



Figure 5.7
Clinton Street today.



Figure 5.8
Clinton Street in 2020. Clinton Street is envisioned as the “main street” of the West Loop, with access to the West Loop Transportation Center, retail and office space.

Transportation

Major investment in bus and rail facilities will enable new workers to reach their jobs in the expanded Loop quickly and conveniently.

Loop transportation improvements were described in detail in Chapter 3.2. They include:

- The West Loop Transportation Center
- The East-West transitway
- Continuing renovation of Loop subway and 'L' stations.

Open Space

- A continuous riverwalk extending from Lake Michigan to Congress Parkway will create a great new public place and pedestrian alternative to crowded streets.
- The Grant Park framework plan and Monroe Harbor improvements will complete Daniel Burnham's vision for the lakefront.
- Millennium Park will provide open space and performance venues.
- A new regional park will be created adjacent to a new elementary school as part of the Lakeshore East residential development in Illinois Center.
- A park will be built at Adams and Des Plaines Streets to serve office workers and local residents.
- Larger open spaces will be focused where the Chicago River meets major streets, including at Congress Parkway.
- Decking over a section of the Kennedy Expressway in the West Loop may also create additional park land and eliminate existing barriers between the loop and neighborhoods west of the expressway.

Adjacent district: The Near West Side

Recommendations from the 1999 Near West Side Plan for the area west of Halsted Street are compatible with and complement these recommendations for West Loop. The Near West Side Plan identifies significant development potential including opportunities to expand existing institutional campuses and develop new ones. The district can also be promoted as a location for commercial office space.

Recommendations include improving the streetscaping to help define the identity of the district, and encouraging residential uses, cultural uses and ground floor neighborhood-oriented retail. New parks will be developed in the east and central areas of the Near West Side that are currently underserved.

New development should be consistent with the district's loft character, and should make use of existing structures through adaptive reuse. In general, development should step down from the high-density corridor at the Kennedy and Eisenhower Expressways. Higher density residential development will be located along the east side of Halsted adjacent to the Kennedy Expressway. Low to moderate scale housing will be located elsewhere. Higher density development will also be located along the Madison Street corridor. If development in the area continues at its current pace, new strategies will be needed to deal with increased traffic congestion and parking.



Figure 5.9
Proposed improvements to stairs leading to the 'L'



Figure 5.10
Existing Wabash Avenue



Figure 5.11
Proposed Rebuilding of Wabash Avenue
Rebuilding the sidewalks, restoring the 'L', addressing landscape and lighting will strengthen the Wabash corridor, with its strong specialty retail districts, office and residential uses. The 'L' and its stations should be restored throughout the Loop.

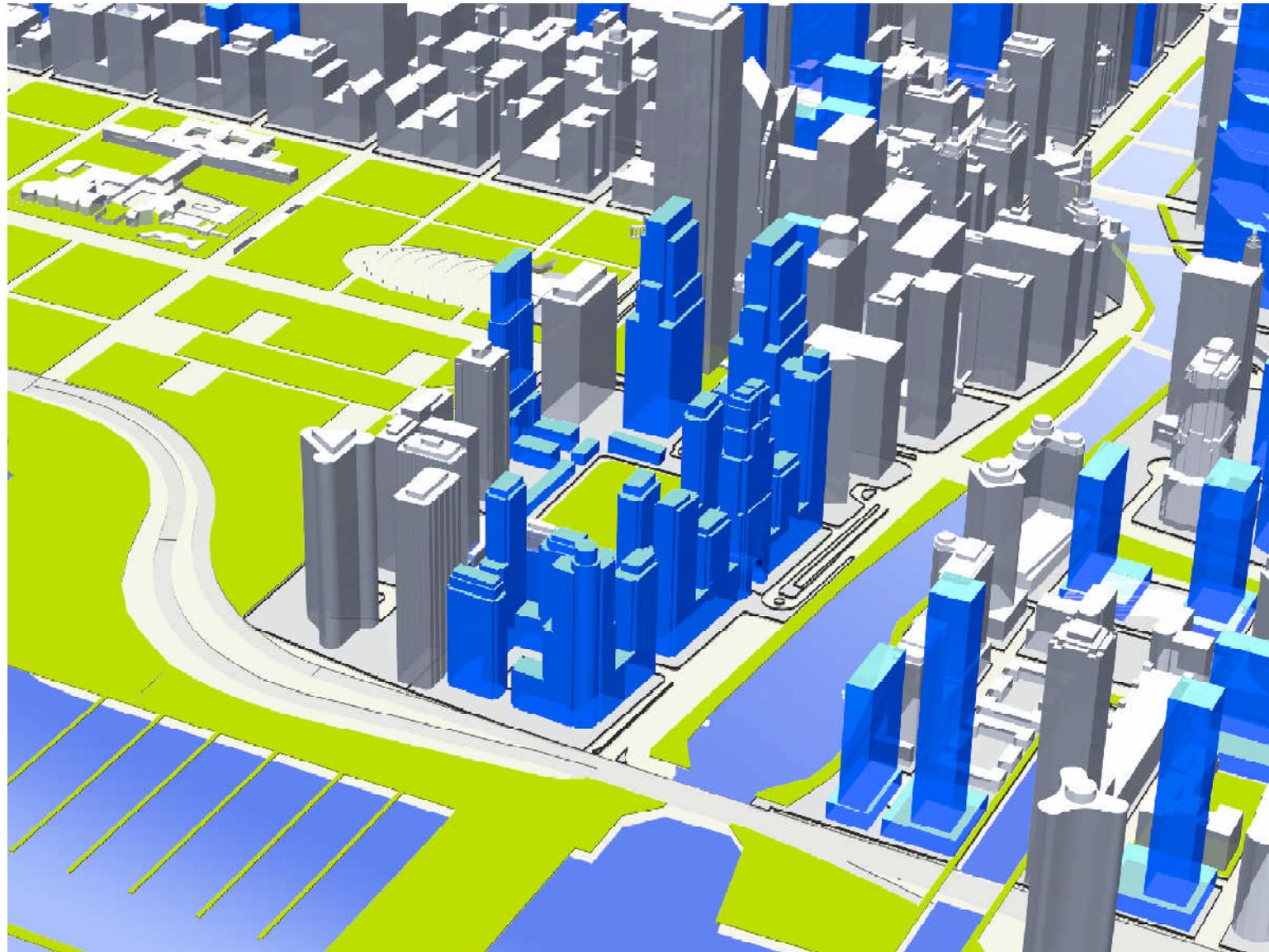


Figure 5.12
Proposed Lakeshore East
The new Lakeshore East neighborhood will provide 4,850 residential units, a new elementary school, office, retail and a new 6-acre regional park. This neighborhood development will complete Illinois Center.

Figure 5.13
Existing Lakeshore East

Figure 5.14
The Near North

Higher density development will be directed to major corridors.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Higher density mixed use infill on major corridors
2. A new park at the Fort Dearborn Post Office
3. Active uses along the main branch of the Chicago River
4. Sensitive reuse and infill development in the Courthouse, the Mart and the Gallery Districts
5. Landscape improvements along the Ohio Street feeder ramp
6. Completing Erie Park at the North Branch of the Chicago River
7. A riverwalk along the North Branch of the Chicago River
8. A recreational and environmental resource along the North Canal on the east side of Goose Island

Corridors will be established to focus high density mixed-use development, while residential neighborhoods and special places will be conserved. Improved transit and new parks will serve the Near North.

The Near North

Context for Development

The Near North is comprised of River North, North Michigan Avenue, Streeterville, and portions of the Gold Coast. The district is the city's destination retail and tourism hub and home to most of its major hotels.

North Michigan Avenue has been the city's dominant shopping corridor since the late 1970s. Generating well over a billion dollars in annual sales, it has become a major tourist destination, attracting visitors from throughout the U.S. and abroad. It is an exemplary mixed-use district, combining shops, offices, hotels, residences, education and medical institutions, and cultural and entertainment attractions.

Near North residential developments in recent years have consisted mostly of new construction, predominantly high-rise but including some townhouses. *Particularly active areas include:*

- The River East Planned Development in south Streeterville
- The corridor between Michigan Avenue and Dearborn Street from the Chicago River's Main Branch to Oak Street
- Western River North between Orleans Street and the North Branch
- The west part of River North
- Kinzie Park and Kinzie Station

Adaptive reuse of loft buildings has slowed as the supply of suitable structures dwindles, but continues to be a strong component of the Near North housing market. Recent loft conversions include the former Montgomery Ward catalogue and administrative center at Chicago Avenue.

The Near North has a significant concentration of hospitals affiliated with Northwestern University: Northwestern Memorial Hospital, the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, and the Veteran's Administration Chicago-Lakeside Medical Center.

Institutional growth is strong, with Loyola University and Northwestern Memorial Hospital undergoing expansion. With 5800 employees, Northwestern Memorial Hospital is a major Chicago employer. Since 1998, hospital admissions have grown by 37% to 39,900 inpatient admissions, and are expected to increase to 45,000 by 2004. Northwestern is the only Level One trauma center serving the Central Area. It brings people from throughout the region to the Central Area. The hospital will continue to expand in the Streeterville community.

New or expanded cultural and entertainment attractions in the Near North over the past twenty years include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Navy Pier, and the Ohio/Ontario entertainment district.

Development Framework

Mixed-use corridors will provide a focus for new higher density development, the character of neighborhoods and special places will be conserved, and historic buildings will be preserved while great new architecture is encouraged.

The *North Michigan-State Corridor* consists of Michigan Avenue, Rush Street, Wabash Avenue, and State Street and stretches from the Chicago River to Division Street. This corridor will continue to be a major destination for shopping, entertainment and visitor accommodations.

The *Ontario/Grand Corridor*, consisting of Ontario Street, Ohio Street and Grand Avenue between Franklin Street and Lake Shore Drive will be a mixed-use corridor that emphasizes retail, entertainment and office at lower levels, with residential above.

The *Chicago Avenue Corridor* between the North Branch and Michigan Avenue will continue as a high-density mixed-use corridor with institutions, retail, hotels and residential development. Further west, at Chicago Avenue and the Chicago River, the Montgomery Ward redevelopment will help to link River North to the Cabrini-Green neighborhood. As along all Central Area corridors, high-density residential neighborhood development will stimulate retail to serve surrounding neighborhoods.

The *LaSalle Street Corridor*, with a mix of residential and hotel development arrayed along a broad, landscaped boulevard, will be a new Park Avenue for Chicago, from Chicago Avenue south to the Chicago River. Larger scale development should be focused along the LaSalle Street corridor.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND SPECIAL PLACES RECOMMENDATIONS

The Near North includes quiet residential enclaves, historic districts, and other special character areas.

Streeterville will continue to grow as a mixed-use neighborhood that has residents, hotels, hospitals, universities and entertainment. New development must be managed to achieve compatibility with neighbors while recognizing this as one of the Central Area's higher density neighborhoods. New neighborhood parks, the Riverwalk and expanded lakefront open spaces will be used by residents and will attract visitors. New transit will reduce reliance on cars by residents, workers and visitors. Construction of stand-alone parking structures will be limited. Parking and access to Navy Pier needs to be managed to reduce disruption to the neighborhoods. Transit shuttles linking to Grant Park garages would help reduce traffic in Streeterville.

River North will continue its development as a mix of restaurants, entertainment, hotel, retail and residential uses. It is shaped by three special character districts which will be maintained through lower-density zoning, Planned Development review for larger projects, height limits, contextual facade design, and the designation of conservation districts in consultation with local business and property owners, residents, and public officials.