences (see skate park, left).

## Bloomington Avenue Access Points

Where there is no adjacent park, care must be taken to develop appropriate entries to the Bloomington. For much of its length, the elevated line is paralleled by a 20' wide street (see below map, indicating in blue on which side of the Bloomington Line it is located).

Bloomington Avenue has minimal traffic. It is discontinuous and changes travel direction frequently. By turning Bloomington Avenue into a one-way street, part of the right-of-way (up to eight feet) becomes available for access (see section, right). This allows the entire width of the Bloomington Line to be retained for trail and park use.

- 4.13 Bloomington Avenue should be studied to determine the ultimate impacts of the one-way conversation.
- 4.13 Access should use the adjacent right-of-way when possible to maximize the width of the viaduct for use as a trail and park.
- 4.14 Retaining walls may be screened with vines and there may be beds with perennials or low shrubs.

Fig. 4.b: Bloomington Avenue, right-of-way

■ Bloomington Avenue's extent and location in relationship to the Bloomington Line



Fig. 4.c: Bloomington Avenue, the Trail and Park, and Connecting Ramp

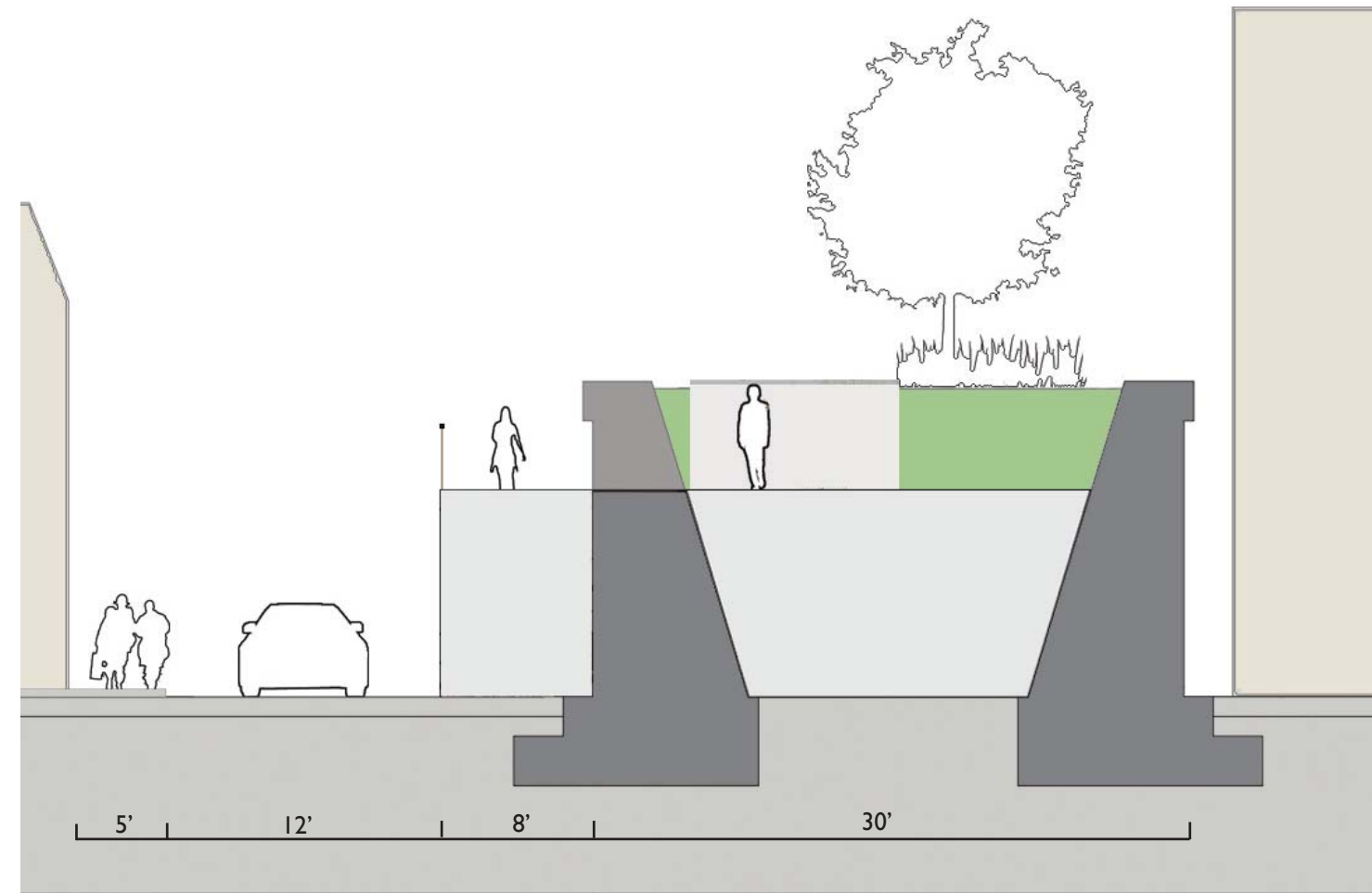
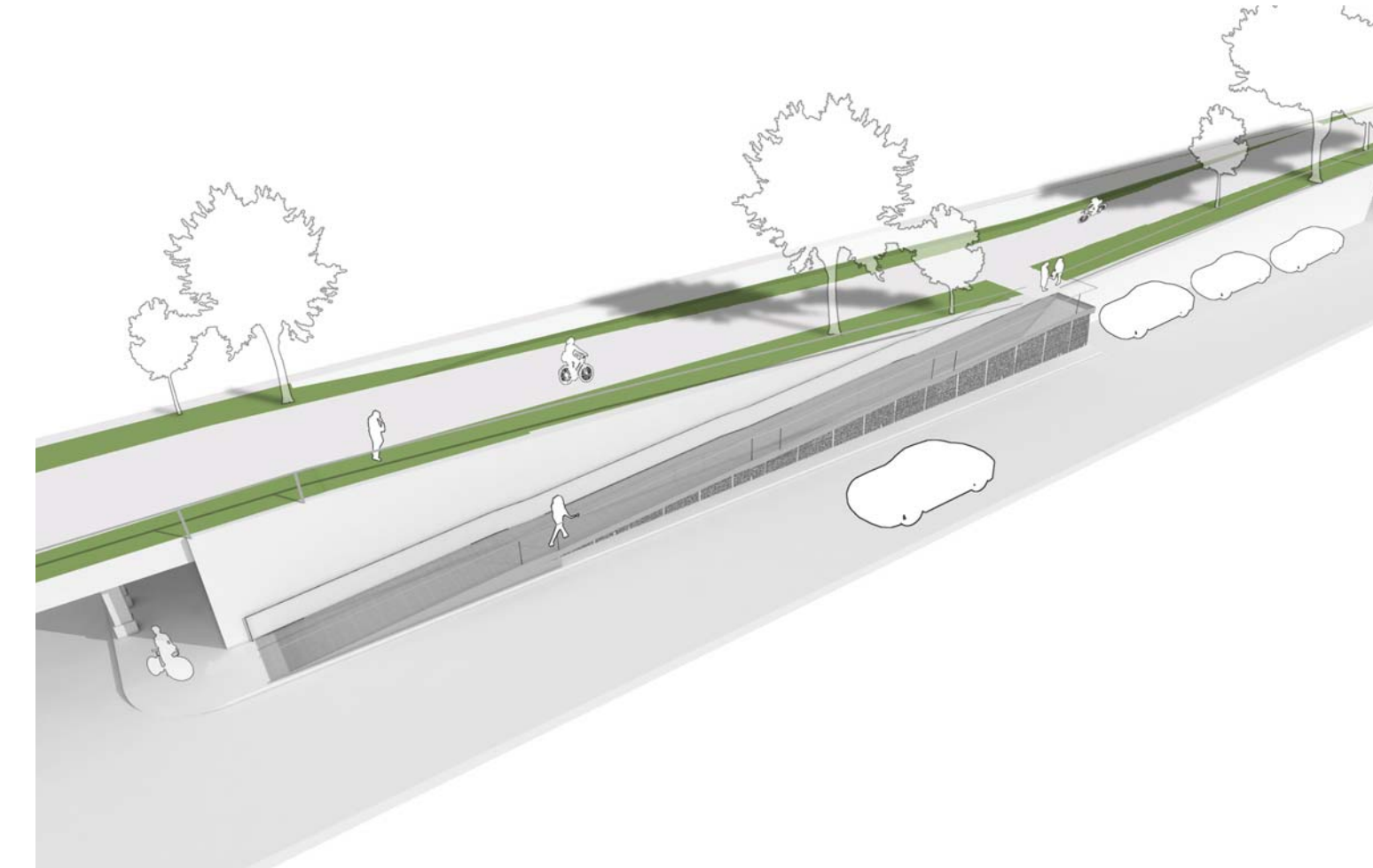


Fig. 4.d: An Access Point Using Bloomington Avenue



## Bloomington Avenue Ramps and Stairs

- 4.15 Provide ramps at all access points. Stairs should only be used in combination with ramps.
- 4.20 Stairs should be no more than five feet wide to maximize the road width on Bloomington Avenue.
- 4.16 Ramps should be built at a grade of 1' rise per 12' run, with landings every 30' of run. This produces the shortest ramps accessible to people with disabilities.
- 4.17 Ramps should be no more than eight feet wide to maximize the road width on Bloomington Avenue.
- 4.18 At the elevated Bloomington, ramp entrances should be located mid-block. The elevation of the Bloomington will be lowered to minimize the length of the ramp.
- 4.19 Where the path is lowered, the retaining wall on the side of the access point should be cut down in parallel with the changed elevation to reveal the structure and how it was built.
- 4.21 Street level entrances to ramps and stairs should be a minimum of 10' from the intersecting street. Where stairs and ramps share a common top landing, the siting of the ramp takes priority.
- 4.22 Ramps and stairs should look different from the Bloomington Line structure in material. They should also be as transparent as possible to maximize visibility and light.



Rendering 8: Typical Path Sloping Down, Exposing the Original Structure

## Objective 5

### Create a safe and welcoming environment:

- Use lighting, path design, and sight lines to create an environment that enhances the feeling of safety on the Bloomingdale.
- Connect to the ground level in a way that is safe and sensitive to the surrounding community.
- Work with the community to create an environment that promotes safety.

Safety is a primary concern for many of the Bloomingdale's neighbors. It was recognized that the degree to which safety is achievable along the trail will depend both on its design and the community's involvement: some indicated "good lighting", others "good neighbors keeping an eye out". Where the Bloomingdale reaches down to connect to its surroundings, this is of particular importance. Lighting, railings and clear identification will contribute to a trail and park that everyone can comfortably use. At access points, safety improvements, such as lighting, sight lines, and signage, will facilitate connections to related transportation networks and adjacent neighborhoods.

Visual consistency is a characteristic of the Bloomingdale which will make it understandable as a place. While topography and width may vary, the Bloomingdale's identity will be achieved through consistent use of various elements: Path width and material (objective 1); access points (objective 4); and lighting, railings, and wayfinding (objective 5).

## Lighting

In addition to making the Bloomingdale Trail and Park a safe nighttime destination in Chicago, lighting should be sufficient to provide wayfinding information, prevent accidents or injury, and identify the presence of other users in the space.

Recommendations:

5.1 Best practices with respect to dark skies preservation, energy conservation, and the prevention of light trespass to adjacent properties should be rigorously applied.

5.2 Lighting should be low intensity and evenly distributed across the entire width of the site, with an average lighting of 0.5 footcandles.

5.3 Lighting requirements will be achieved through a mix of overhead and low lighting.

5.4 When passing next to access parks, lighting fixtures on the Bloomingdale should be coordinated with those found in the park.

5.5 The Bloomingdale should be lit from dusk to dawn.

5.6 Existing Chicago Park District electrical supplies should be used.

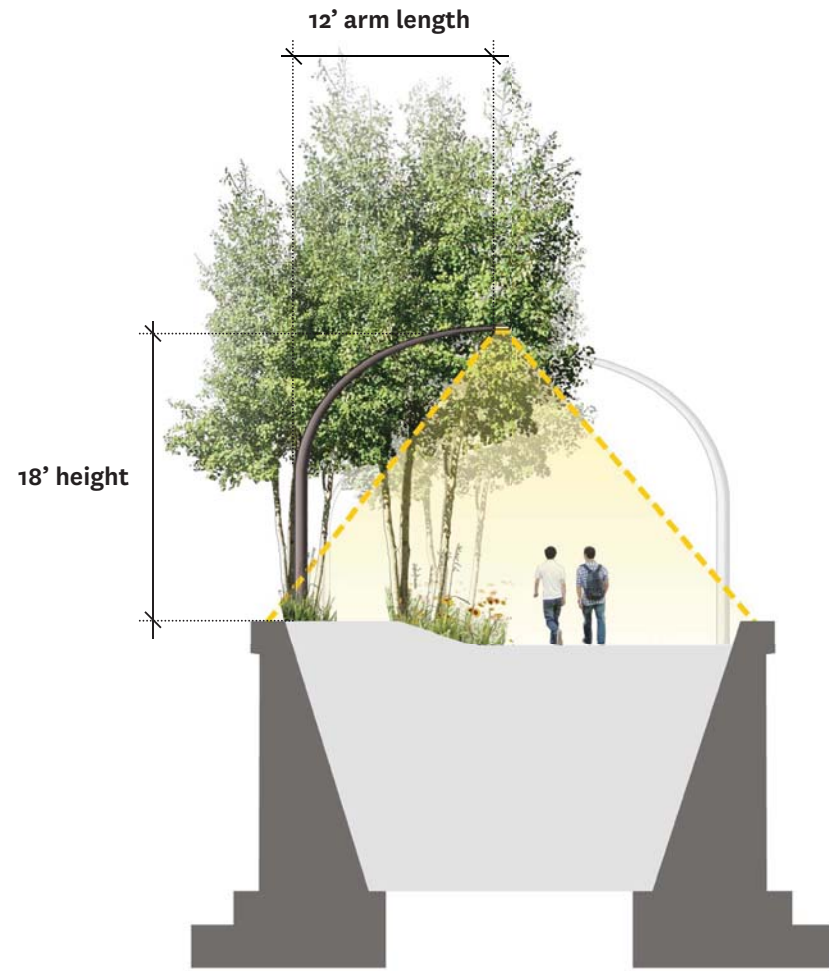


Fig. 5.a: An Example of Overhead Lighting Blended into Canopy



Fig. 5.b: An Example of Low Lighting, Re-purposing Old Rails



Pedestrian bridge, Penn. Park



Pedestrian bridge, Princeton University, NJ



Veteran's Plaza, Chicago River Walk



Plant railing, Brooklyn Bridge Park, NY

Fig. 5.c: Transparent Railings in Public Spaces

## Railings and Fencing

For reasons of public safety at the level of the park and the level of the street, guardrails are required along the length of the Bloomingdale Trail and Park. In addition, short fences should be installed around the planting to discourage intentional and unintentional trail blazing that would endanger plants or park users.

5.7 Design railings and guardrails to complement the overall design of the trail and park, minimizing the sense of obstruction and enclosure.

5.8 Given the length of the site, railings should be easy to install, repair, and replace.

5.9 Railings should be as transparent as possible to maximize the openness of the site.

5.10 Short fences and benches should be used to prevent people from entering the planting beds.



## Wayfinding

Wayfinding and signage throughout the Bloomingdale will contribute to the user's comfortable experience of the trail. Informational signage will also help to integrate the trail into the surrounding urban network.

5.11 The wayfinding systems, location specific signage and graphic identity of the trail and park should be consistent.

5.12 Wayfinding at street level should clearly direct people to and from safe crossing points, and provide information about distance between access points for multiple types of trail users.

5.13 Wayfinding on the trail should highlight transit connections, and provide information about distance to local amenities and commerce.

5.14 Wayfinding throughout the trail and park should provide information about the history and identity of the surrounding communities.

5.15 Wayfinding should include providing temporal, community based signage such as community message boards, as well as information about the site that might facilitate self-guided tours.

5.16 Identify adjacent schools, public transit lines, and bicycle facilities.



Fig. 5.d: Examples of Creative and Informative Wayfinding

## Maintenance

5.17 Waste receptacles should be located at trail entrances and at major seating areas.

5.18 Provide maintenance and emergency vehicle access in the vicinity of Ridgeway, Kimball, Damen, and Ashland Avenues.

5.19 Hose bibs should be provided for the maintenance of the park during establishment and drought conditions.



Sustainable waste removal and recycling



Efficient maintenance vehicles



Routine plant care



Community stewardship

Fig. 5.e: Maintaining Public Parks



## Objective 6

# See and experience the Bloomingdale as a living work of art:

- Use a wide range of artistic approaches.
- Strengthen community use and stewardship of the Bloomingdale through the arts.
- Reflect local interests, concerns, and history of the structure through the arts.
- Introduce visitors to the Bloomingdale neighborhoods through the arts.

The arts should be incorporated into the Bloomingdale in order to reflect the “creative, vibrant, and involved” surrounding neighborhoods. The community suggested that the work should reflect the diversity of the four neighborhoods adjacent to the trail and park and the rich work of artists throughout the city.

In addition to the community having strong feelings about the incorporation of art, they felt that the Bloomingdale itself should be recognized as a work of art in its own right. This can be achieved by providing artists the opportunity to design site-specific work that reflects the wide variety of public art appropriate to this setting and to incorporate materials (new and old) that reflect the legacy and history of the Bloomingdale Line. The design can also support the arts in a way that extends beyond the physical structure, by being aware of the space needs for dance, culture walks, and future arts programming.

Art that reflects local interests and represents local culture, although it may be by artists from around the world, will strengthen community presence, use, and stewardship of the Bloomingdale. Community use and stewardship of the Bloomingdale can be expanded through the introduction of innovative arts projects that will contribute to the defining characteristics of the trail and park and the adjacent neighborhoods. Art opportunities can be integrated into the design, or phased in as the trail and park develop.

## Infrastructure for Arts and Programming

Public art planning should be an integral part of the Bloomingdale Trail and Park. The design team will include a public art advisor and work closely with artists to identify specific opportunities and to incorporate work into the construction process.

Design and construction of infrastructure will permit easy access to utilities to support future performances, public art, and programming.

Recommendations:

- 6.1 Sufficient electricity should be provided through conduit to support future artistic programs in proximity to any stage/performance/installation areas.
- 6.2 The electrical distribution system should make it feasible to draw additional voltage through panels, breakers, and circuits.
- 6.3 Water provided for drinking or irrigation should also be available for temporary artistic or interpretive installations.
- 6.4 Access to the lighting system should permit an artist to link movement sensors on the trail with sound producing systems on site or at other locations.



Fig. 6.a: A Community Art Project Sponsored by the Chicago Public Art Group and Logan Square Neighborhood Association

## Infrastructure for Arts and Programming

6.5 Every effort should be made to anticipate digital media as an increasingly varied, complex, and forum for artistry and communication.

6.6 Benches, fences, and access ramps and stairways should be opportunities for artistic design and fabrication.

6.7 New concrete construction should incorporate designs/molds created by artists or anticipate opportunities for future public art.

6.8 Provide clear communication about the public art to strengthen local stewardship of the trail.

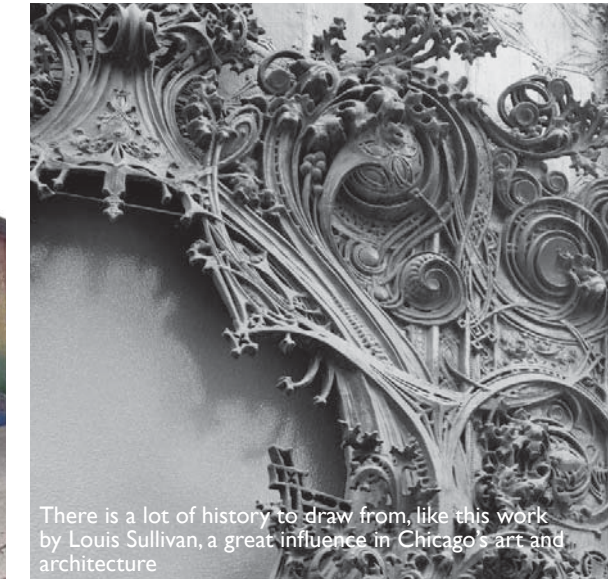
6.9 Develop programming coordination with schools and local community agencies to identify fundable partnership opportunities.

6.10 Create a curatorial community to coordinate public art funding and to support a diversity of artistic approaches.

6.11 Encourage the installation of interactive art.



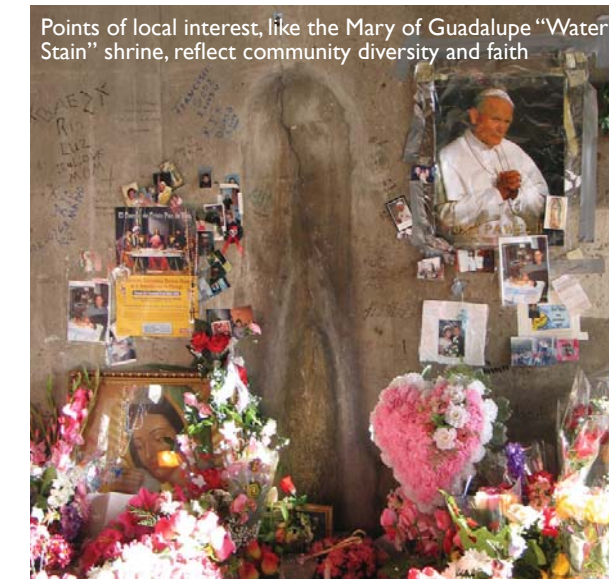
Existing art and graffiti create both interest and depth at street level



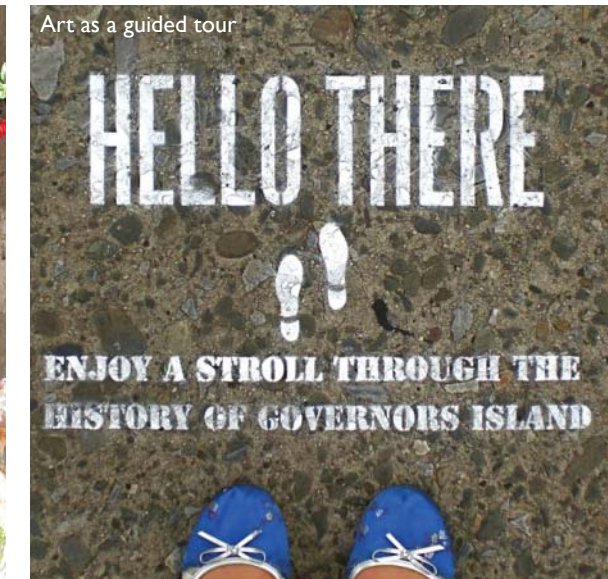
There is a lot of history to draw from, like this work by Louis Sullivan, a great influence in Chicago's art and architecture



Community art encourages pride and stewardship of the Bloomingdale



Points of local interest, like the Mary of Guadalupe "Water Stain" shrine, reflect community diversity and faith



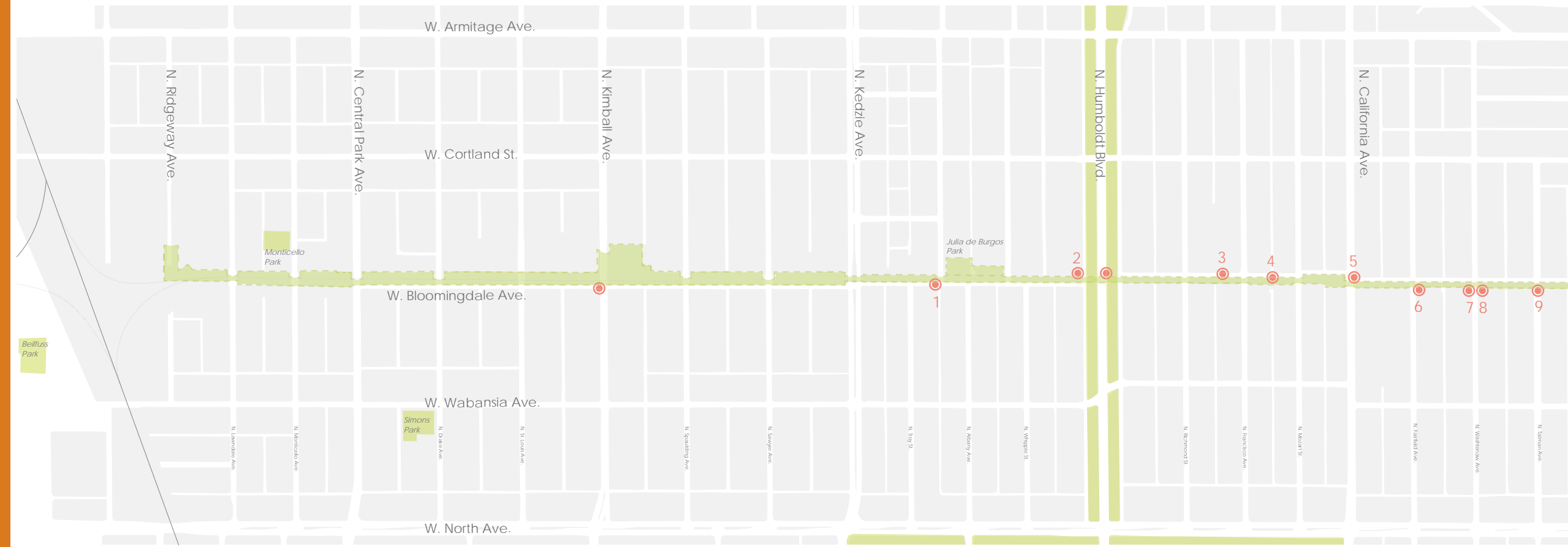
Art as a guided tour



Interactive art creates a different experience of trail and park

Fig. 6.b: Examples of Engaging and Interactive Art

## Existing Art Along the Bloomingdale

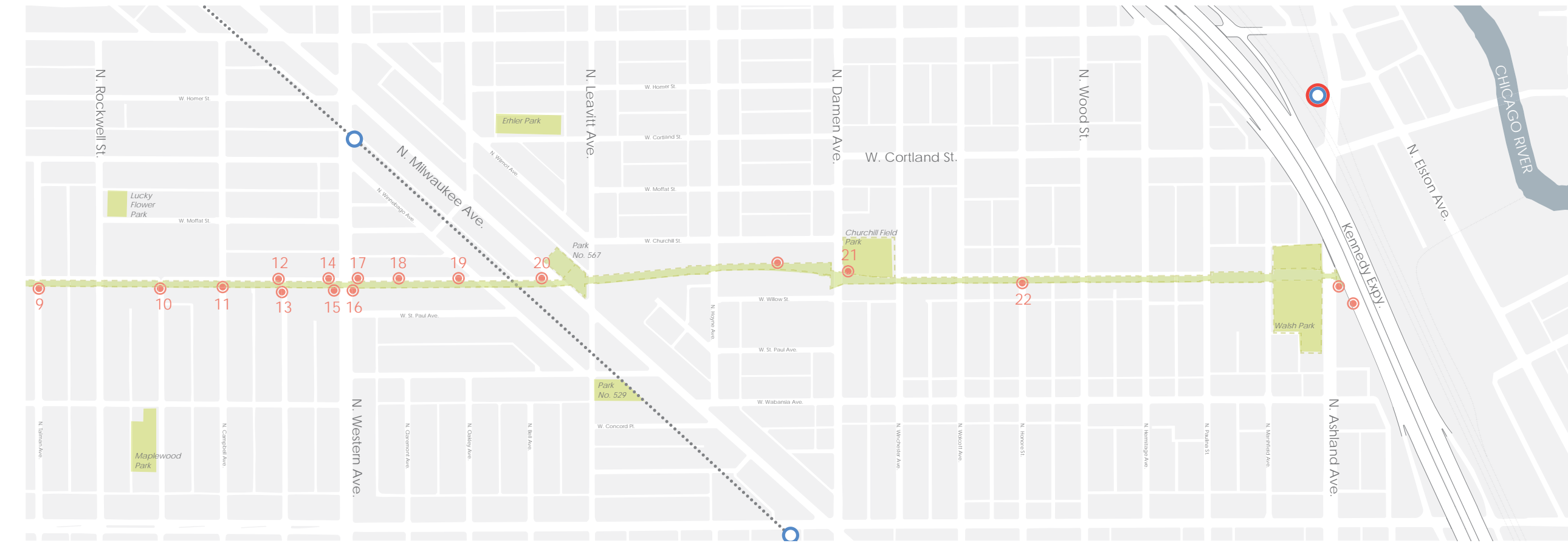


The Bloomingdale has been the site of a wide variety of public art installations during the last 30 years. The necessary development of the trail, engineering and construction of access points will disrupt or destroy some of the existing recent or significant public art.

Because some public art projects will be removed or lost due to the needs of engineering or providing access to the Bloomingdale, the characteristics of those works should be incorporated into new public art projects as part of ongoing development. This may include:

- Restoration of significant projects,
- Replicating significant lost projects at a new location,
- Reinterpretation of the project theme in a new project,
- Creation of an entirely new project by the artist of the lost work, or
- Creation of new work done with the intent of providing an opportunity for artists to test new ideas in public spaces.

## Existing Art Along the Bloomingdale



The decision to remove, restore, replace, or create public art should be informed by evaluation for evidence of community respect, the understood meaning, and the artist(s) significance. Questions to be considered include:

- Is the project in good condition? How much graffiti has accumulated on the surface given the number of years it has been there?
- Is the project's meaning understandable? Is the meaning still important to the community/world today?
- Were appropriate materials used? Does it need to be cleaned?
- Was the work created by an artist (or artists) who has done other work that is considered significant by people knowledgeable about community-engaged public art and/or the art world?



Fig. 6.c: Existing Art

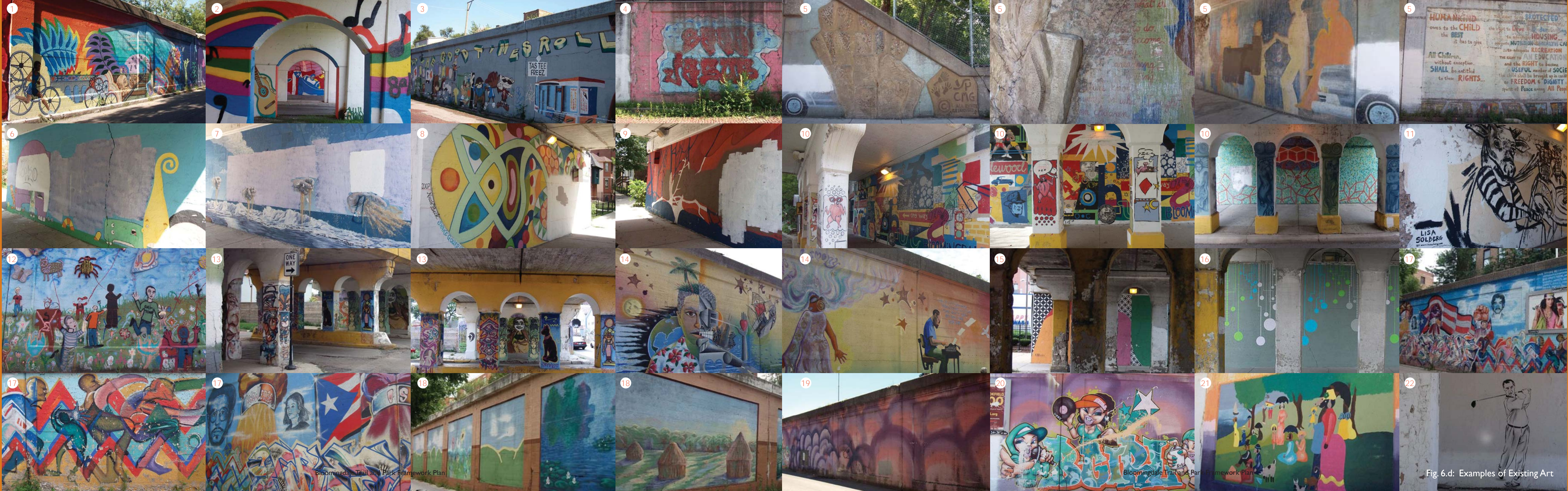


Fig. 6.d: Examples of Existing Art



## Objective 7

### Balance the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors to create a local trail and park with global appeal:

- Balance the needs of residents with users.
- Encourage connections between local communities and amenities and the Bloomingdale Trail and Park.
- Build support for the ongoing stewardship of the trail and park to ensure the project remains active and vibrant for years to come.

This objective for the Bloomingdale seeks to ensure a local park with global appeal in the heart of Chicago neighborhoods. Planning, design, and programming should reflect a balance of desires and needs for Bloomingdale Trail and Park users, as well as surrounding residents, businesses, and communities. It has the potential, as one community member wrote, to “provide an unprecedented link between communities otherwise divided” and to foster positive, productive, and safe community connections between adjacent neighborhoods and the greater Chicago transportation and park networks. Both the definition and achievement of these goals will require passionate community participation and stewardship.



Fig. 7.a: Examples of Commerce and Community Integration

Recommendations:

The conversion of the Bloomingdale Line into a public trail and park provides numerous opportunities to create positive connections with the communities that it will serve.

7.1 Maximize connections to the community that promote neighborhood health, safety, and economic development through non-motorized transportation options.

7.2 The community should be engaged and reflected in the programming, art, and amenities of the Bloomingdale Trail and Park. Furthermore, access points into the trail and park should invite users up onto the Bloomingdale and down into the neighborhoods.

7.3 The community should be informed how to participate in the City of Chicago’s public bidding process for the construction of the Bloomingdale.

7.4 Youth should be engaged in the ongoing stewardship and programming of the Bloomingdale, especially in art, education, maintenance, and service-learning opportunities.

7.5 Design and operate the trail and park so that it becomes a year-round amenity.

## Stewardship



Charrette at the McCormick Tribune YMCA, October 2011  
(Kate Joyce Photography)

## Stewardship



(Kate Joyce Photography)



(Kate Joyce Photography)



(Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail)

One of the values of the Bloomingdale is that it will be a sustainable project. This includes financial sustainability that allows for support and funding beyond the opening of the trail and park, for ongoing maintenance, programming, and other activities. This issue has been voiced by members of the public who are supportive of the project, encouraged by the progress being made, but concerned about the function and care of the trail and park. Who will be the stewards of the Bloomingdale and what will their role be?

To a certain extent, stewards of the Bloomingdale have already been identified and their work has already begun. Two of the existing parks that line the Bloomingdale and will eventually provide access (Walsh Park and Churchill Field Park) have established Park Advisory Councils (PACs) that act as the local stewards. The two newest adjoining parks, Julia de Burgos and Park 567, have burgeoning PACs to help guide their development. At Kimball Avenue (a future access point), a group of engaged residents has already gathered to take on the official role of PAC once a park is established.

In addition to park-specific stewardship groups, the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail (FBT) has positioned itself as the overall steward of the Bloomingdale for almost a decade. Through its extensive advocacy work, FBT has been building a base of supporters across the region that are personally invested in the long-term success of the Bloomingdale.

The Bloomingdale would not be as close to realization without the commitment and diligence of these groups. This Framework Plan builds on the momentum already established by the PACs and FBT, converting the widespread support and excitement for the project into financial commitments from local and federal governments and private entities.

The City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District (CPD), and The Trust for Public Land (TPL) will continue to work with the current and future PACs and FBT, calling on them to remain passionate advocates of open space and increasing their role as the stewards of the Bloomingdale.

The success of the Bloomingdale depends upon partnership and collaboration between many groups. CPD will provide the same level of maintenance and activity as it does for other parks. The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will oversee the structural integrity of the Bloomingdale, particularly its bridges and viaducts. The Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development will continue to work with the communities along the Bloomingdale to guide further investments and future planning. The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events will guide the integration of the arts into every aspect of the Bloomingdale's life.

Stewardship for the Bloomingdale will go far beyond the institutional partners (CPD, CDOT, TPL, local elected officials, PACs, and FBT) to include the entirety of the communities it serves. Parks benefit greatly from active community participation and dedication, and the resulting sense of ownership. We all play a role in the stewardship of the Bloomingdale; we are all its owners and caretakers.

To make the Bloomingdale an extraordinary trail and park, however, we must be committed to a higher level of care and programming than the City and its sister agencies can provide. TPL is including a stewardship reserve in its fundraising campaign and FBT has already begun an analysis of its capacity to become the Bloomingdale's long-term steward. Both groups are confident in their ability to play a leading role in the stewardship of the Bloomingdale, provided there is an equal commitment of time, money, and volunteerism from the community at large.





Rendering 10: Seating Area and Pedestrian Path with Landscaped Buffer between Them and the Shared-use Path

# The Future of the Bloomingdale

The following section visually expresses the Framework Plan's objectives and recommendations and includes a concept plan from Ridgeway Avenue to Ashland Avenue.

# Proposed Site Plan and Access Points

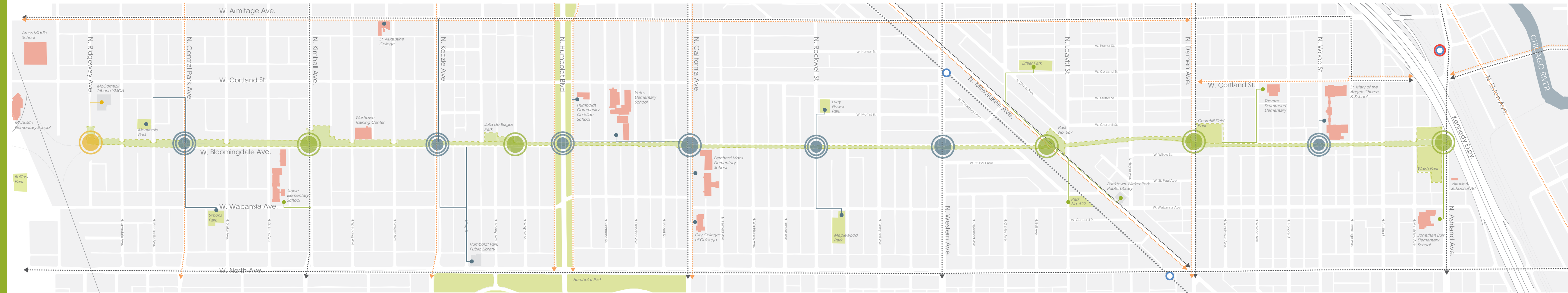


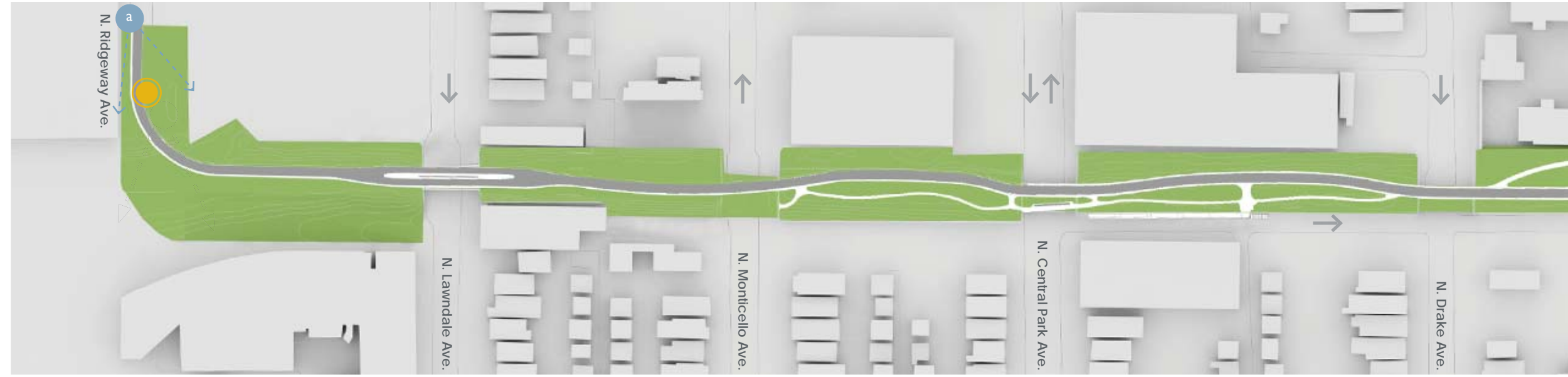
Fig. 4.a: Access Points, Transit Networks, and Adjacencies

Fig. 8.a: Walk-through Reference Plan





a Rendering 11: Ridgeway Avenue Entrance, south-east



a Existing Ridgeway, south-east

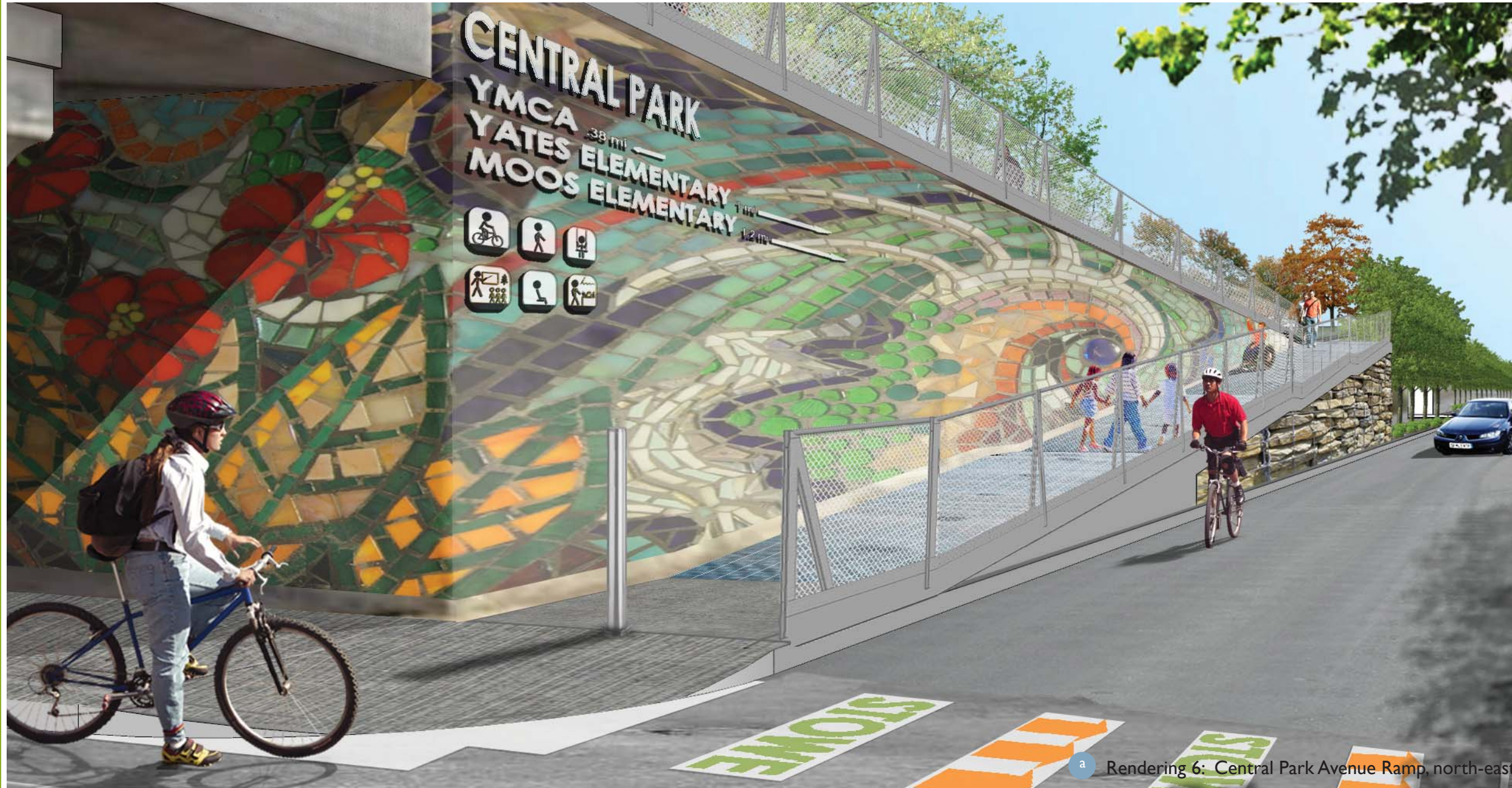
## Ridgeway Avenue ●

Ridgeway Avenue will provide access to amenities, such as schools and the McCormick Tribune YMCA. Ridgeway will be the Bloomingdale's western connection to the city's bicycle network, to the north at Armitage Avenue. From that point, there is the potential to connect to a forest preserve, several miles to the west.

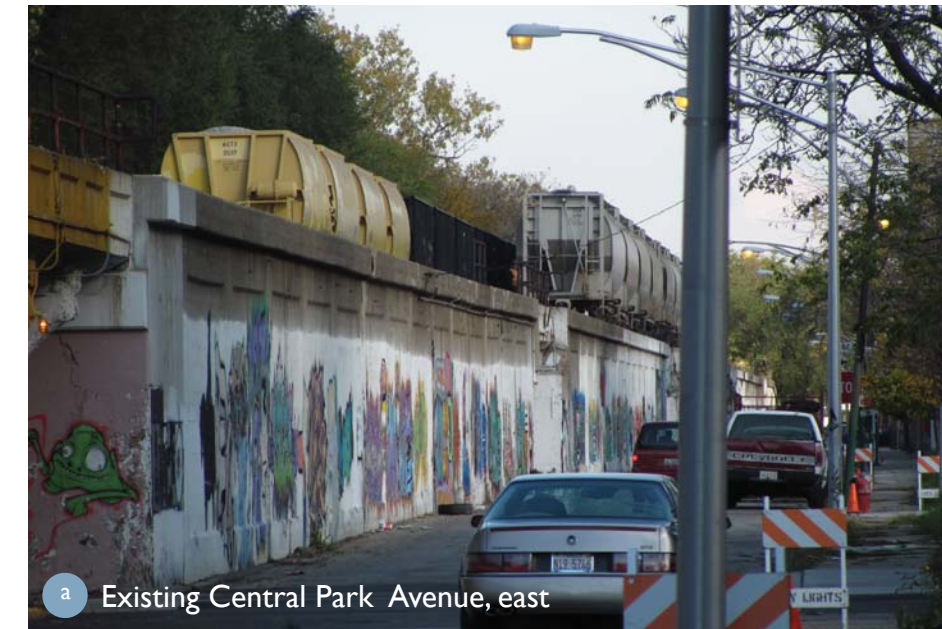
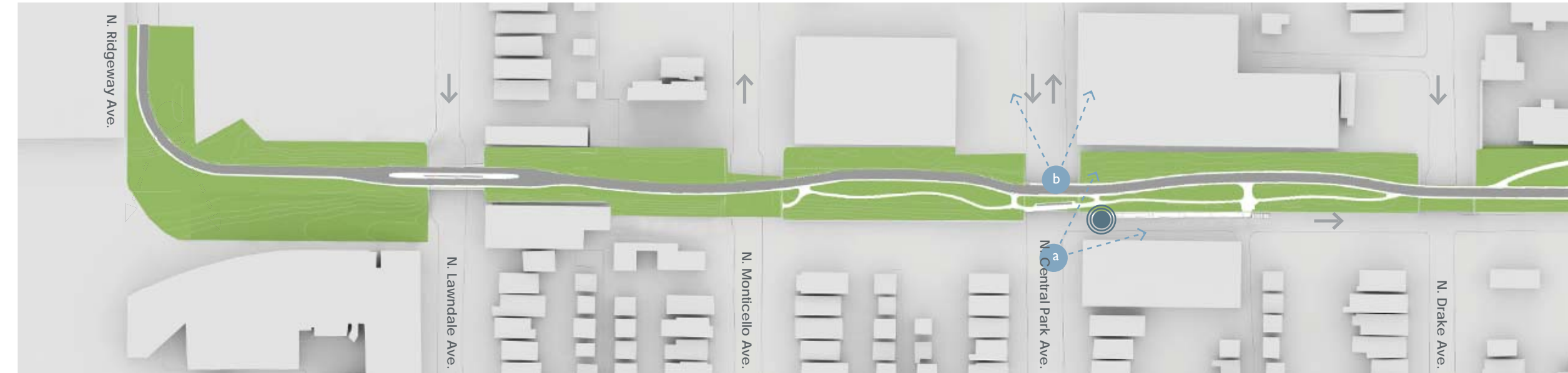
### Features:

- Ramp to the north of the Bloomingdale, into the Ridgeway Avenue right-of-way (opposite page).
- Access point for maintenance and emergency motor vehicles.





a Rendering 6: Central Park Avenue Ramp, north-east



a Existing Central Park Avenue, east



b Existing Central Park Avenue, north

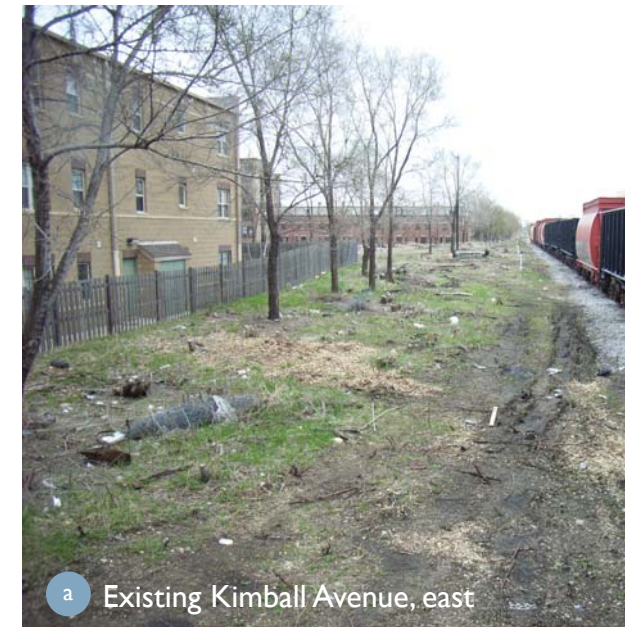
### Central Park Avenue

Central Park Avenue is a recommended route in Chicago's bicycle network. The opening of the Bloomingdale will reduce bicycle commuters' exposure to street traffic by up to 2.5 miles travelling to the Loop or other points east. Central Park would provide the shortest route to Garfield Park and its conservatory.

Feature: Ramp to the south, in the Bloomingdale Avenue right-of-way, meeting grade east of Central Park Avenue (opposite page). Top of ramp is 6' below the existing elevated level.



a Rendering 4: Park at Kimball Avenue, east



a Existing Kimball Avenue, east



b Existing Kimball Avenue, south-east

### Kimball Avenue

The vacant land on the east side of Kimball Avenue will become a park. As one of the widest portions of the Bloomingdale, there is potential to accommodate small playing fields, an amphitheater, a basketball court, and places for leisurely activities, such as picnicking.

#### Features:

- Vegetated slope with a ramp, plaza, and play area connecting to the east side of Kimball Avenue. The shared-use path is 2' below the existing elevated level.
- Access point for maintenance and emergency motor vehicles.





a Rendering 12: Julia de Burgos Park, south-east



### Kedzie Avenue

Kedzie Avenue is an important connection for pedestrians, who benefit from frequent access to main streets. Kedzie is also a connection to both Humboldt and Garfield Parks via the city's bicycling network. Humboldt Park has a fieldhouse, lagoon, beach, and many popular athletic fields.

Feature: Ramp to the south, in the Bloomingdale Avenue right-of-way, meeting grade east of Kedzie Avenue. Top of ramp is 6' below the existing elevated level.



b Existing Julia de Burgos Park, east

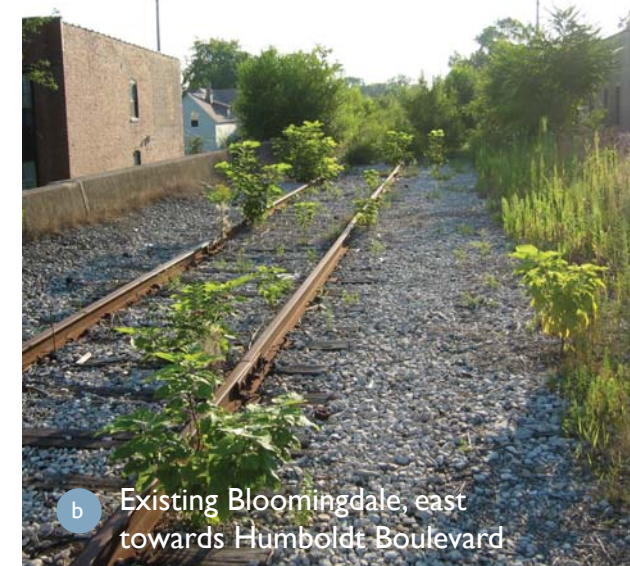
### Julia de Burgos Park

Access at Julia de Burgos Park will provide routes from Albany Avenue and Whipple Street to the Bloomingdale Trail and Park. It will increase the visibility of both the trail and park, becoming one integrated place (opposite page).

Feature: Vegetated slope with a ramp and, maybe, a slide (opposite page). The multiuse path is 6' below the existing elevated level.



a Rendering 13: Humboldt Boulevard Mirador, south



b Existing Bloomingdale, east towards Humboldt Boulevard

## Humboldt Boulevard

Humboldt is part of Chicago's landmark boulevard system, or "Emerald Necklace". The Emerald Necklace is a system of parks and broad, landscaped boulevards that were planned in 1869, with construction beginning shortly thereafter. It includes and connects many of Chicago's major parks.

Humboldt Boulevard will provide a direct connection to Humboldt Park, one-quarter mile to the south. It is one of the largest in the city and a major asset in this park-deprived area, containing a lake, a beach, and popular baseball fields.

Humboldt Boulevard is also a proposed part of the Grand Illinois Trail, a network of greenways, paths, and roadways through which to explore the state.

Seating and a projection over Humboldt Boulevard will be provided to take advantage of the views to the north and south, towards Humboldt Park. Its viaduct is the longest and has one of the most open views from the Bloomingdale.

### Features:

- Humboldt Boulevard is difficult to cross and will have entrances on both sides of the street.
- Ramp to the north, in the Bloomingdale Avenue right-of-way, meeting grade east of Humboldt Boulevard. Top of ramp is 1-foot below the existing elevated level.
- Stair to the south, in Bloomingdale Avenue, meeting grade west of Humboldt Boulevard. The companion ramp is at Julia de Burgos Park.
- “Mirador” and seating on the viaduct over Humboldt Boulevard (opposite page).





a Rendering 14: Mozart Avenue Ramp, east



a Existing Mozart Avenue, east



b Existing California Avenue, east

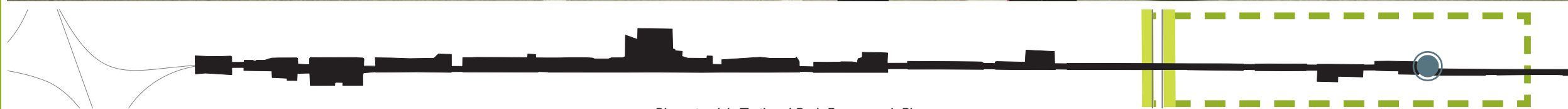
### California / Mozart Avenues

California Avenue connects to the eastern edge of Humboldt Park. The California bus and bicycle routes connect to the California Blue Line CTA station.

A ramp on the east side of Mozart Avenue will re-establish a connection to California that was lost when a half-block-long segment of Bloomingdale Avenue was vacated (opposite page). This will reduce the distance to the Bloomingdale, Moos Elementary School, bus line, and bicycle network by as much as two blocks.

#### Features:

- Ramp to the north, into the Bloomingdale Avenue right-of-way, meeting grade east of California Avenue. Top of ramp is 3.5' below the existing elevated level.
- Ramp to the north, within the Bloomingdale right-of-way, meeting grade east of Mozart Avenue. Top of ramp is 3.5' below the existing elevated level.







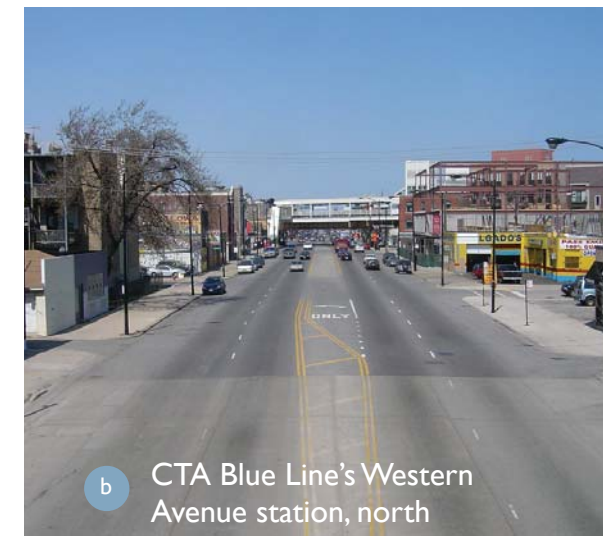
a Rendering 15: Western Avenue Bridge, north



### Rockwell Street / Maplewood Avenue

Rockwell Street and Maplewood Avenue will provide access to two nearby parks, Lucy Flower and Maplewood. The City of Chicago is evaluating whether Rockwell should become a “bicycle boulevard”, designed to give priority to walking and bicycling.

- Features:
- Ramp to the north, in the Bloomingdale Avenue right-of-way, meeting grade east of Rockwell Street. Top of ramp is 3.5’ below the existing elevated level.
  - Stair to the north, in Bloomingdale Avenue, meeting grade west of Maplewood Avenue.



b CTA Blue Line's Western Avenue station, north

### Western Avenue

Western Avenue will connect the Bloomingdale with its closest Blue Line station, the Western station, and to a bus route. Western is also being evaluated for the future implementation of “bus rapid transit”.

The clear view towards the train station makes Western Avenue a perfect bicyclist’s “kiss and ride” location. Seating and a projection over Western Avenue will accommodate those waiting for loved ones to return home from the Blue Line.

- Features:
- Western Avenue is difficult to cross and will have entrances on both sides of the street.
  - Stair to the north, in Bloomingdale Avenue, meeting grade east of Western Avenue.
  - Ramp to the north, in Bloomingdale Avenue, meeting grade west of Western Avenue. Top of ramp is 3.5’ below the existing elevated level.
  - Stair to the north, in Bloomingdale Avenue, meeting grade east of Artesian Avenue.
  - “Mirador” and seating on the viaduct over Western Avenue (opposite page).



a Rendering 16: Park 567, Milwaukee Avenue Approach, south



b Existing Milwaukee Avenue and Bloomingdale Line, west

## Milwaukee Avenue

Some of the best view corridors along the Bloomingdale can be found at Milwaukee Avenue: The Loop, the elevated train (photo to left), and the smoke stack that is the trail and park's most visible western terminus. Ample spaces for seating and viewing will be provided at the approach from Milwaukee Avenue (next page) and on the bridge.

A connection to the bicycle network is significant, since Milwaukee Avenue is one of the busiest streets for cyclists in Chicago. It will be made through a ramp to the west of Milwaukee Avenue and through Park 567, north of the Bloomingdale.





a Rendering 17: Milwaukee Plaza, north



a Existing Milwaukee Avenue, north

## Milwaukee Avenue ●

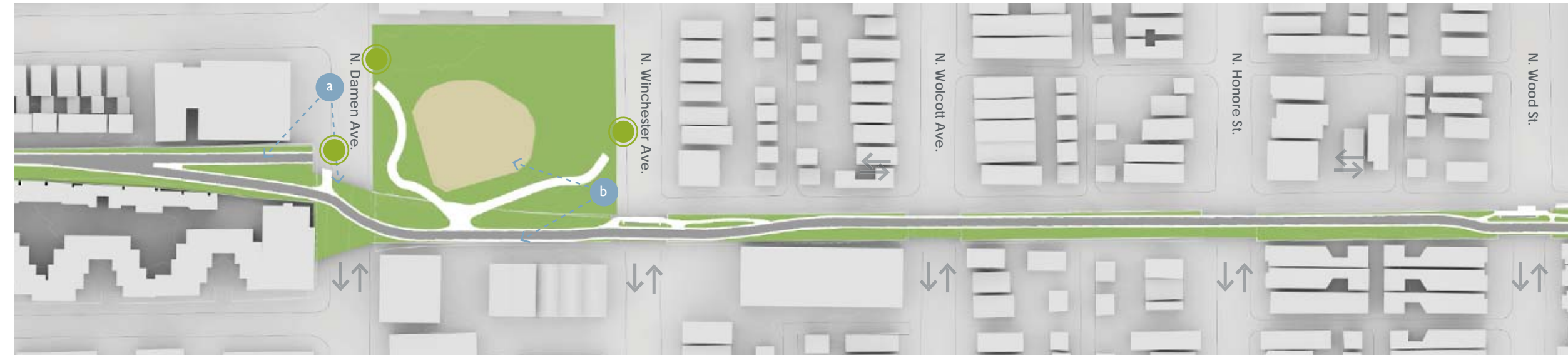
Features:

- Milwaukee Avenue is difficult to cross and will have entrances on both sides of the street.
- Ramp to the north, in Bloomingdale Avenue, meeting grade west of Milwaukee Avenue. Top of ramp is 3.5' below the existing elevated level.
- Vegetated slope with a ramp to the north, meeting grade east of Milwaukee Avenue.
- Stairs to the south, doubling as a plaza, meeting grade at the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Leavitt Street.





a Rendering 5: Access at Damen Avenue, south-west



a Existing Damen Avenue, south-west



b Existing Churchill Field Park "dog-friendly area", west

## Damen Avenue / Churchill Field Park

Damen Avenue is the western-most location from which one can see the dome of St. Mary of the Angels church. A projection over Damen should be provided for visitors to stop and look over the park towards the dome.

The Bloomingdale could be connected to Churchill Field Park with a vegetated slope and integrated seating. This would create a dynamic area for the dog-friendly area and extra seating for the baseball field.

Features:

- Damen Avenue is difficult to cross and will have entrances on both sides of the street.
- Ramp to the north, within the Bloomingdale right-of-way, meeting grade west of Damen Avenue (opposite page).
- Vegetated slope with ramps to the north, meeting grade east of Damen Avenue and west of Winchester Avenue.
- “Mirador” and seating on the viaduct over Damen Avenue.
- Access point for maintenance and emergency motor vehicles.



a Rendering 18: Wood Street Mirador, north



a Existing Wood Street, north

## Wood Street / Hermitage Avenue

The campus of St. Mary of the Angels church and school, which predates the Bloomingdale's elevation, is immediately to the north. Seating and a projection over Wood Street will be provided to take advantage of the view.

Like Rockwell, Wood Street is a City-proposed "bicycle boulevard". Wood Street will be a comfortable and safe route to connect bicyclists to Cortland Street, Elston Avenue and the Loop.

Features:

- Ramp to the north, within the Bloomingdale right-of-way, meeting grade east of Wood Street. Top of ramp is 3.5' below the existing elevated level.
- Stair to the north, within Bloomingdale Avenue, meeting grade west of Hermitage Avenue.
- "Mirador" and seating on the viaduct over Wood Street.



a Rendering 19: Ashland Skate Park, west



a Existing Walsh Park, west

### Ashland Avenue / Walsh Park

Two ramps will connect the Bloomingdale to the neighborhood: one will connect to the east side of Marshfield Avenue and the other to the west side of Ashland Avenue. The slopes required for the ramps will be used to integrate Walsh Park with the planned park to the north. They could be used for sledding or skateboarding, for example.

To provide a safer connection to and from Metra, Lake Michigan, and the Loop, cyclists will connect to the bicycle network via Marshfield and Cortland Avenues. Pedestrians will have a choice of using either Marshfield or Ashland Avenues.

While not part of the current Framework Plan, the design of the Bloomingdale will accommodate future connection to the North Branch of the Chicago River.

- Features:
- Vegetated slope with ramps, one meeting grade east of Marshfield Avenue and one west of Ashland Avenue.
  - Access point for maintenance and emergency motor vehicles.
  - "Mirador" and seating on the viaduct over Ashland Avenue.

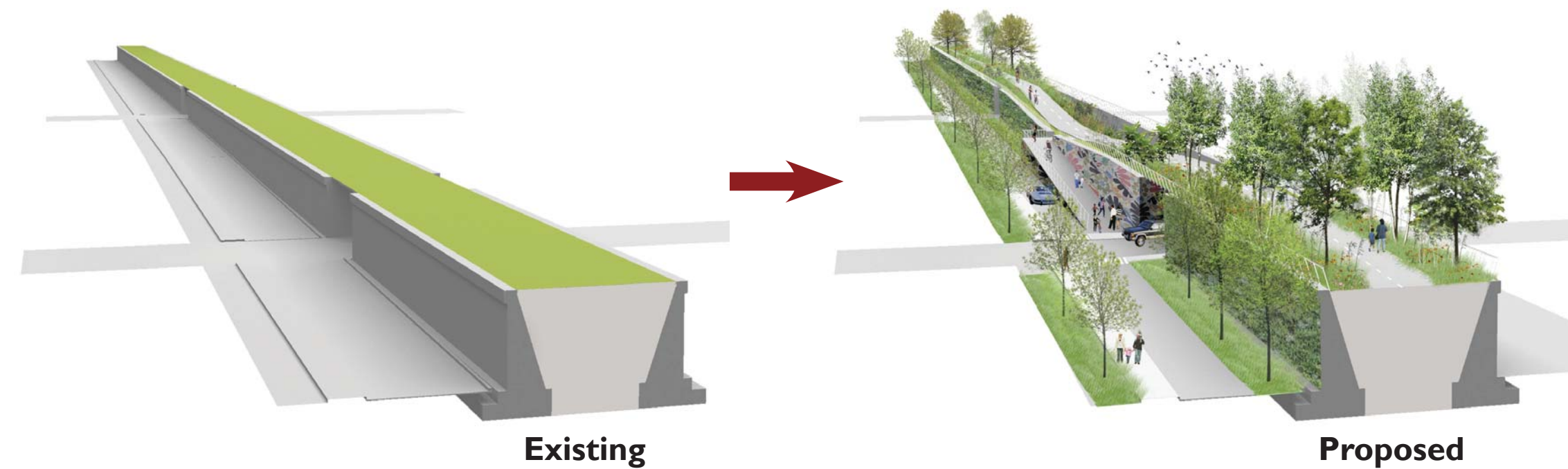


Fig. 9.a: Axonometric Diagrams of Site Transformation

# Implementation

Completion of the Bloomington Trail and Park Framework Plan is an important milestone in moving the project towards implementation, for which many funding sources as well as opportunities for stewardship are anticipated. In part, the Bloomington Trail and Park will be funded from the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ). The project's role in creating a new facility for pedestrians and cyclists, connecting to the surrounding transportation infrastructure, supports the efforts of this program.

While a significant amount of funding has already been secured, it is not yet enough to construct all of the elements envisioned and represented in the Framework Plan. It may be 20 years or more until the full build-out of the trail and park landscape can be realized. Sufficient infrastructure should be provided within the next three years to allow the Bloomington to be safe, accessible, and open to the public.

## Implementation: Trail and Park

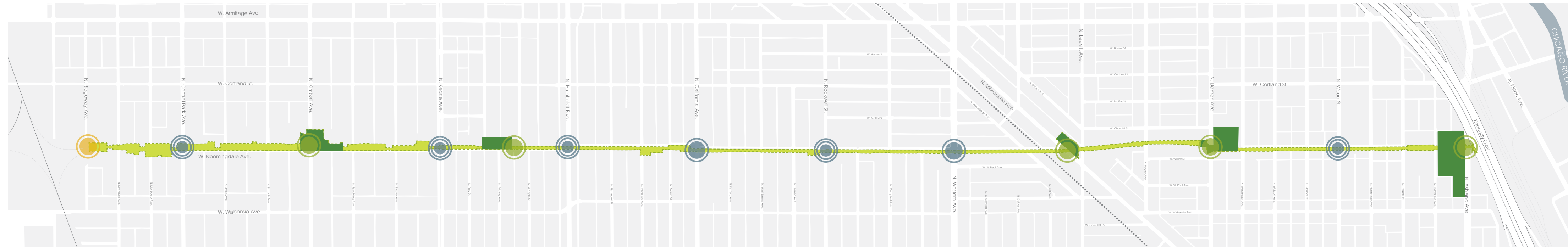


Fig. 9.b: Developing the Connections, Phasing

- Parks
- Structural repairs, earthwork, soil, path, and safety features
- Landscape and program fully developed
- Priority Access (Park)
- Priority Access (Street)
- Priority Access (West)
- Access points that merit further consideration

## Implementation: Trail and Park

A phasing strategy has been created to prioritize and guide the development of the trail and park. During the initial phase of construction, repairs to the existing bridges and structures will be undertaken to reduce water damage and cracking and preserve structural integrity.

A new topography will be carved out of the existing infill material and new planting soil brought in. The main shared-use pathway will be created along the full length of the trail to be integrated into the city's park and transportation network. All public safety features, including lighting and guardrails, will be included at this time.

Given the importance of connecting the trail to the neighborhoods, eight access locations along its length have been prioritized and are anticipated for development in this first three-year period. The segments between these access points will at first have simple landscaping, and as more funding becomes available they will be fully developed, with amenities such as benches and miradors, overlooks, being provided.

Finally, the additional access points recognized in the Framework Plan are prioritized, based on their location and connectivity to Chicago's transportation and park networks, and they will be developed as funding becomes available.



## Implementation: Trail and Park



Fig. 9.c: Critical Infrastructure Required for Opening the Trail and Park



Fig. 9.d: Further Development of Planting and Program Elements



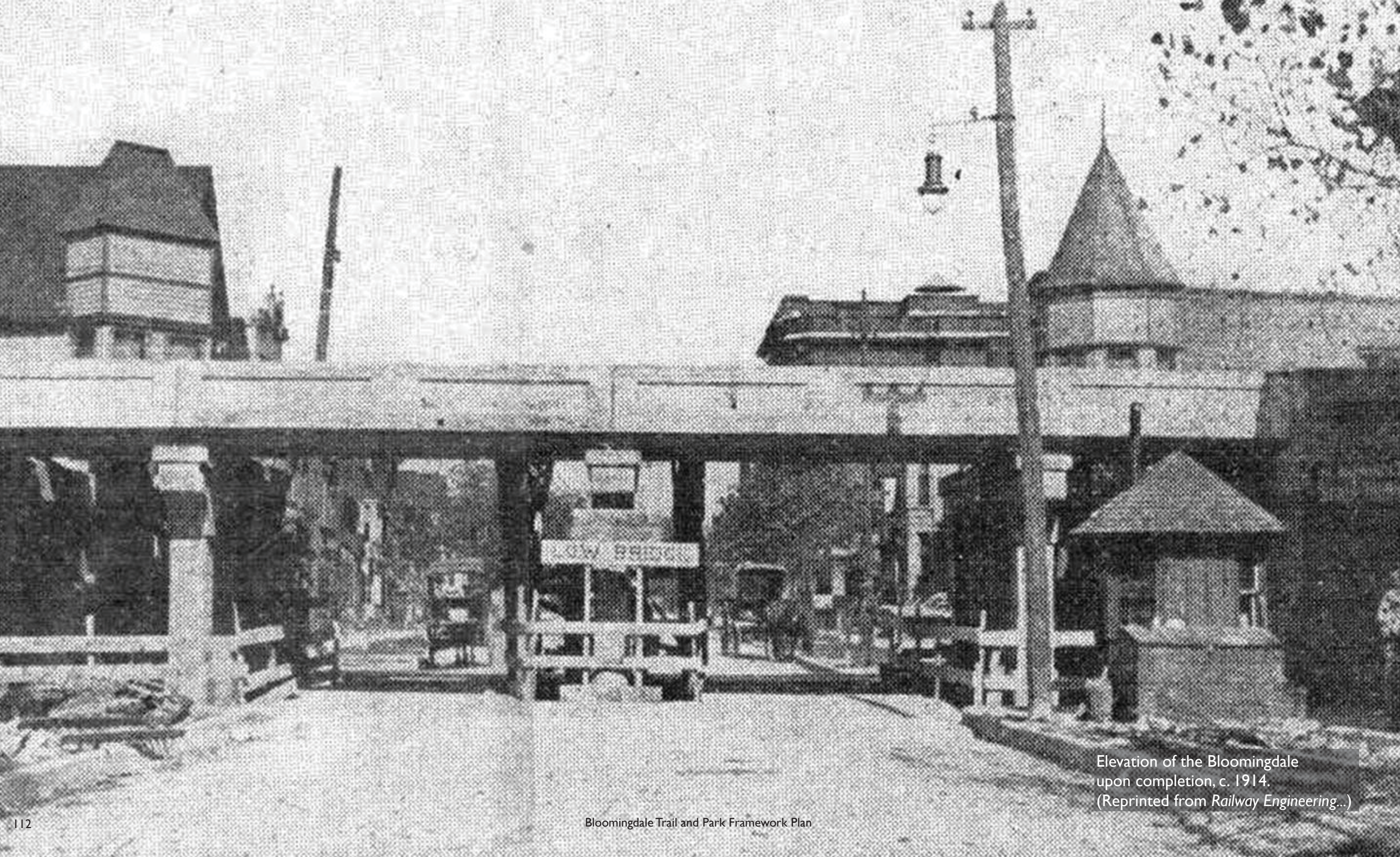
Fig. 9.e: 10 Years after Planting



Fig. 9.f: 20 Years after Planting

## Implementation: Trail and Park

Safety and accessibility along the entire length of the Bloomingdale Trail and Park will be the priority for initial investment. As additional funding becomes available, planting, access, and program elements will be further developed. Over time, the vegetation will develop into the fully-mature landscape that is envisioned in this framework plan.



Elevation of the Bloomingdale upon completion, c. 1914. (Reprinted from *Railway Engineering...*)

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# List of Figures

All images produced by Bloomingdale Design Team except as noted below:

## VISION

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