

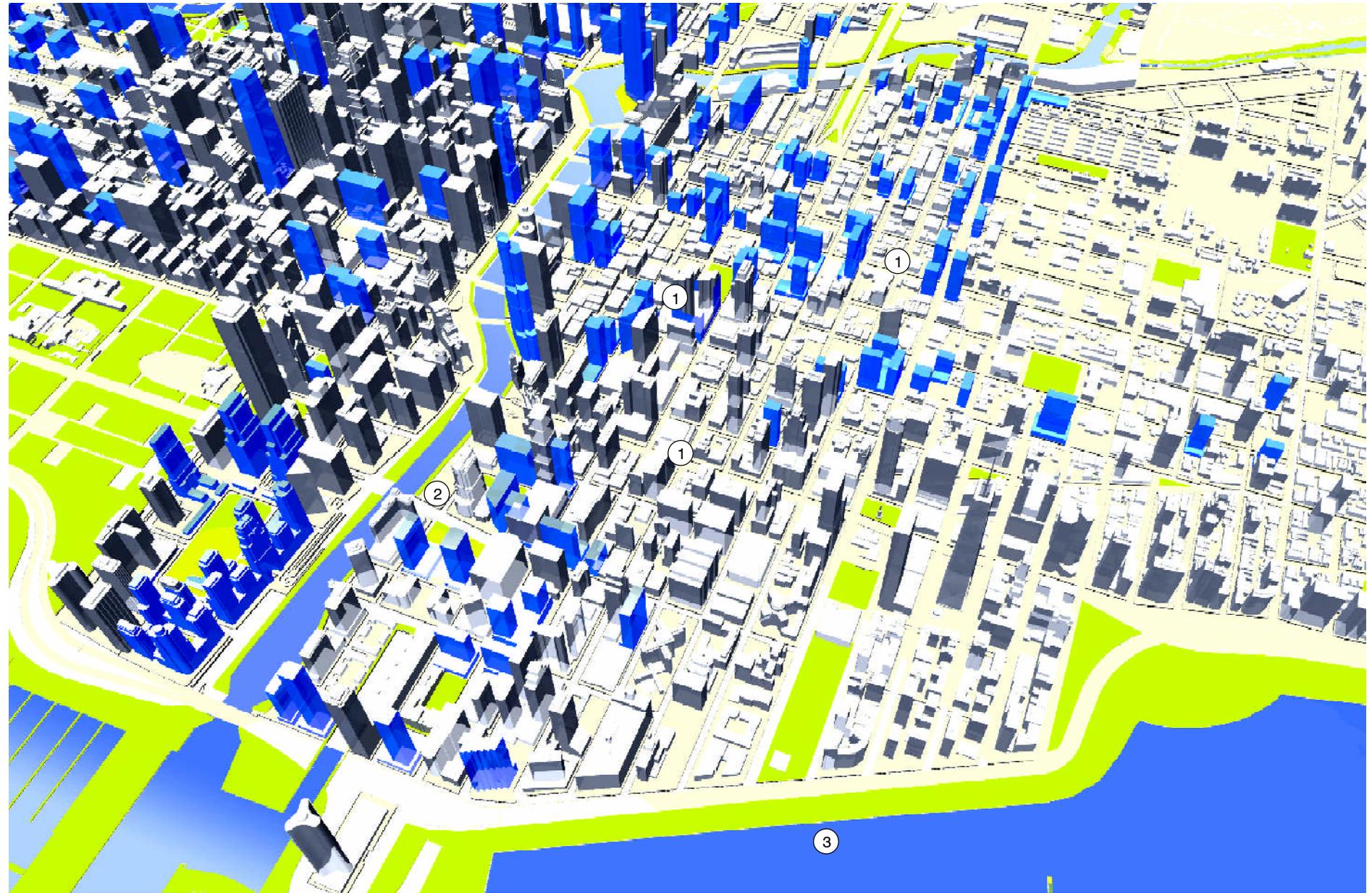
**Figure 5.15**  
The Near North

*Higher density development will be directed to major corridors.*



**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Higher density mixed-use development on major corridors. Major corridors are LaSalle, Chicago, Grand/Ontario, and Michigan Avenue.
2. A riverwalk with commercial activities will be developed along the north bank of the Main Branch of the Chicago River
3. Widen and landscape the lakefront open space between Olive Park and North Avenue Beach



- *The Gallery District* between the Chicago River and LaSalle Street north of Erie Street was previously a light manufacturing district and has found new life as a center for Chicago's art and design community, and a place for small offices. The loft character of the area will be preserved through sensitive rehabilitation. New buildings will respect existing building heights by limiting heights or by setting back upper floors.
- *The Courthouse District* is a collection of historic buildings in the vicinity of the old County Courthouse at Hubbard and Dearborn Streets. This attractive ensemble of small Victorian commercial structures provides homes for many small shops and businesses. These buildings will continue to thrive as a distinctive Near North address.
- *The Mart District* immediately north of the Merchandise Mart includes residences, restaurants, specialty stores and small and mid-size businesses located in older loft buildings and store fronts, as well as newer residential and office buildings. The Mart District will see continued renovation and new development for a similar collection of uses.

## Transportation

Existing Near North transit stops will be upgraded, and a transitway will provide convenient access to the West Loop commuter stations

- The Carroll Avenue Transitway extending along the north bank of the Chicago River from Michigan Avenue to the Apparel Mart will improve transit access between the Near North and the West Loop commuter rail stations. Buses exiting the transitway will fan out into the district to provide convenient access to major Near North destinations.
- The CTA Red Line subway station at Grand Avenue and State Street will be renovated in the same manner as the recently completed station at Chicago Avenue and State Street. The Chicago Avenue Brown/Purple Line 'L' station will also undergo major rehabilitation, including lengthened platforms and new entrances at Franklin/Superior and Franklin/Chicago.

## Open Space

New parks will be created throughout the Near North to serve residents and workers.

- A new park will replace the city-owned Kraft Building at Grand Avenue and Peshtigo Court. It will include a playground and an underground parking structure.
- The lakefront promenade between Olive Park and Oak Street Beach, will be widened and landscaped.
- Improved pedestrian access to the lakefront via additional under- or overpasses across Lake Shore Drive will be explored.
- A new park will be created at the Fort Dearborn Postal Station at Dearborn and Ontario Streets.
- The courtyard at the rehabilitated Tree Studios at State Street and Ohio Street will be open to the public.

*Several river edge enhancements will be implemented, including:*

- A large park east of Lake Shore Drive at the mouth of the Chicago River will commemorate early settler Jean-Baptiste Point DuSable.
- A multi-level river promenade will be provided as part of the redevelopment of the Sun-Times site on the Main Branch at Wabash Avenue.
- Riverside open space will be provided at Wolf Point as the site is developed.
- A public riverwalk will be provided along the North Branch throughout the redeveloped Montgomery Ward site from Erie Street to Hobbie Street (1030N), a distance of about one-half mile.
- New riverside parks will be provided at Hobbie Street and at Erie Street adjacent to the existing Erie street-end park.
- Wetland planting in the North Branch Canal will improve water quality and provide habitat for migrating waterfowl.
- A public park will be provided at Kinzie Street and Jefferson Street as part of the Kinzie Station development.

## Adjacent Districts

### Near Northwest Side

A plan was completed in September 2002 for the Near Northwest Study Area, bounded roughly by Grand, Chicago, Milwaukee and Western Avenues, just beyond the Fulton River District at the edge of the expanded Loop. Its development framework calls for strong neighborhood corridors that offer a mix of retail, entertainment, office, work space and residential uses, and are served by transit. Residential development should respect the historic context of neighborhoods including Eckhart Park, Noble Square East Village, and Ukrainian Village.

Transportation enhancements should be designed to ensure adequate and accessible service and to maintain good traffic circulation. Upgraded open space and new neighborhood parks are a high priority, as are pedestrian-friendly, bicycle-oriented landscaped streets.

### Near North Redevelopment Initiative

The area bounded by Chicago Avenue, North Avenue, Wells Street and Halsted Street is the near North Tax Increment Finance District, and the subject of the Near North Redevelopment Initiative. The goal of this initiative is to create a mixed-income community, and to improve the area through public investment in schools, parks and other amenities. Redevelopment of land owned by the city or the Chicago Housing Authority will create mixed-income communities with the following ratios: 50% market-rate, 30% public housing and 20% affordable rental units.

Public investment and private redevelopment are transforming the neighborhood. A new library, police station, park, elementary and high schools as well as a retail mall have brought new services to residents. The area is well served by bus and rapid transit. Open space improvement will continue, with plans to expand facilities at Seward Park, improved public access to Stanton Park and a new two-acre park.

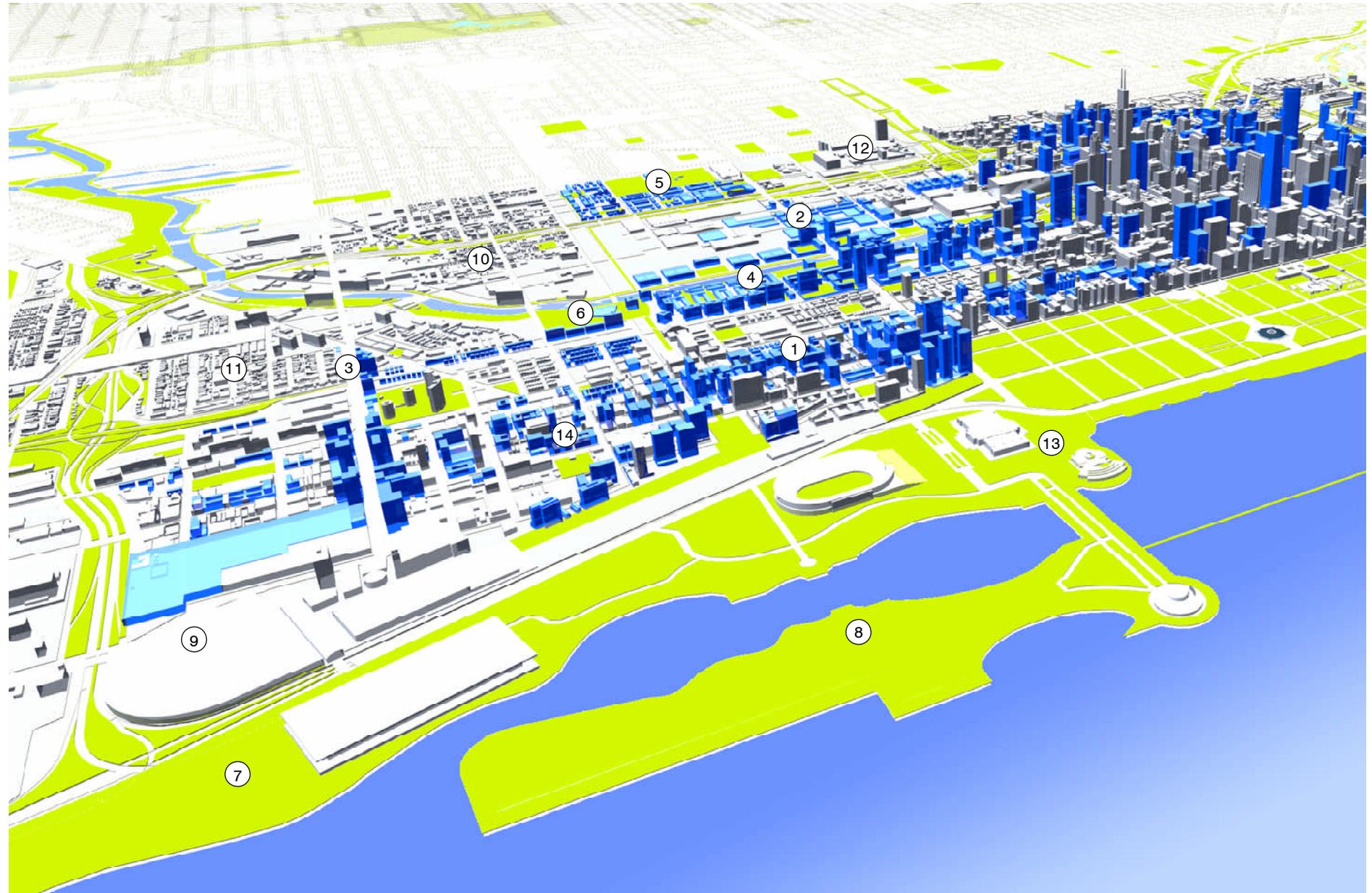
**Figure 5.16**  
The South Loop and Near South

*The South Loop and the Near South provide the greatest opportunities for new development.*



**SOUTH LOOP AND NEAR SOUTH  
PROJECT AREAS**

1. The Michigan-Wabash-State Corridor
2. The Roosevelt Road Corridor
3. The Cermak Road Corridor
4. The South River Neighborhood
5. University Village
6. Ping Tom Park
7. Burnham Park
8. Northerly Island Park
9. McCormick Place
10. Pilsen
11. Chinatown
12. University of Illinois at Chicago
13. Museum Campus
14. Prairie Avenue District



# The South Loop and Near South Side

## Context for Development

With the largest amount of vacant land in the Central Area, the South Loop and Near South Side present excellent opportunities for continued residential neighborhood development.

The South Loop and Near South districts experienced a rebirth in the late 1970s with the reclamation of rail yards and printing houses for housing at Dearborn Park and Printer's Row. Since then, strong residential development has occurred throughout the district, including both new construction and loft conversions. Recent developments include Central Station and renovation and infill around Prairie Avenue.

The first wave of residential construction was low-rise, with town homes and loft style buildings. The more recent trend is mid- and high-rise construction, which is likely to become more prevalent due to the proximity to the lake and good transit.

The South Loop, close to the central business district, contains a diverse mix of educational, cultural, office and residential uses. Institutions of higher learning, clustered on the eastern edge of the South Loop, will continue to grow.

The Near South contains a similar mix of uses but is more predominantly residential. Given its comparatively greater distance from the Loop, this area will be more affordable than other parts of the Central Area.

Cultural amenities within the district include the Museum Campus, the Prairie Avenue Landmark District and Museums, and the Motor Row and Michigan Boulevard Landmark Districts. The McCormick Place convention complex dominates the southern lakefront.

West of the River, the district contains one of the major remaining concentrations of distribution and service property in the Central Area, spanning the area between the Dan Ryan Expressway and the river, continuing south to the Pilsen Industrial Corridor. The western edge of the district includes a portion of the UIC campus.

Large parcels of vacant railroad land remain, providing ample opportunity for continued growth. The large undeveloped tracts adjoining the South Branch are the Central Area's best opportunity for significant development along the river.

## Development Framework

Mixed-use corridors will provide a focus for new higher density development. The character of existing neighborhoods, historic buildings and districts, and special places will be conserved and a new neighborhood will be created along the South Branch of the Chicago River.

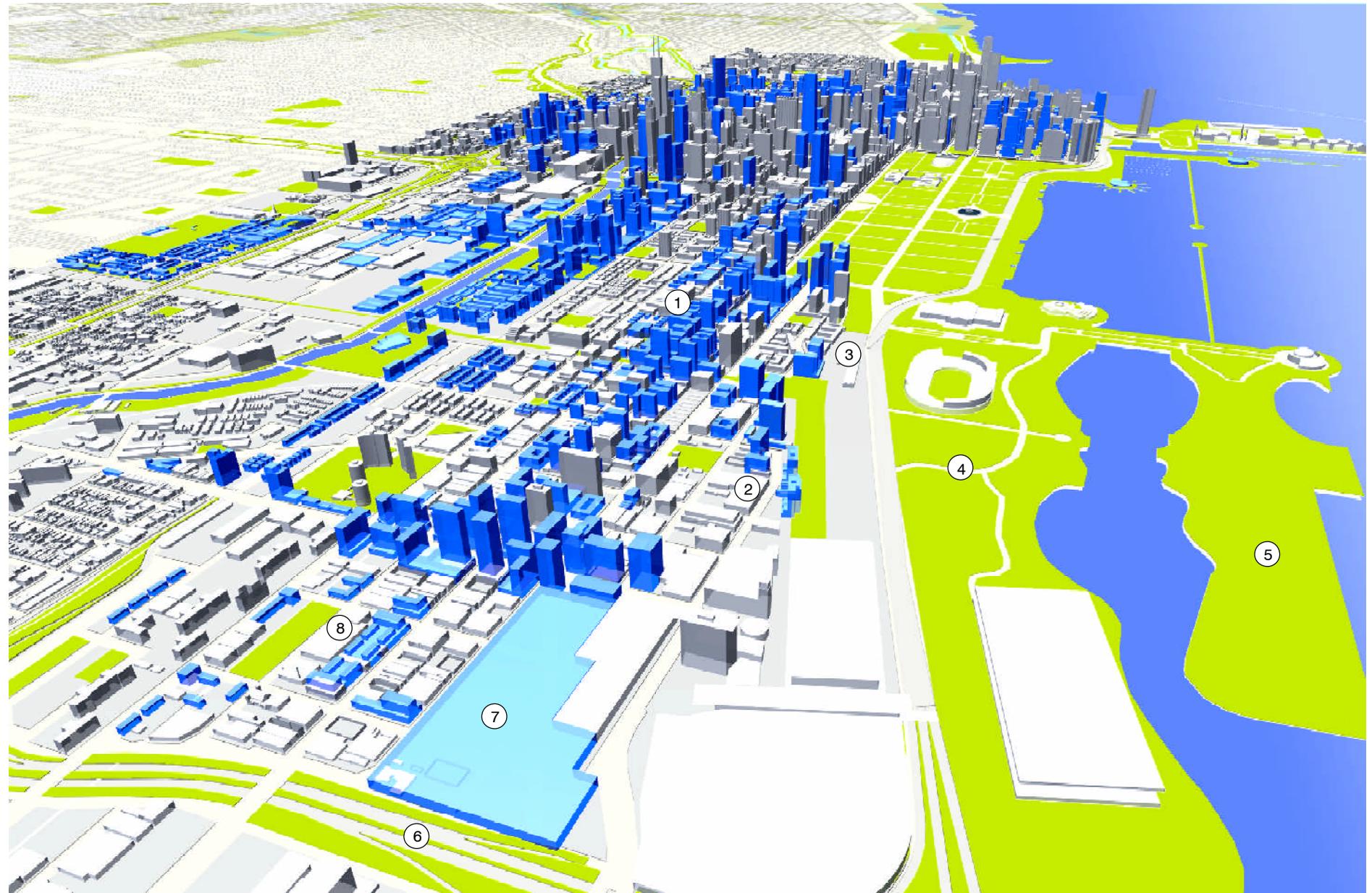
Four corridors will be the focus for new development in the South Loop and the Near South.

- The Michigan Avenue - Wabash Avenue - State Street Corridor
- The Cermak Road Corridor
- The Roosevelt Road Corridor
- The South River Corridor

A future corridor addressing higher density housing may occur when Wentworth is extended north to join Wells Street.

**Figure 5.17**  
The South Michigan-Wabash-State Corridor

*Mid- and high-density, mixed-use development will extend from the Loop to McCormick Place and Cermak Road.*



**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. High density, infill, and adaptive reuse along the Michigan - Wabash - State Corridor
2. Preservation and sensitive infill in the Prairie Avenue District respecting the scale and character of this important Landmark District
3. Completion of Central Station residential development
4. Burnham Park improvements as part of Soldier Field redesign
5. Develop Northerly Island Park
6. Landscape improvements along the Stevenson Expressway
7. McCormick Place Expansion
8. Motor Row Redevelopment

### The Michigan - Wabash - State Corridor

The South Michigan-Wabash-State Corridor will continue to develop as a high-density corridor incorporating housing, education, cultural, retail, entertainment and office. The Corridor will link the Cermak Corridor to the Museum Campus, Grant Park and the Loop. Because of the proximity to transit, stacked flats, mid-rise and taller buildings will be encouraged, with densities higher than those in surrounding neighborhoods. The renovation of existing buildings and new construction for educational institutions will continue. Ground floor retail in taller buildings at key intersections and around transit stations will meet the daily needs of residents and workers. New restaurants will also draw in visitors from other neighborhoods and from McCormick Place. The corridor's landscaped pedestrian-oriented streets will be served by transit.

The newly designated Motor Row Historic District runs along Michigan Avenue concentrated from Cermak Road south to the Stevenson Expressway. The 56 buildings in the district represent possibly the world's largest concentration of early auto showrooms and associated businesses. Motor Row will become a new neighborhood and visitor destination that is home to galleries, nightclubs or restaurants and cultural institutions, with offices or loft spaces above. The area may also serve as an incubator for fledgling museums and arts organizations.



**Figure 5.18** The South Michigan-Wabash-State Corridor today.



**Figure 5.19** The South Michigan-Wabash-State Corridor in 2020. Motor Row will become a new neighborhood and visitor destination.

**Figure 5.20**  
The Cermak Road Corridor

The Cermak Road corridor will connect Chinatown, Motor Row, McCormick Place and Lake Michigan.



**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Mid- and high-density mixed-use infill development along the Cermak Road Corridor
2. McCormick Place expansion with an active, urban edge along the Cermak Road Corridor and along Indiana Avenue
3. Potential new Green Line stop near Cermak Road
4. Complete park at 24th and South Federal Streets
5. Landscape improvements along the Stevenson Expressway
6. An expanded Ping Tom Park with a neighborhood field house
7. Redevelopment of the Hilliard and Ickes Homes

### The Cermak Road Corridor - The Connection for an Emerging Urban District

The Cermak Road Corridor offers the potential for a higher-density, transit-based residential neighborhood connecting the Lakefront, McCormick Place and Chinatown. Some hotels may be constructed particularly in proximity to McCormick Place. Ground floor retail, restaurant and service uses will add vitality. Future transportation enhancements (including a revitalized Metra station on Cermak Road at McCormick Place and a new CTA Green Line station near Cermak and State) will encourage transit use.

McCormick Place is one of the city's great visitor magnets, attracting some 4 million people annually to trade shows and conventions. McCormick Place will continue to expand and is expected to add an additional 800,000 square feet by 2007. McCormick Place will also build stronger connections with surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas, including Motor Row, Prairie Avenue and Chinatown.

The new Cermak Elementary School and Teacher's Academy is a major asset for the community. It includes a new neighborhood park and community center. Chinatown will continue to thrive as a distinctive residential community and a long-standing visitor destination.



**Figure 5.21** The Cermak Road Corridor today.



**Figure 5.22** The Cermak Road Corridor in 2020. Cermak Road will be developed as a high-density mixed-use corridor linking Pilsen and Chinatown to McCormick Place and the Lakefront.