

# MAYOR EMANUEL'S INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR MODERNIZATION North Branch



*UI LABS - 1415 N CHERRY AVE, CHICAGO, IL*

## COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY December 13, 2016



CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



## DECEMBER 13, 2016 MEETING

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 December 13, 2016 by documenting the input 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 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on December 13, 2016, at UI Labs, located at 1415 N Cherry Ave, Chicago Illinois. Aldermen Smith, Hopkins, and Barnett also participated in the meeting and DPD's team of consultants were in attendance.

Over 450 stakeholders were invited to the December 13th, 2016 meeting via an Eventbrite email. The meeting was also posted on DPD's website and Facebook page. There were 108 stakeholders who attended the December 13th 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 meeting was to review the goals of the Industrial Corridor Modernization initiative, and present the draft Transportation, Open Space, and Community Character concepts of the Framework Plan to stakeholders. Attendees were given an opportunity to review the information and also ask questions of city staff and their team of consul-

ants. 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 planning process and project time line, stakeholder outreach efforts and results, and the North Branch project purpose and corridor goals & economic factors, and framework concepts:

#### Goals

- 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.

#### Economic Factors

- **Employment Trends**, which confirmed a 261% increase in the number of Tech jobs within the North Branch Industrial Corridor between 2002 and 2014;
- **Center Led Growth**, which illustrated how the 3-mile radius adjacent to the Central Area experienced growth that outpaced the region;
- **Manufacturing**. The share of manufacturing jobs within the North Branch Industrial Corridor has decreased from 73% in 1990 to 20% in 2016.
- **Industrial Tech**. Identified several current industrial tech anchors, including Wrigley's Global Innovation Center, UI Labs, mHub & GE FUSE.
- **Urban Case Studies** from across

the county demonstrated how industrial land uses co-exist with other uses:

- *Boston Seaport, Boston, MA*
- *South Lake Union, Seattle, WA*
- *South Side District, Pittsburgh, PA*

#### Framework Concepts

Attendees were presented with the following short, mid-term, and long-term conceptual recommendations and implementation ideas, all of which were informed by community input and extensive research. Highlights include:

#### Transportation

- Increase network efficiency by modernizing traffic signals
- Expand existing transit areas with new pedestrian and bicycle bridges
- Create regional transit links through longer-term projects (i.e. transitway)
- Create regional transit links through longer-term large projects (i.e. Metra improvements)

#### Corridor Character

- Character building survey
- Potential clusters of character buildings with streetscapes and plazas

#### Open Space

- North Branch River loop: potential for a 7-mile
- 606 connections to the east (North Branch River Loop, and Lakefront Trail)
- Developer-led recreational amenities (publicly accessible open space provided in new developments)
- Civic spaces (explore opportunities)
- Eco parks (within North Branch Canal and turning basin for passive recreation and inland habitat

## INPUT HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting participants offered numerous insightful comments during the meeting via the Q&A session and through discussions with subject matter experts.

### *Highlights include:*

- The transportation framework plan needs to address the transit needs of both existing and future users, and ensure that adequate multi-modal transit options are provided.
- Adequately-sized open space needs to be provided in the area for current residents.
- The character of the area can be promoted through preservation of historic buildings and other assets.

## 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](mailto:DPD@cityofchicago.org) with any questions, or if you would like to be added to our contact database.



## COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

### Received during presentation:

#### Transportation

- Current plan should prioritize the needs of the existing residents and businesses in the area. Transit connections should not focus on regional connections, but rather connections between existing CTA stations, existing residents, and employment centers.
- Develop strategies for alleviating traffic congestion by planning for adequately-sized transportation infrastructure including roads, plazas and walkways. Long-term transit solutions are preferable over short-term, unsustainable solutions.
- Coordinate with all transportation agencies (CTA, CDOT, IDOT, Metra/rail) to design a transportation system that is adequate for the expected future growth.
- Traffic congestion is caused by the lack of open space in the surrounding neighborhoods since parents have to drive their children to other neighborhoods for recreation programs.
- Research the previous plan for a CTA circle line approximately 5 to 7 years ago.
- Review and possibly implement the work of DePaul University's Professor Schwieterman, who has researched unique methods of increasing transit capacity within cities.
- Consider increasing opportunities for bus ridership to alleviate auto traffic.
- Explore the concept of Metra Clybourn Station relocation.
- Continue to explore funding options for the infrastructure improvements needed to allow this area to accommodate future growth. Some transportation projects have received funding. Other projects are subject to cost-benefit analysis and may be threatened in the current

political climate at the federal level. Opportunities for public-private partnerships should be explored.

#### Open Space

- Alderman Smith: City should take the lead on the open space issue... as was done with Grant Park. The redevelopment of the NBIC is a great opportunity to plan for and secure needed open space for the community.
  - Create new, sizeable parks, fields and with field houses. Existing neighborhood parks (Oz and Clover play lot) are severely overcrowded.
  - Linear parks or public/private plazas are great, but need larger recreational areas.
  - Provide more space for youth athletic fields in the area.
  - Applaud consideration to integrate private sector green space (POPS).
  - Consider programming options for youth and adult active recreation. For instance, adult sports could utilize field at later hours.
  - Concerns over the potential River Trail width. The 606 is very popular and at times can be dangerous due to conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.
  - Encourage businesses such as cafes and breweries to provide outdoor patio spaces along the river trail.
  - Consider year round recreation activities along the river trail such as cross country skiing and snow shoeing.
  - Enhance east/west and north/south pedestrian connections from River Trail to surrounding neighborhoods.
  - How does proposed riverwalk connect back to existing street grid/neighborhoods? More articulation of "green fingers" extending to periphery of study area.
  - How does proposed riverwalk connect back to existing street grid/neighborhoods? More articulation of "green fingers" extending to periphery of study area.
- Take a long term approach when considering widths of riverwalk/ multi-modal paths. The 606 is already overcrowded. How will such space be utilized in 50+ years?
  - Continuous bike trail along the Chicago River would be great. A concern over future maintenance – the 606 isn't plowed for days after it snows. If it is to be considered a commuting alternative it needs to be year round.
  - The North Branch industrial area is ill-suited for large park spaces. The area's large spaces and industrial character make the NBIC very viable land for businesses.
  - The 606 is a wonderful asset, great to see more trail connections.
  - The Greyhound building on Goose Island would be a good location for a future park.
  - The current proposal includes many examples of the vision developed by the Chicago's Great Rivers initiative, such as improved access to trails and recreation opportunities, creating "in-river" parks on the canal, providing soccer fields within PD's.
  - Continue to coordinate with CPD and develop a master open space plan to show where larger recreational opportunities will be provided.
  - Alderman Hopkins: The 2nd ward sponsored two planning charrettes earlier this year, which highlighted the need for additional open space. Suggestions for achieving adequate open space in this area include re-purposing non-private land for park land, and also to coordinate with developers through the PD process (example: Focal Point at 31st). Encourage developers to allocate green space in their plans. Would like an inventory of non-private owned land to determine if any parcels are feasible for open space.

### ***Community Character***

- Create a plan to preserve and promote the areas historical assets - which tell the story of the city's industrial legacy.
- Consider an inventory of historic industrial buildings and landscapes/sites. How can these spaces be adapted to future use? Can they define the urban design character of Goose Island? Or a collection of historic tannery buildings (Horween Leather) at Ashland and Armitage.

### ***Land Uses***

- Alderman Burnett: The priority for this area should be to grow in a manner that does not harm the existing residents and businesses.
- Continue to evaluate the appropriate mix of uses needed to create a sustainable community and innovation center. Research on this topic has included case studies from other cities which have experienced similar land use transformation including Pittsburgh, Boston, and Seattle.

### ***General***

- Coordination with CPS, CFD, CPD needs to continue to fully understand the impact that new development will have on the city's resources and agencies. Additional residential will require new social infrastructure and new schools.

