



CHAPTER 1

Great Plans for a Great City



Figure 1.1
South Michigan Avenue today



Figure 1.2
South Michigan Avenue will be one of many higher intensity, mixed-use corridors that will extend out from the Loop and form the centers of urban neighborhoods.

Great Plans for a Great City

This is an extraordinary time for Chicago's Central Area. Under the leadership of Mayor Richard M. Daley, Chicago's Central Area is experiencing dramatic growth. It is a turnaround based on the principle that successful downtowns must be dynamic and people friendly places. This transformation will continue in the coming decades, only if we carefully plan today with a vision that supports best practices and ensures Chicago's quality of life.

Three Reasons to Expect Growth

The 43.5 million square feet of new office space constructed in downtown Chicago between 1980 and 2002 was equivalent to the entire metropolitan inventory of Phoenix or St. Louis. Chicago's underlying economic strength suggests that the pace of growth will continue. The city that began as the hub of the nation's inland waterways, then became its principal hub for the railroads and then the airlines, is now a hub for the nation's fiber optic network. As a hub, Chicago remains an excellent place to do business. Although fluctuations have occurred from year to year, the city's commercial core has grown at a remarkable pace since 1980, adding 43.5 million square feet of office space. With thoughtful planning and judicious public investment there is every reason to expect sustained growth.

The second reason to expect growth is Chicago's central location and economic diversity. Today, the Central Area is a diverse mix of office towers, residential districts, world famous shopping, convention centers, entertainment, tourism, and industry. This diversity, and a mid-continent location, has kept the Central Area, and the Chicago Region, strong in increasingly competitive national and international markets where quality is key.

Finally, Chicago's Central Area will grow because people want to be here. Since 1980, more than 23,000 new homes meant the Chicago added more downtown residents than any other American city. People from around the region, nation and the globe will continue to make business, career and life decisions that enable them to be here.

The Purpose of the Plan

The Central Area Plan is the City of Chicago's response to the continuing transformation of central Chicago. It details the Central Area's potential as well as the obstacles to growth, and provides a blueprint for essential change. It crafts this vision with a "greener", more environmentally sustainable Central Area as an overarching theme.

To a greater degree than perhaps any other U.S. city, Chicago has benefited from an enlightened planning partnership between the public and private sectors. Burnham and Bennett's famous 1909 Plan of Chicago began the transformation of Chicago from "hog butcher to the world" to a city with international standing for the quality of its civic realm. Subsequent plans have been as important in creating some of the most admired features of the city we know today.

This Plan is offered in the same spirit. A great deal has been accomplished, but there is much more work to be done if the Central Area's growth, quality of life, and commitment to preserving the best of its history are to be maintained and balanced. This Plan is the next step in Chicago's future.

Figure 1.3 The Central Area of Chicago

The Central Area represents 107 million square feet (sf) of office, 9 million sf of retail, and 56,000 residential units.

By 2020, the Central Area will see an additional 30 to 40 million sf of office, 5 to 7 million sf of retail and 40,000 additional residential units.

In 20 years, the residential population of the Central Area may exceed 150,000 people. This is more people than currently live in any Illinois city except Rockford.

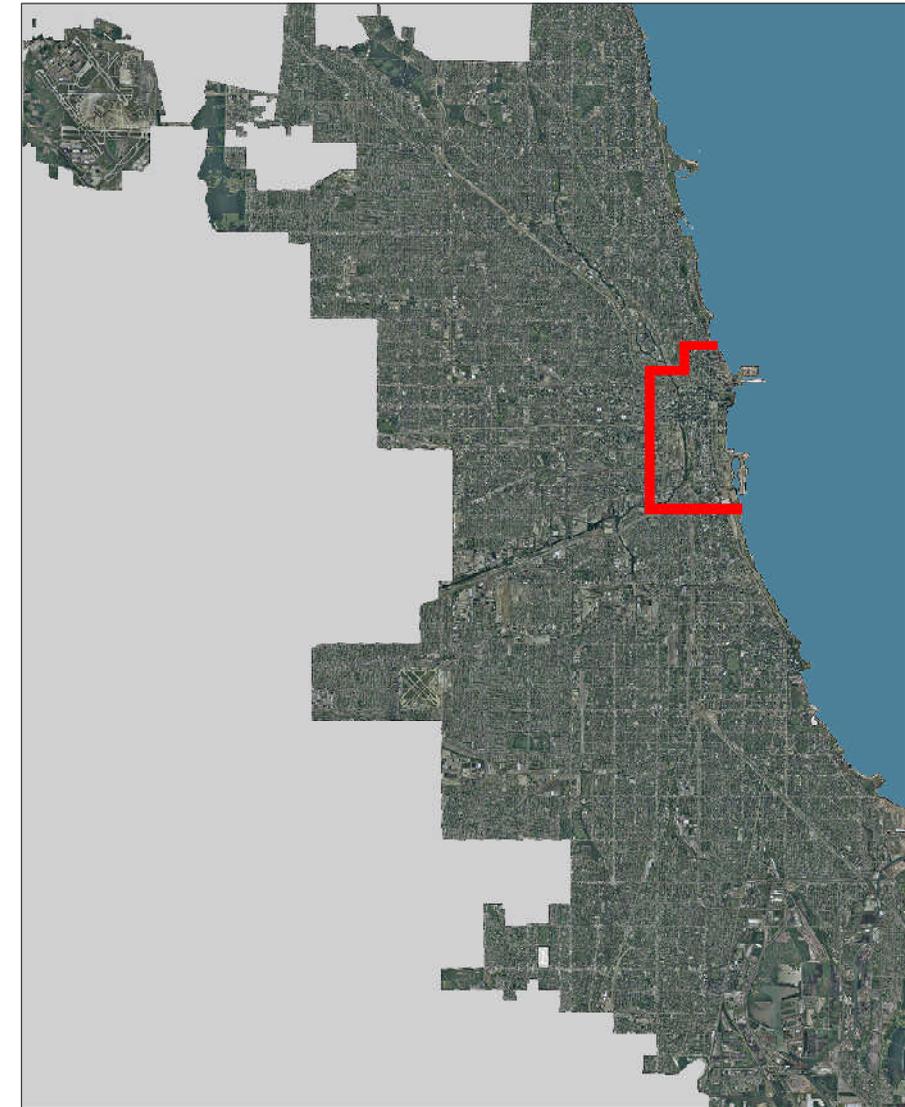
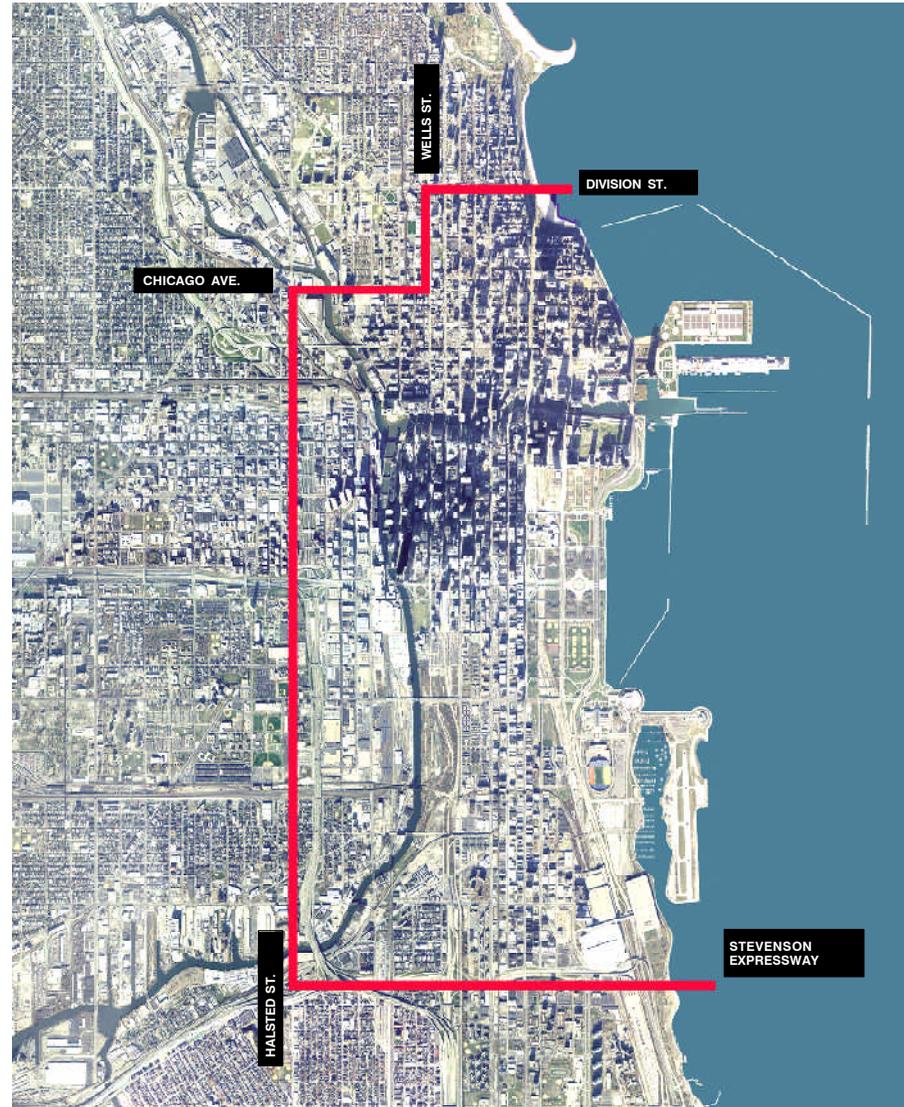


Figure 1.4

The Central Area makes up 2% of the City of Chicago. It is the hub for public transit and the region's expressways.



The Planning Process

Initiated by Mayor Richard M. Daley, the Central Area Plan is the product of over two years of discussion and reflection by a broad group of dedicated Chicagoans. Mayor Daley assembled a Steering Committee of 24 business and civic leaders to assess the challenges ahead and create a responsive and visionary plan. The Central Area Plan is the result of the Committee's work and extensive input from seven task forces.

The City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, provided direction for the project and coordinated the development of the plan with other government agencies such as the Department of the Environment and the Chicago Transit Authority.

The project was overseen by a 24-member Steering Committee. Seven Task Forces assessed the challenges and opportunities faced by key Central Area development sectors. Major stakeholders in the public and private sectors were consulted throughout the planning process.

A preliminary draft of this report was released in July 2002, and people from throughout Chicago provided comments at public meetings. The Department of Planning and Development worked with the Steering Committee through the spring of 2003 to integrate public comments into this final document.

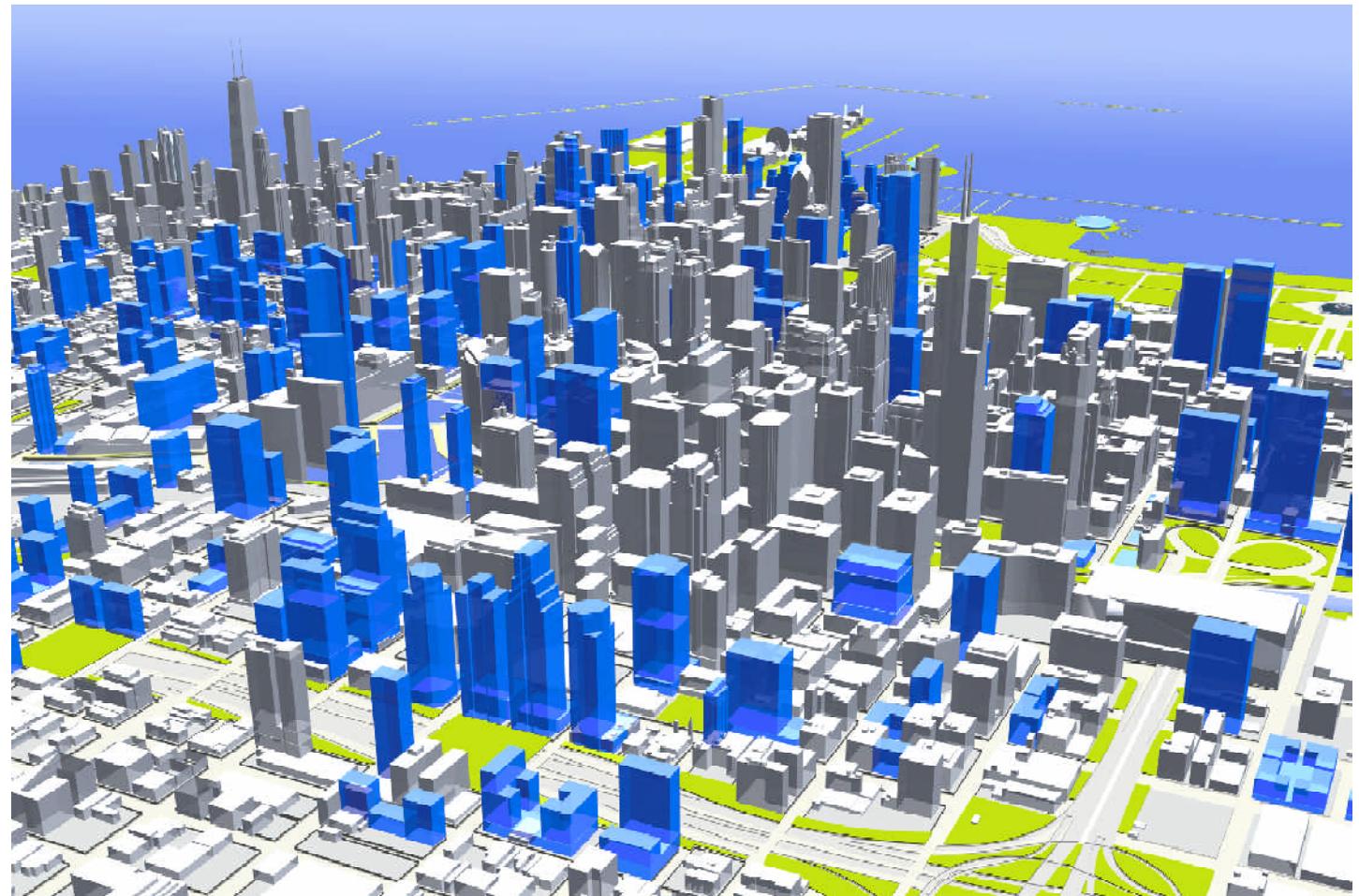


Figure 1.5

The Central Area in 2020 will continue to focus its downtown office core in the Central Loop. Expansion of the central business district west to the Kennedy Expressway will keep the office core compact, walkable and accessible by public transportation.

Past Plans

Chicago's tradition of private and public sectors coming together to create and implement plans sets it apart from other U.S. cities. The following are some highlights of Chicago's past Central Area plans.



The Plan of Chicago (1909)

*The Commercial Club
Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett*

A call to “make no small plans,” this plan marked the beginning of modern urban planning. It revolutionized urban design and established an agenda that still shapes Chicago to this day.

Initiatives:

- The Lakefront Park system and Lake Shore Drive
- Navy Pier
- The Shoreline Islands
- Soldier Field
- North Michigan Avenue and the Michigan Avenue Bridge
- Wacker Drive
- Congress Parkway



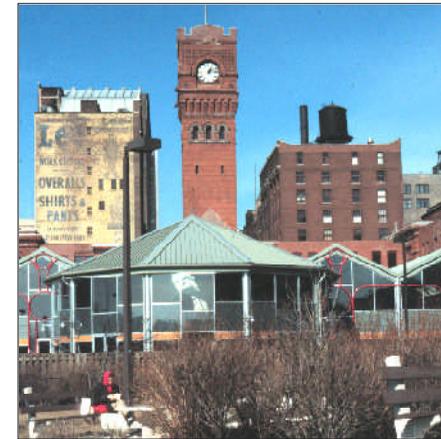
Development Plan for the Central Area of Chicago (1958)

Chicago Department of City Planning

A municipal plan addressing land use, public buildings, pedestrian environments, transit and transportation for “the economic betterment, comfort and general welfare of the people.”

Initiatives:

- The Federal Center Complex on Dearborn Street
- The Daley Civic Center and Daley Plaza
- McCormick Place
- Illinois Center
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- Stevenson Expressway Connection to Lake Shore Drive
- Oak Street and Ohio Street Beaches



Chicago 21: A Plan for the Central Area Communities (1973)

Chicago Central Area Committee and the City of Chicago

A plan that sought to “restore the historic role of the center city and to preserve what is unique about Chicago”.

Initiatives:

- Dearborn Park (the South Loop New Town)
- North Loop Redevelopment
- Redevelopment of Ogden Slip
- Reactivation of Navy Pier
- Extension of the “L” to O’Hare International Airport
- Extension of Columbus Drive over the Chicago River
- Extension of Wacker Drive to Lake Shore Drive
- Extension of the Pedway



Chicago Central Area Plan: A Plan for the Heart of the City (1983)

Chicago Central Area Committee and the City of Chicago

This private sector plan responded to the “pressing needs of the city and the trends which are transforming it”.

Initiatives:

- Creation of the Museum Campus
- Expansion of McCormick Place
- Relocation of Lakeshore Drive
- Extension of Roosevelt Road to the East
- Lakefront Gardens (Millennium Gardens)
- Streetscaping of Wacker Drive, Congress Parkway, LaSalle Street and Michigan Avenue
- West Loop Development

Current Planning within Chicago's Central Area

Finer-scale enhancements to, and preservation measures for, specific communities within the Central Area are treated more fully in district-level plans. District plans recently completed or currently in development include:

- The Near North Redevelopment Initiative (1997) - focuses on Cabrini North Extension
- River North Urban Design Plan (1987)
- A Plan for Chicago's Near Northwest Side (2002 - includes Fulton River District)
- Lakeshore East Design Guidelines (2000)
- East Loop – Vision for Greater State Street: Next Steps (1997);
- A Vision for State Street, Wabash Avenue and Michigan Avenue (2000)
- Near West Side Plan (1999)
- Near South Plan (in progress)
- Chicago River Design Guidelines/Downtown Corridor (1990); Chicago River Corridor Development Plan (1999); Chicago River Corridor Design Guidelines (1999)
- Grant Park Framework Plan (2002)
- Planning Principles for Chicago's Central Area (1991).

Regional Planning Initiatives

As we move forward in the 21st Century, a comprehensive view of how the region will grow is critical.

The Central Area Plan is based on a core belief that directing growth to the historic center of the region will: limit sprawl at the regional fringe; protect regional open space; enable the greatest number of people to commute on transit; maximize the value of existing infrastructure and improve the environmental quality of the region. The Central Area plan is consistent with and bolsters two recent regional planning initiatives.

METROPOLIS 2020

In 2003, Chicago Metropolis 2020, a nonprofit organization created by the Commercial Club of Chicago, released *The Metropolis Plan: Choices for the Chicago Region*. Based on sophisticated computer models and extensive participation of community leaders, the plan for the six-county metropolitan region contrasts “business as usual” with a new prescription for healthier growth. It illustrates the benefits of linking land use and transportation for the health and vitality of the region. Its calls for a region where we:

- Spend less time in traffic
- Live nearer to our jobs
- Protect more open space and environmentally sensitive areas
- Build communities that are friendlier to walking and biking – and therefore healthier for the people who live in them
- Make economic opportunity available to more of our region's residents.

To accomplish this vision *The Metropolis Plan* recommends that we:

- Coordinate land use and transportation plans and investments
- Create a broader range of housing options
- Rebuild and redevelop existing communities, ensure adequate affordable housing near jobs and transit, and promote economic growth in communities facing economic hardship
- Ensure that the Chicago region remains a preeminent national and international hub for freight transportation
- Design communities that are friendly to walking, biking and the use of public transit.
- Protect natural areas, open space and farmland

COMMON GROUND

The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission's (NIPC) Common Ground: A Blueprint for Regional Action initiative is engaging the region's citizens in a dialogue about the connection between shared natural resources, the transportation system and the economy. The aim is to create a clear picture of what Chicago and its surrounding counties will look like in 2050.

The City of Chicago will continue to work with Metropolis 2020, NIPC and other regional partners to implement our common vision.



Figure 1.6
The Metropolis Plan for the region says, “a strong Chicago downtown is essential to our region's future.”