

MAYOR EMANUEL'S INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR MODERNIZATION North Branch



St. John Cantius Church, 825 N Carpenter St, Chicago, IL

COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY September 29, 2016



CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



SUMMARY OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

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 memorialize the open house meeting that occurred on September 29, 2016 by documenting the comments and questions that staff received from stakeholders during the meeting, and making this information available to all interested parties.

MEETING

City staff from the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the City of Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) continued their community outreach efforts by holding a community meeting from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm on September 29, 2016, at St. John Cantius church, located at 825 N Carpernter St, Chicago Illinois. Alderman Smith also participated in the meeting, and DPD's team of consultants were in attendance.

Nearly 400 stakeholders were invited to the September 29th meeting via an Eventbrite email. The meeting was also posted on DPD's website and Facebook page. There were **52 stakeholders who attended the September 29th meeting**, including representatives from neighborhood resident groups, residents, business owners and employers, business

organizations, industrial organizations, real estate professionals, and members of the media.

The purpose of this "open house" meeting was to give stakeholders an opportunity to review and discuss the draft Land Use Framework for the North Branch Industrial Corridor modernization initiative with city staff and their team of consultants, and other stakeholders. The informational presentation slides and boards shown at the meeting were published on DPD's website, and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Staff and meeting participants reviewed information regarding the project time line, core job trends within Chicago's industrial corridor system, the study-area boundary, and the purpose of this initiative, which is to create a planning framework that aims to:

- **Guide future development and;**
- **Inform improvements to the transportation network**

The corridor goals that have been formulated using input received from the community outreach efforts, including social mapping (sMap), meetings with community groups, aldermen, LIRI's, business owners and organizations, property owners and residents were also reviewed.

The corridor goals include:

- **Maintain the North Branch Industrial Corridor as an important economic engine and vital job center in the City of Chicago.**
- **Improve the multi-modal transportation network so that it better supports and encourages trips made by walking, biking, taking transit, and utilizing shared-use mobility options.**
- **Build upon the North Branch Industrial Corridor's unique natural and built environment.**

Two conceptual land use scenarios were reviewed which classify areas into one of three categories: **Dynamic, Stable, and Transitional zones**, depending upon a parcels location, land use characteristics, and relationship to adjacent properties.

Four Urban Case Studies were presented which illustrated examples from across the county where industrial land uses co-exist with other uses (click project below to view additional information) :

- [Boston Seaport, Boston, MA](#)
- [South Lake Union, Seattle, WA](#)
- [South Side District, Pittsburgh, PA](#)
- [Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA](#)

Maximizing the value of the waterways within the corridor was also discussed, including increasing and maintaining natural habitat areas and utilizing water transportation in appropriate locations.



INPUT HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting participants offered numerous insightful comments during the open house via the Q&A session, discussions with subject matter experts, and comment cards. In general, most attendees were in favor of the main goals that have been established to modernize the city's industrial corridors. Many comments centered on future land uses within the NBIC and the importance of continued planning to understand and address the impact of these changes.

Input summary highlights include:

- Allow the area to continue as an economic engine and job center
- Further explore the mix of land uses needed to ensure area is sustainable, while being mindful of the operational needs of businesses and their impact on adjacent areas
- Ensuring the multi-modal transportation network can adequately accommodate the future uses
- Maximizing the value of the river to continue to provide transportation and recreational opportunities
- Creating new public open spaces in appropriate areas
- Utilizing several important character elements found within the area

NEXT STEPS

DPD and their team of consultants will continue to refine conceptual land use scenarios, urban design, and transportation concepts. DPD will also continue to meet with groups and individuals if they have questions or wish to discuss their views.

STAY INFORMED

DPD will continue to hold public meetings and will **post upcoming meeting dates on our website.**

All previous staff presentations have been posted online:

- DPD's website: <https://www.cityofchicago.org/dpd>
- Medium.com: <https://medium.com/@ChicagoDPD>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/chicagodpd>
- Twitter: @ChicagoDPD



Please email DPD at DPD@cityofchicago.org with any questions, or if you would like to be added to our contact database.

COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

Received during presentation:

- What does the 2FM move mean - what is planned for this big space? 2FM site has potential for park/ open space.
- Is a park along the river in the plan? A nice park with facilities is needed.
- Generally positive reactions received to DPD's goals for the NBIC modernization.
- Is this project consistent with the North Branch vision statement?
- Does the planning approach take into account that "we may run out of 'Googles' someday"?
- What is the rationale for including residential units? Is residential critical to creating a vibrant and successful innovation district? Do any of the scenarios show it acceptable for no residents in the area?
- A residential component is needed for the area to keep is active 24/7 and keep viable amenities for a corporate campus.
- Residential units will force "polluters" to leave.
- What is the appropriate amount of residential, office, and manufacturing land uses for the area?
- How have other cities handled the conflicts between residential and industrial operations/businesses? Case studies are available online.
- Would manufacturers be permitted in the mixed-use areas?
- Put north side post office sorting in NBIC, combining functions now at Dearborn and Clark St stations. Dearborn can be redeveloped; Building to the north of Clark St. Station will be on market soon and this can be combined for development site.
- Will the fees that are being discussed be so onerous as to curtail development?



- The traffic jams are already horrible trying to get on the Kennedy Expressway from Lincoln Park and to connect from Lincoln Park to Bucktown. Without better connections and mass transit, how can the area support more commercial and possibly residential development?
- Sewers may need replacing; they may have been damaged by industrial uses.

Comment Cards

- There is a concern that the buffers need to be studied with high scrutiny because using the river as a buffer may not work well because the noise and pollution still would travel between businesses and residential. Also property tax revenue could be lost because commercial properties are taxed at a higher rate than mixed-use and residential only properties.
- Traffic is our largest concern. The east-west and north-south access to the Finkl property is inadequate no matter how you slice it. There is no guarantee that employees would be the residents of any new development built on this space. There is no way to make that a reality. Commercial tax revenue far exceeds any residential tax revenue from development. No towers and high density structures on the Finkl space. Low rise tech, restaurants, park space and office space is the way to go.
- The whole area is easily bottle-necked! If more development brings more business and residents, the whole road, bike sidewalk and street lighting needs to be rethought to make it more accessible, safe and functional.
- Celebrate the river by providing easy access to the public and encourage awareness and use.
- Linkage across river especially at Goose Island.
- A major concern is keeping the river edge closed to public from Division to Halsted.
- Would like to see north-south connection to the 606 and

downtown zones. More parks and pedestrian friendly aspects.

- I'd like to see the river opened to the public. A bike and walking trail along the river. Non-motorized transit in the river, rowing, kayaking, with some tour boats. A model would be the river walk downtown with restaurants and shops along the river park.

Topic Tables & Information Boards

Open Space / River / Character

- Build a continuous Riverwalk with bike trails.
- Route Cortland bike traffic through Wicker Park, Buck Town to Armitage.
- Create a bicycle friendly corridor along the river as well as connections to other open spaces.
- Extend bike paths from the 606 to Lincoln Park along Dickens (east) and Belden (west).
- Extend Southport across the river to improve transit access.
- Build a bridge across the river at Armitage.
- Build new Pedestrian / Bike bridges across river at Ogden, Evergreen, Blackhawk, Willow, and at Finkl site.
- Create more opportunities to interact with the river including a commuter boat further into the North Branch, and allowing kayaks.
- Make open space a priority. Increase access to open space, and include as a selling point for potential uses as meeting space or entertainment venue.
- Non-motorized boats should have priority through regulations.
- Improve water quality.
- Offer river tours.
- Expand water taxi service. River West resident: 'If I could take river to downtown, it would be great'
- Access for local residents to riverfront open space including parking spaces, bike racks, disabled access.

- Create amenities such as snack kiosks, boat rental, fishing piers, water taxi.
- Oz Park is the most used small park in the city.
- Performance space and concert venue at previous Morton Salt site.
- Build a new large park with passive and active open space areas, including baseball fields.
- Build a new park at General Iron site on west side of Chicago River
- Build a new park on the 2FM site.
- Are there plans for a park on the Finkl site?
- New park along river at Tribune site north of Chicago Ave.
- Retail corridor along Grand Ave along Tribune site.
- Improve access for families to the 606 in the corridor.
- Preserve the historic Cortland Bridge.
- Preserve the historical character of the former Clybourn Mansion.
- Keep the character of the area - call out history of river with kiosks and wayfinding – tell the story.
- Note historic home that once stood on/near 2FM site.
- Provide adequate river access for barges to promote a working river.

Transportation

- Better inform residents how additional development can occur with existing traffic issues -traffic has only gotten worse over the years.
- Improved pedestrian and bike connections are needed throughout area.
- Build a pedestrian/bike bridge connection on Erie Street over existing rail lines and river
- Build a pedestrian/bike bridge across Ogden Ave.

- Add a pedestrian/bike crossing across the North Branch canal between Division and North Ave.
- Build pedestrian bridge from Ogden to Goose Island to connect/provide foot and bike access to Blue Line and further to Fulton Innovation District.
- Extend the 606 trail to the Finkl Steel site.
- Widen bridges at Cortland St and North Ave.
- Build a second bridge over river south of Division St
- Build a pedestrian bridge over river at Ogden Ave.
- Goose Island is disconnected and needs more bridges to improve access.
- Add water taxi stops.
- Reinstate the Clybourn bus.
- Improve the pedestrian environment at Ashland/Elston/Armitage
- Relocate the Metra Station.
- Add Divvy stations near generators.
- Utilize rail ROW at Tribune site for trucks.
- Consider taking out parking on street or making it diagonal parking.
- Truck traffic will be reduced when 2FM moves.
- Increase access between Lincoln Park and Wicker Park by adding more east – west connections.
- There is increased street gridlock on and around Clybourn south of Racine.
- New shuttle bus from Metra stop to Finkl site.
- New shuttle from Red/Brown CTA lines to Finkl site.
- Extend the 606 trail to Finkl site and further to Lake Michigan.
- Fill in river on east side of Goose Island to connect streets.
- How does the city plan to accommodate the 15-20,000 new residents?

- Square structure in northeast lane of Ogden Ave just before the railroad viaduct is sunken 6 inches and needs to be adjusted.
- Need dedicated parking for visitors to open space along the river.
- Reinstate the Clybourn bus.
- Rename Clybourn Metra state to Construct segregated bike lanes to improve safety for all users.
- Plan for coordinated parking facilities.
- Improve lighting, visibility and street crossings for pedestrians at and around the Ashland/Elston/Armitage intersection
- Add Divvy stations throughout the area, including at the Metra stop and UI Labs.
- Trucks on Fry Street trying to bypass Ogden/Chicago to get to Elston.
- Could Bigane use a new curb cut by Fletcher Jones to alleviate trucks in neighborhood?
- Truck access below grade of Chicago and Halsted intersection from Bigane to Kinzie along existing, underutilized freight rail line.

Case Studies

- South Lake Union has a nice waterfront park.
- Are there residential buildings in South Lake Union?
- What is the proximity to downtown Boston?
- How does this area compare in size to the North Branch?
- There are still large surface parking lots in the Boston Seaport.
- What was on this site previously in Pittsburgh (South Works)?
- The north side of the river looks isolated from the city.
- It's nice to see Pittsburgh reinvent itself.

Land Use Scenarios

- I would like to see mixed use with residential along the canal.
- Build more parks, increase river access and bike paths.
- Cabrini Green development will eventually extend west to the river.
- Buffers can act as barriers for pedestrians – not enjoyable to walk through.
- In the example of the Clybourn Corridor acting as a buffer, there is only so much retail that can move into the area and the limited uses don't allow much else, so it limits the development that can happen in the area.
- The three zones "Dynamic, Stable and Transitional" are split east to west, but perhaps they should be split north to south? Along Ashland and Halsted, etc.
- The development of the Ohio City neighborhood in Cleveland is an example of a mix of uses.
- Need to start discussing possible density of development in North Branch as it will make the draft scenarios more realistic for people to understand what the impacts will be. Need to test the tolerance of stakeholders for height in the area.
- The office market is volatile.
- The City may need more manufacturing space in the future, and should hold space for this use
- Mixed use is appropriate on the Greyhound site.

