



*City of Chicago*  
**South Cicero Corridor Study**  
*December 2004 (Updated June 2005)*

City of Chicago  
121 N. LaSalle Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60602



URS Corporation  
Goodman Williams Group  
Gonzalez Hasbrouck Architects  
Capraro Consulting

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# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# ***INTRODUCTION***

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The South Cicero Corridor Study Area (the “Study Area”) is the gateway into the City of Chicago for visitors arriving at Midway Airport, which anchors the south end of the Study Area. Once a sleepy and struggling airport in the 1960’s and 1970’s, Midway has now become one of the fastest growing airports in the nation, currently serving over 18 million annual passengers. Building on Midway’s success, the City recognizes the Study Area’s critical regional role and sees the opportunity to undertake new economic development initiatives.

Political, business, and community leaders have been frustrated that adjacent suburban communities have benefited from Midway Airport activity and the spending power of City of Chicago residents as new spin-off commercial, retail, and hotel development has located in those communities and not in the City of Chicago. The *South Cicero Corridor Redevelopment Plan* (the “Plan”) examines demand and supply characteristics of these markets and sets forth recommendations on how future development can be captured within the Study Area and lead to new economic vitality in this key Chicago corridor.

## **Background to the Plan**

There are significant opportunities for reuse and redevelopment in the Study Area. Opportunities for reuse and redevelopment include vacant buildings, vacant storefronts, vacant land parcels, marginal and deteriorated structures, and small, underutilized structures. These properties may be suitable for new commercial and residential development in the future.

Despite the importance of the Study Area as a major gateway into the City of Chicago, surrounded by a stable and growing residential community rich in history and culture, there has never been a comprehensive community plan for the improvement and development of the area. In 2000, the City of Chicago established several Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts in the area to enable financing of coordinated development. This Plan will provide an implementation strategy for specific development opportunities that can utilize the TIF toward the revitalization of this corridor as detailed later in this report.

In conjunction with the City retaining the URS • TPAP Consultant Team to create this corridor plan, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) retained the same URS • TPAP Consultant Team to create a “Plan for Transformation” at the LeClaire Courts/Extension public housing development, located adjacent to the north end of the Study Area. The intention of this collaboration is that both projects benefit from an inclusive and comprehensive analysis of development opportunities that will benefit the Study Area and improve integration of the LeClaire Courts community with the South Cicero Corridor.

## **Plan Objectives**

The *Plan* provides a guide for physical improvement and development within the Study Area over the next 10-to 15-year period. The Plan establishes the framework for private development projects, as well as a basis for public improvement within the Study Area.

A consulting team comprised of URS • TPAP, Goodman Williams Group, Capraro Consulting, and Gonzalez Hasbrouck Architects was engaged by the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development to assess market and physical site conditions to develop both a vision and strategy that is grounded in economic realities to strengthen and guide future development in the area.

The primary objectives of the Plan are to:

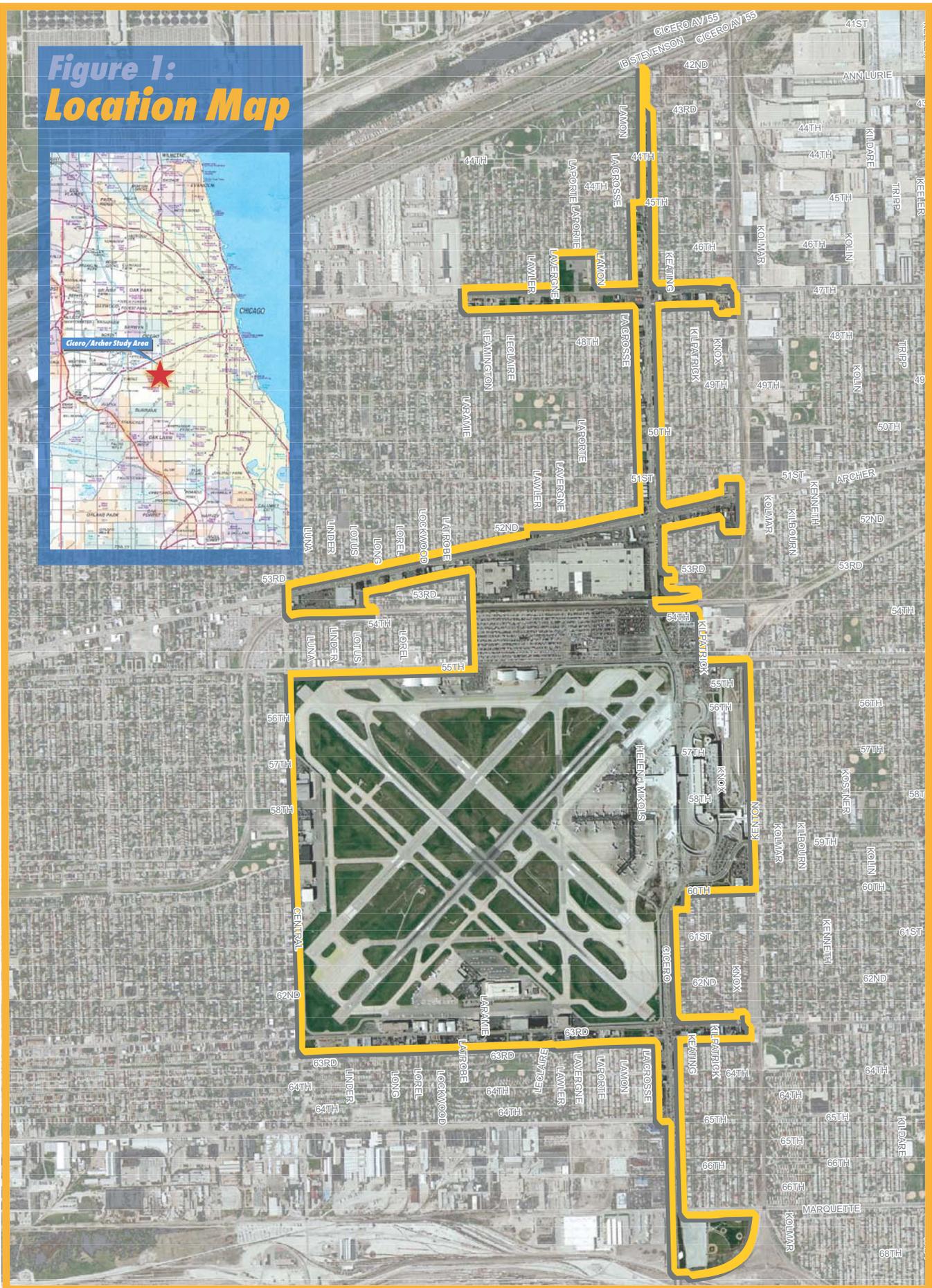
1. Identify development opportunities that will capitalize from close proximity to Midway Airport – the economic engine anchoring the south end of the Study Area.
2. Integrate development opportunities with a “Plan for Transformation” for the Le-Claire Courts public housing development located at the north end of the Study Area.
3. Improve the ability of the Study Area to meet the day-to-day needs of residents, employees and businesses.
4. Promote “higher and better” commercial uses along Cicero and Archer Avenues.
5. Establish site-specific opportunities for new economic development within the Study Area.
6. Upgrade the image and appearance of the Study Area, including the public rights-of-way and existing buildings.
7. Establish design guidelines to promote high-quality and compatible improvements and new developments within the Study Area.
8. Establish an implementation strategy to facilitate Study Area revitalization.

## The South Cicero Corridor Study Area

The Study Area is located on the southwest side of Chicago, approximately 10 miles from downtown and is anchored on the south end by Midway Airport. The Study Area boundaries include four distinct corridors as described below, which are illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page.

- **Cicero Avenue** between the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) on the north and 67<sup>th</sup> Street on the south.
- **Archer Avenue** between Central Avenue on the west and the Kenton Line railroad tracks on the east (east of Knox Ave).
- **47th Street** between Laramie on the west and the Kenton Line railroad tracks on the east (east of Knox Ave).

**Figure 1:  
Location Map**



- **63rd Street** between Central Avenue and the Kenton Line railroad tracks on the east.

## The South Cicero Corridor Planning Process

The planning process for this Study entailed a three-phase planning process, as outlined below.

**Phase 1: Existing Conditions and Market Analysis** entailed a) working with City staff to discuss the planning process and review ideas and perceptions of the Study Area and adjoining neighborhoods; and b) collection and analysis of a range of information about existing conditions and future potentials within the Study Area, including land-use, zoning, the physical condition of sites and buildings, transportation, parking, overall image and appearance, and market conditions.

**Phase 2: Concept Alternatives and Design Guidelines** entailed a) the preparation of development concept plans for select key opportunity sites to illustrate alternative approaches to conservation and redevelopment of the Study Area; b) development of design guidelines for the Study Area; and c) estimating the tax revenue potential of the forecasted development opportunities within the Study Area based on market findings.

**Phase 3: Preferred Development Program and Prioritization** entailed preparation of the draft and final versions of the *South Cicero Corridor Redevelopment Plan* document. The report includes long- and short-range recommendations related to land-use, zoning, development and redevelopment, traffic, urban design, and implementation.

## Organization of the Plan Report

The *South Cicero Corridor Redevelopment Plan* is presented in seven sections, encompassing all the phases of the planning process as described below:

**Section 1: Existing Conditions** presents an overview of existing conditions and potentials within the Study Area, including land use, physical conditions, plans and projects, and transportation and parking.

**Section 2: Market Overview** summarizes the South Cicero Corridor Market Study completed for this planning assignment, which is included as an appendix item to this report.

**Section 3: Revitalization Concept** presents: a) a long-range “vision” of the Study Area as it should be 10 to 15 years in the future; and b) a list of principles and objectives that should be used by the City to guide decisions regarding improvements and new developments along the four distinct corridors within the Study Area.

**Section 4: Opportunity Sites** highlights: a) specific properties that may have potential for improvement and/or redevelopment in the future; and b) preliminary recommendations for the improvement of each site.

**Section 5: Illustrative Plans** presents a series of concept plans that suggest the type, scale, and intensity of new development to be promoted on select key opportunity sites.

**Section 6: Design Guidelines** presents design guidelines that should be used by the City to promote high-quality and compatible improvements and new developments within the Study Area.

**Section 7: Implementation** outlines the actions and next steps to be undertaken in order to implement the Plan.

## **SECTION 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS**

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The section highlights existing conditions within the Study Area, including: a) community setting; b) existing land-use and physical conditions; c) public ownership; and d) traffic, parking, and public transportation.

### **Community Setting**

The South Cicero Avenue corridor has significant continuity within the Chicago metropolitan area. It provides connections to Downtown Chicago, which is located approximately 10 miles northeast of the Study Area. It also provides connections to a number of other major activity centers within Chicago and nearby suburbs.

Cicero Avenue provides access to I-55 (Stevenson Expressway) on the north end of the Study Area and access to several other major arterial streets throughout the corridor. These arterial streets include: 47<sup>th</sup> Street, Archer Avenue, 55<sup>th</sup> Street, 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, and 67<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Study Area spans or borders several Chicago Community Areas, including Garfield Ridge (#56) and Clearing (#64) on the west side of the corridor; and Archer Heights (#57), West Elsdon (#62), and West Lawn (#65) on the east side of the corridor. A map of these community areas boundaries is located in the appendix of this report.

The Study Area contains sections of two Aldermanic wards. The majority of the Study Area is currently located within the 23rd Ward. Property east of Cicero Avenue and south of 59<sup>th</sup> Street is located within the 13th Ward. A map of these ward boundaries is located in the appendix of this report.

### **Existing Land-Use and Physical Conditions**

This section describes existing land-uses and physical conditions in each of the four corridors within the Study Area. Within the Study Area, there is a diverse mix of land-uses, including retail, service uses, offices, auto-oriented commercial uses, industrial facilities, eating and drinking establishments, public and semi-public uses, residential properties, and aviation services associated with Midway Airport.

Figure 2 highlights selected uses within and adjacent to the Study Area. Figures 3 – 7 illustrate and describe existing land uses and physical conditions of each corridor: Cicero Avenue, Archer Avenue, 47<sup>th</sup> Street, and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. The pattern of existing land-uses along the corridor will influence the type and extent of new development and redevelopment within the Study Area.

### **Public Land Ownership**

The City of Chicago and its sister agencies control 77 parcels in the Study Area, totaling approximately 825 acres, of which Midway Airport comprises 766 acres. Please refer to

**Selected Uses Within and Adjacent to the Study Area:**

- 1 - LeClaire Court Public Housing
- 2 - Renaissance @ Midway Skilled Nursing Center
- 3 - Phoebe Hurst Elementary School
- 4 - Sportmans Hotel
- 5 - UHaul
- 6 - Los Amantes Restaurant & Starbucks
- 7 - Car Rental Over Flow
- 8 - Illinois Department of Employment Security
- 9 - Dolphin Cartage
- 10 - Bobak Sausage Company & Restaurant
- 11 - Skylark Motel
- 12 - Midway Business Park
- 13 - Aldi's
- 14 - Dominick's
- 15 - Walgreens
- 16 - State Farm Insurance
- 17 - Brandy's Restaurant
- 18 - Public Parking
- 19 - Midway Terminal/Parking Garage
- 20 - Southwest Airlines
- 21 - Signature Fixed Base Operators
- 22 - Signature Fixed Base Operators
- 23 - Signature Fixed Base Operators
- 24 - Army National Guard
- 25 - Million Air
- 26 - Atlantic Aviation
- 27 - Airport Maintenance Center
- 28 - Air Traffic Controller
- 29 - Sear's Hanger
- 30 - Signature Fixed Base Operators
- 31 - Dollar/Alamo Car Rental
- 32 - Ray Buick Dealership
- 33 - Midway Employee Parking
- 34 - Giordano's Pizzeria
- 35 - Anthony's Restaurant
- 36 - Continental Sales
- 37 - Alamo Rental
- 38 - CTA Orange Line Terminal
- 39 - Baseball Fields
- 40 - Firestation
- 41 - Autumn Green at Midway Village
- 42 - Public Parking Garage
- 43 - Midway Hotel Center
- 44 - S/3rd Bank
- 45 - Salvation Army



- Residential
- Retail
- Commercial Service
- Public/Open Space
- Industrial
- Midway Airport Operations

Figure 2: Selected Uses Within and Adjacent to Study Area

**Figure 3:  
Existing Conditions, Cicero Avenue  
North of 51st Street**

Cicero Avenue is a major north-south arterial street providing regional connections to Downtown Chicago, I-55, Midway Airport, numerous City of Chicago community areas and nearby suburbs. This corridor between I-55 and the Midway Airport is characterized by a diverse mix of uses, including retail, commercial, multi-family residential, and vacant land and buildings.

**Land Uses**

**Retail/Commercial.** Retail/Commercial uses comprise the majority of the Cicero Avenue Corridor and include local retail, service, and limited office uses. Many of the retail uses are configured as retail strip centers, and include uses such as currency exchanges, cell phone retailers, drug stores, restaurants, fast food establishments and convenience retail. Commercial uses range from hotel/motel uses to health care facilities to neighborhood convenience (dry cleaners, tailor, barber, and beauty shops). Prominent commercial uses include the Renaissance Skilled Nursing Facility, Sportsman Motel, Midway Motel, and the Sky-lark Hotel. There is a high concentration of auto-oriented commercial uses along this segment of Cicero Avenue, including gas stations, car rental agencies' overflow lots, auto parts retailers, used car dealerships, and auto repair facilities.

**Residential.** The most prominent residential development along Cicero Avenue are the LeClaire Courts and LeClaire Courts Extension Public Housing Developments located just outside the Study Area boundaries-south of I-55 on the west side of Cicero Avenue, with a total of 616 units.

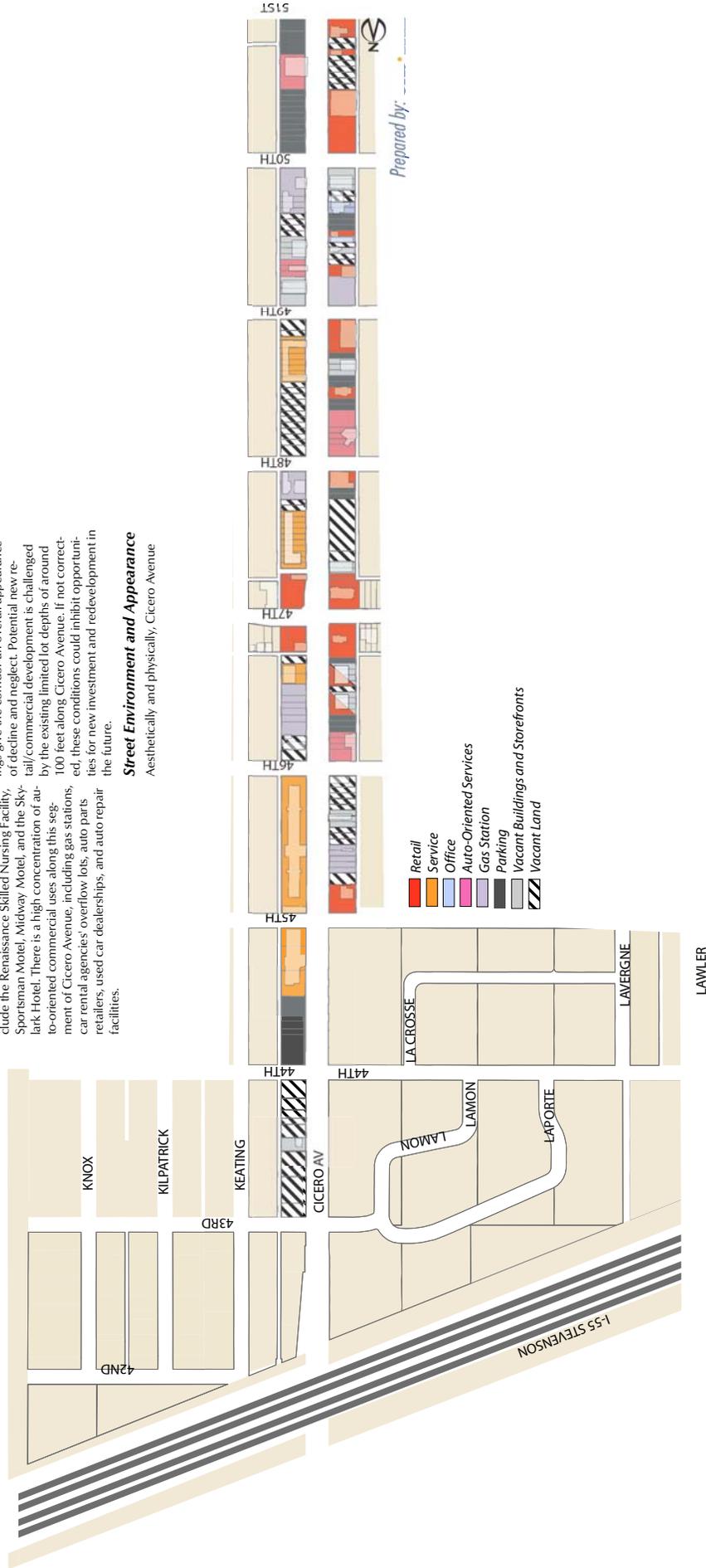
**Building and Physical Conditions**

Although Cicero Avenue is not characterized by severe deterioration, a number of low quality features and conditions combined with a significant number of vacant parcels and buildings give the corridor an overall appearance of decline and neglect. Potential new retail/commercial development is challenged by the existing limited lot depths of around 100 feet along Cicero Avenue. If not corrected, these conditions could inhibit opportunities for new investment and redevelopment in the future.

**Street Environment and Appearance**

Aesthetically and physically, Cicero Avenue

north of Midway Airport lacks the uniformity of such elements as quality building materials, attractive signage, colors, built form and architectural style that other commercial corridors have successfully employed. Cicero Avenue is a heavily trafficked arterial with average daily traffic of over 65,000 vehicles with nominal pedestrian activity. The sidewalks along Cicero Avenue are generally in good condition. However, signs of deterioration are present on the sidewalks north of 47th Street. Wayfinding signage related to the airport, parking and transit access is new and current.



## Figure 4: Existing Conditions, 47th Street

The 47th Street Corridor between Laramie and the Kenton Line railroad tracks east of Knox Avenue is surrounded on the north and south by solid residential neighborhoods. However, 47th Street is primarily characterized as an underutilized commercial corridor that contains a significant number of vacant lots and buildings.

### Land Uses

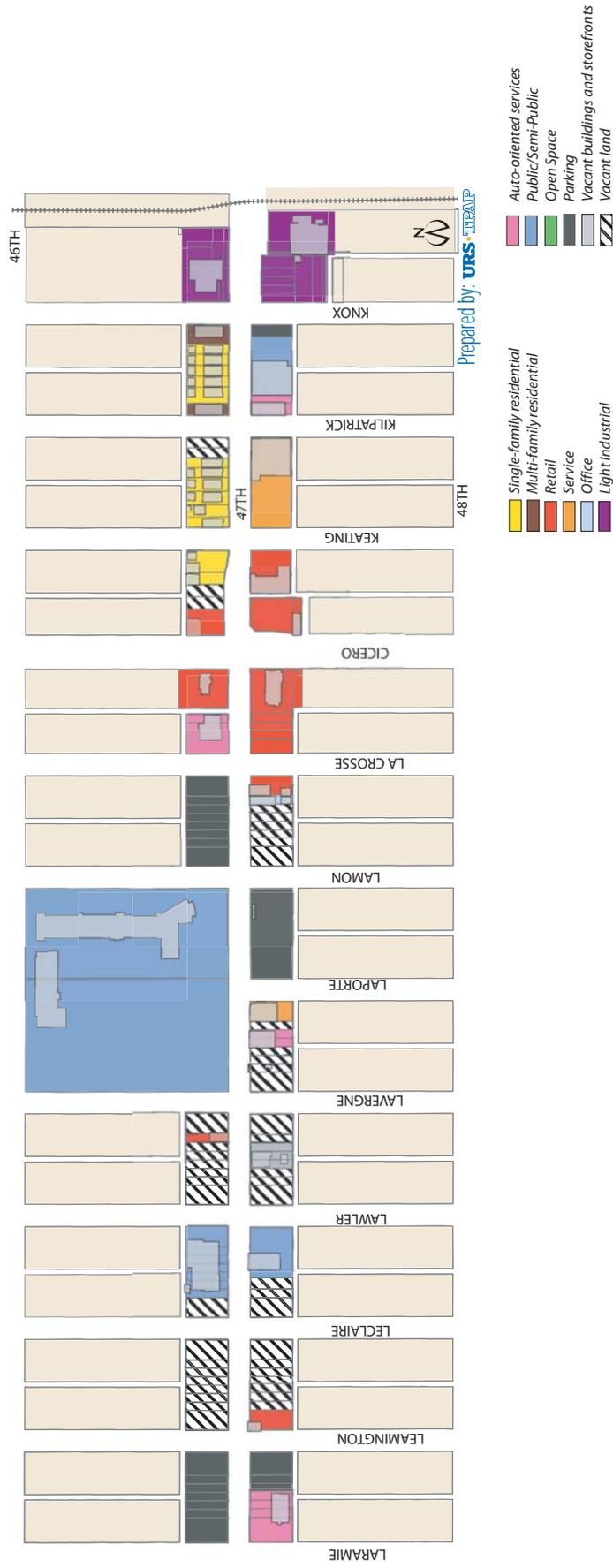
**Commercial.** The majority of 47th Street is characterized by vacant land and buildings, creating minimal continuity and identity for the corridor. The main anchors along 47th Street include the Phoebe Hearst Elementary School and the Salvation Army facility on the western end of 47th Street. Retail/commercial uses along 47th Street are very limited and mostly concentrated at the intersection of Cicero Avenue. The most prominent commercial uses include auto service related businesses, a U-Haul rental facility, the Los Amantes Restaurant, and the Tres Reynas Dance Hall. The large number of vacant sites is evidence of the current lack of demand for additional retail/commercial businesses along this less trafficked corridor, as compared to nearby Cicero Avenue.

**Industrial.** There are a couple of light industrial uses located on the eastern end of 47th Street between Knox Avenue and the railroad, which include Continental Windows and Tony's Truck Repair.

**Residential.** In addition to these uses, there are a limited number of single and multi-family units on 47th Street west of Cicero Avenue.

**Building and Physical Conditions**  
The 47th Street Corridor is generally characterized by underutilization, significant vacancy and deferred maintenance, marginal uses, and functional obsolescence. Over eight acres of frontage property on 47th Street are currently vacant and hold the potential to transform 47th Street, if redeveloped.

**Street Environment and Appearance**  
47th Street is not as highly trafficked as Cicero Avenue, with average daily traffic of only around 20,000 vehicles, a level which is more compatible and inviting to pedestrian activity. However, significant pedestrian activity is not currently present in the area. This can be attributed to the significant number of vacant areas along 47th Street, creating an environment with no clear destination points and atmosphere of limited safety.



## Figure 5: Existing Conditions, Archer Avenue

The Archer Avenue Corridor between Central Avenue and the Kenton Line railroad tracks just east of Knox Avenue is a dense mixed-use commercial corridor serving local and regional traffic, carrying on average over 29,000 vehicles a day.

### Land Uses

**Commercial.** Mixed-use commercial comprise the vast majority of the Archer Avenue Corridor and include local retail service and office uses. Examples of some of the more prominent neighborhood commercial/retail uses include: Dominick's, Aldis, Walgreen's, Brandy's Restaurant, Bobak Sausage & Restaurant, and local insurance, attorney, real estate and accounting offices. Archer Avenue is also characterized by a number of multi-family residential buildings and mixed-use buildings with residential units on the upper floors.

**Industrial.** A significant portion of the south side of Archer Avenue encompasses the Midway Business Center, located between Cicero Avenue and Laramie Street. This 51-acre development contains over one million square feet of industrial space, which is approximately 60

percent vacant and includes warehousing, office, and post office operations. The high vacant rate is largely attributed to the departure of Archibald Candy (Fannie May Candies), Discount Card and the Olympic Oil Group within the last year. Two additional industrial uses are located on the east end of Archer Avenue, which include Dolphin Cartage and Bobak Sausage Company.

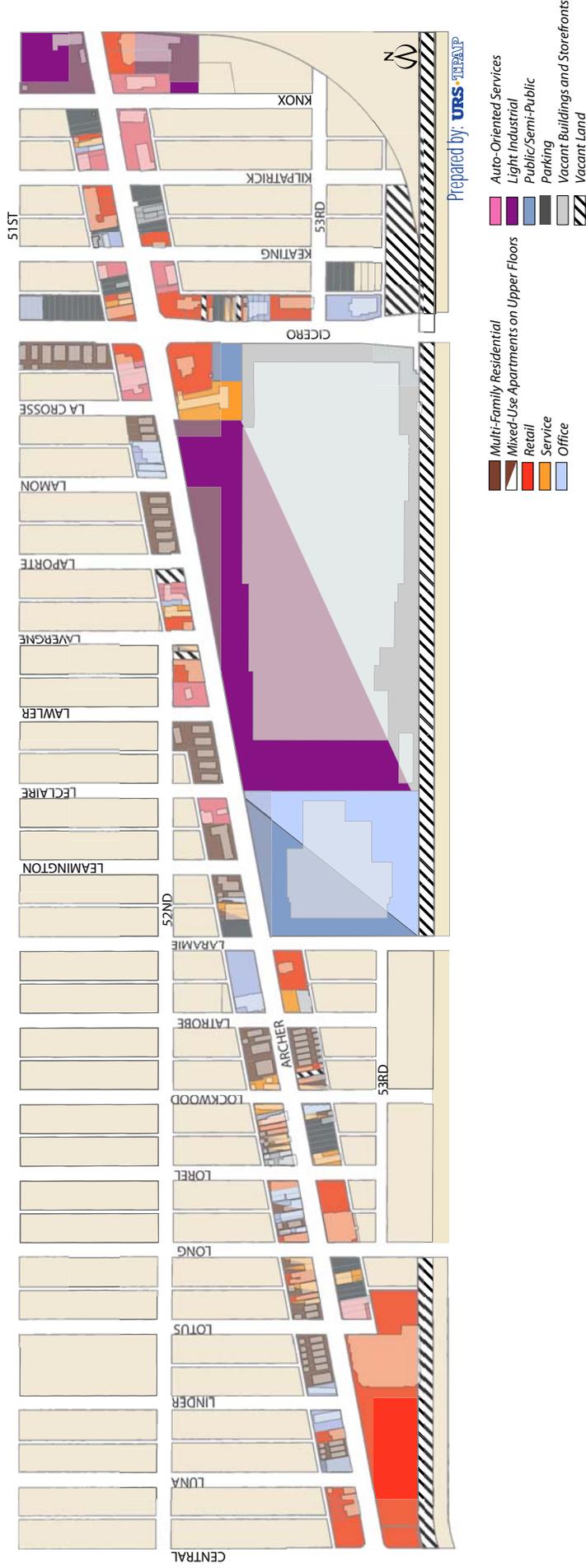
**Residential.** While traditional single family residential does not exist along the Archer Avenue frontage, low density two- and three-flat buildings are visible along the corridor. Most of these buildings are fully occupied and in good condition. Many of the mixed-use commercial buildings also have upper story residential units. Also along Cicero Avenue, just north of Archer Avenue are multi-family residential units.

### Building and Physical Conditions

Archer Avenue is a healthy mixed-use commercial corridor with relatively little to no vacancies. While there are only a few severely deteriorated buildings along Archer Avenue, several commercial, industrial, and residential properties are characterized by deferred maintenance and minor condition problems. While these conditions may not be significant at the present time, they do detract from the overall image and perception of the area.

### Street Environment and Appearance

Most mixed-use, retail, service and office uses are located at the sidewalk line, with no setback. However, there is little design coordination between adjacent commercial properties in terms of facade treatment, colors, and signage. A number of existing commercial buildings have a tired and dated appearance. There is no consistent streetscape treatment along Archer Avenue; very little landscaping within the public rights-of-way, and older street lighting. The sidewalks are in fairly good condition but could be further improved in select areas where there is significant deterioration.



## Figure 6: Existing Conditions, Cicero Avenue South of 54th Street

The Cicero Avenue Corridor between 55th Street (Midway Airport) and 67th Street is a major arterial street and primarily characterized by airport structures, parking and airport related businesses, as well as mix of uses south of 63rd Street, including retail, commercial, senior housing, and vacant land and buildings.

### Land Uses

**Commercial.** The majority of this segment of Cicero Avenue is comprised of airport structures and related businesses, such as car rental agencies and parking operations. There are some retail/commercial businesses south of 63rd Street, which primarily include auto-oriented commercial uses, including a couple of used car dealerships. The main retail anchors for this corridor segment include Continental Sales (discount furniture) and Giordano's Pizza. The majority of the primary retail nodes in the area are located directly south of the Project Area and offer power shopping (Walmart, Target and Costco), community-oriented shopping (Cub Foods, Best Buy and Circuit City) and regional retail (Ford City Shopping Mall).

**Residential.** A new independent living senior housing development is currently under construction at 67th Street and Cicero Avenue, which will help anchor this segment of Cicero Avenue. This new residential development is comprised of approximately 200 units of rental and for sale housing with land available for future phases.

**Industrial.** There is one significant industrial site located within this subarea. O&K of America, which produces steel coils, is located east of Cicero Avenue at 55th Street and Kilpatrick.

### Building and Physical Conditions

Although Cicero Avenue is not characterized by severe deterioration, a number of low-grade features and conditions combined with a significant number of vacant parcels and

buildings give the corridor an overall appearance of decline and neglect. Also, potential new retail/commercial development is challenged by the existing limited lot depths of around 100 feet along Cicero Avenue. If not corrected, these conditions could inhibit opportunities for new investment and redevelopment in the future.

### Street Environment and Appearance

The portion of Cicero Avenue bordering Midway Airport between 54th Street and 63rd Street is very well maintained and features attractive streetscapes and landscaping. There is minimal streetscape south of 63rd Street.



## Figure 7: Existing Conditions, 63rd Street

The 63rd Street Corridor between Central Avenue and the Kenton Line railroad tracks just east of Knox Avenue is primarily a commercial corridor serving Midway Airport which is located directly north and carries close to 19,000 vehicles a day.

### Land Uses

**Commercial.** The entire north frontage of 63rd Street west of Cicero Avenue is occupied by Midway Airport. Primary uses along the south frontage include auto-oriented commercial services, airport-related businesses and associated parking, such as: Dollar/Alamo Car Rental, Fifth Third Bank, Ray Buick Dealership, State Farm Flight Insurance, and auto repair facilities. A number of clustered parcels are owned by the City of Chicago and are being held for future airport development and protection needs.

63rd Street east of Cicero Avenue has a more diverse mix of uses, including a few restaurant and drinking establishments, local office development, multi-family residential development, auto-oriented commercial services, and a few vacant parcels.

**Residential.** There are a variety of multi-family residential properties along the 63rd Street corridor. These properties are primarily low density, multi-family such as two-and three-flats and are located between Lorel Avenue and Latrobe Avenue. There are two larger apartment buildings located at the intersection of Kilpatrick Avenue and 63rd Street, as well as a few upper story units scattered throughout the corridor in mixed-use buildings. These units are located east of Cicero Avenue.

**Industrial.** No industrial uses are located along the 63rd street corridor.

### Building and Physical Conditions

Most commercial and business uses are located in small, nondescript, one-story freestanding buildings. There is little coordination between adjacent commercial properties in terms of building placement and orientation, setbacks, access drives, signage, and site landscaping.

A number of existing commercial buildings do not have a dated appearance with signs of deferred maintenance.

### Street Environment and Appearance

Given the low-density character of 63rd Street with the numerous parking lots, vacant sites, and open space areas, the 63rd Street corridor lacks a sense of identity and character.

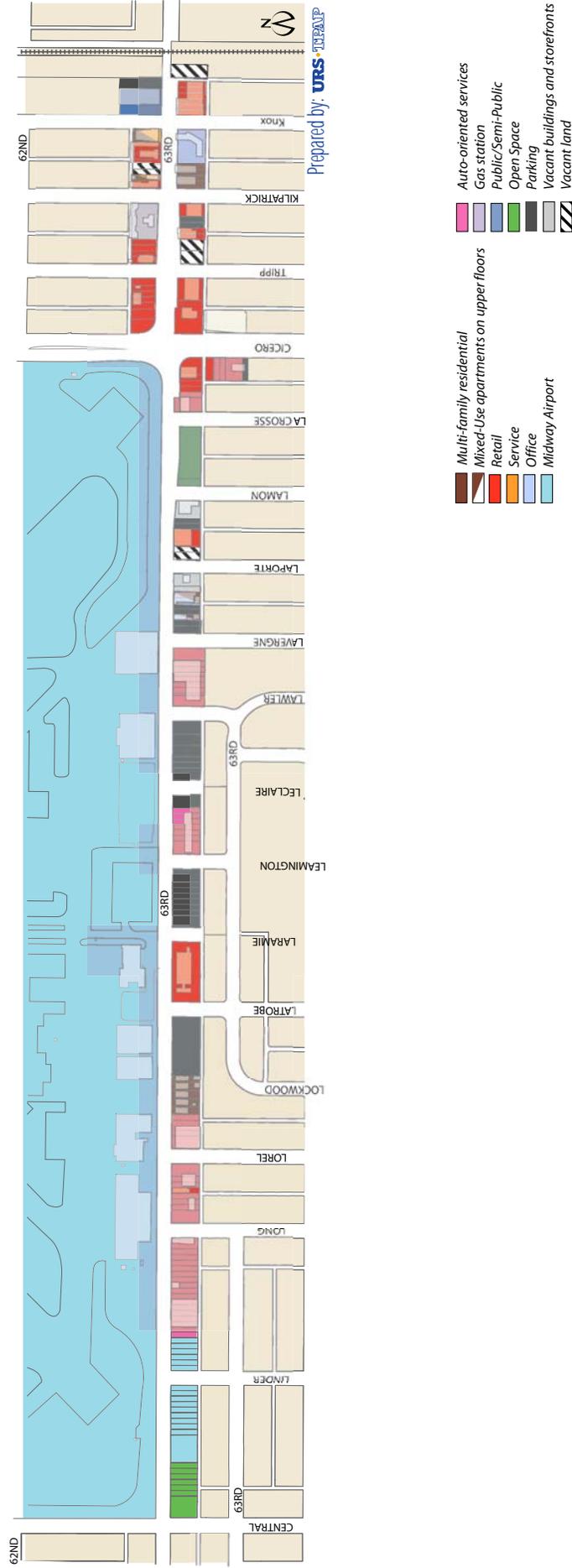


Figure 8 on the next page for an illustration and detailed description of properties under public ownership in the Study Area.

## **Traffic, Parking, and Public Transportation**

This section describes traffic circulation, parking and public transportation within the Study Area. Cicero Avenue (IL Route 50) is a major arterial street with significant continuity through the City of Chicago and adjoining suburbs. It is classified as a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA). Major roadway improvements and re-construction along Cicero Avenue near Midway Airport have been completed over the past eight years as part of Midway's \$1billion redevelopment initiative. These roadway improvements significantly improved access and traffic circulation throughout and around the airport campus.

### ***Traffic Access and Circulation***

Cicero Avenue within the Study Area has two moving lanes in each direction, plus left-turn lanes near intersections and at key activity areas. Parking is not allowed at any time on Cicero Avenue.

Curb cuts are modest along the frontage of Cicero Avenue and Archer Avenue but are very frequent on 47<sup>th</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> Streets.

Traffic along Cicero Avenue is very heavy, with average daily traffic of 65,700 vehicles per day, based on 2003 Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) data. The major east-west streets that intersect with Cicero also carry significant traffic volumes, as highlighted below:

55 <sup>th</sup> Street	33,100 ADT
Archer Avenue	29,200 ADT
47 <sup>th</sup> Street	20,200 ADT
63 <sup>rd</sup> Street	18,700 ADT

Cicero Avenue serves as the main access to Midway Airport. It connects several south Cook County communities such as Bedford Park, Burbank, Hometown, Oak Lawn, and Alsip with I-55 (Stevenson Expressway). North of the Study Area, Cicero Avenue provides connections to the Town of Cicero, I-290 (Eisenhower Expressway), I-90 (Kennedy Expressway), and I-94 (Edens Expressway). South of the Study Area, Cicero Avenue provides connections to I-294 (Tri-State Tollway).

Except for the major streets, most east-west local streets are one-way. These are shown in Figure 9.

### ***Parking***

There is no on-street parking along either the east or west sides of Cicero Avenue in the Study Area. On the east-west side streets, on-street parking is permitted on most blocks. On the collector streets, parking restrictions control some on-street parking. Parking in most blocks is not permitted from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM or from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. There are several off-street parking lots serving Midway Airport. Several lots serve airport

## Figure 8: Properties Under Public Ownership

*There are five major taxing bodies with public land ownership within the Study Area.*

- The City of Chicago is the largest public landowner, with 77 parcels totaling 766 Acres. Midway Airport and the surrounding operations facilities such as parking comprise the majority of these parcels. 8 of the 77 total parcels are currently leased by the City of Chicago to business in the area.
- The Chicago Board of Education controls 2 parcels totaling approximately 8 acres. Phoebe Hearst Elementary School represents the principal property and covers 2.5% of the total site.
- The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) controls 3 parcels totaling approximately 5 acres. The CTA sites are scattered throughout the corridor; however, its principal holding is the Orange Line terminal and parking located on 59th Street, east of the Midway Airport Parking Garage.



employees and rental car establishments. The major off-street parking lots are highlighted in Figures 3-7.

A 7-level 6,300 car public parking garage is currently under construction on the north side of 55<sup>th</sup> Street between Laramie and Cicero Avenues to serve Midway Airport. Phase II is planned to begin construction in 2006 and will include a 5-level consolidated rental car garage facility. This facility will consolidate the eight rental car companies currently located at the existing space-constrained terminal garage on the east side of Cicero Avenue.

Both garages will be served by a dedicated busway system for airport travelers.

### ***Railroad***

The **Belt Railway of Chicago** (BRC) network criss-crosses the Study Area with multiple lines. The Belt Railway is currently owned by six major Class I railroads: Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation; Canadian National; Canadian Pacific Railway; CSX Transportation; Norfolk Southern Corporation; and Union Pacific Railroad. BRC is the largest intermediate switching terminal railroad in the United States, employing approximately 520 people. BRC has 28 miles of mainline route with more than 300 miles of switching tracks, allowing it to interchange with every railroad serving the Chicago rail hub. The Belt's Clearing Yards in Bedford Park are 5.5 miles wide, cover 786 acres, and support more than 250 miles of track. It contains one of the few remaining "hump" sorting and switching facilities in North America. Major BRC branch lines in the Study Area include:

#### **Kenton Line of the BRC (Kenton Line)**

Right-of-way is between Knox Avenue and Kolmar Avenue four blocks east of Cicero Avenue .

Runs from Montrose Avenue (4400 N) to the Bedford Park Yard (6700 S).

Union Pacific owns the tracks approximately north of Roosevelt Road (1200 S).

Traffic volumes through the Study Area are approximately 50 - 70 freight trains per day.

#### **59<sup>th</sup> Street Branch**

Runs west from the 47<sup>th</sup> Street rail yards west of the I-94 along 50<sup>th</sup> Street; jogs southwest at Kimball to Kenton and continues west along 54<sup>th</sup> Street; at Central Avenue, turns south until 59<sup>th</sup> Street; ends at the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Argo Yard in Summit.

Canadian National owns the tracks between the 47<sup>th</sup> Street Yard and Kimball; BRC owns the tracks west of Kenton in the City of Chicago.

Traffic volumes through the Study Area are approximately 40 freight trains per day.

The **Illinois Central** Railway is now part of Canadian National Railway. The Joliet District subdivision runs from Chicago (Bridgeport) to Pequot, Illinois. In the vicinity of the Study Area, the tracks run along I-55 on the south side of the expressway. There is a rail bridge across Cicero Avenue.

### ***Public Transportation***

The Study Area is well served by public transportation, including **CTA Orange Line** rail service and numerous bus routes along Cicero Avenue and major intersecting east-west

streets as listed below and shown in Figure 4. Nearby CTA rail transit stations are located at Pulaski Road near Archer Avenue and at Midway Airport at 59<sup>th</sup> and Knox Avenue.

#### **CTA Bus Routes**

<b>54B</b>	South Cicero Avenue	<b>47</b>	47 <sup>th</sup> Street
<b>47N</b>	47 <sup>th</sup> Street Owl Service	<b>62</b>	Archer Avenue
<b>62H</b>	Archer/Harlem	<b>62N</b>	Archer Avenue Night Owl Service
<b>55A</b>	55 <sup>th</sup> Street/Austin	<b>55N</b>	55 <sup>th</sup> Street/Naragansett
<b>55X</b>	Garfield Express	<b>63W</b>	West 63 <sup>rd</sup> Street
<b>63</b>	63 <sup>rd</sup> Street		

#### **Pace Buses**

The Study Area and suburbs to the southwest of the Study Area are also well-served by several Pace bus routes, which include:

<b>379</b>	West 79 <sup>th</sup> Street	<b>382</b>	Central Clearing
<b>383</b>	South Cicero	<b>384</b>	Narragansett-Ridgeland
<b>385</b>	87 <sup>th</sup> 111 <sup>th</sup> 127 <sup>th</sup>	<b>386</b>	South Harlem
<b>390</b>	Midway CTA -UPS	<b>831</b>	Joliet Midway

#### **Metra Commuter Rail**

There are no Metra commuter rail stations within the Study Area. The closest stations are located at:

##### **Burlington Northern Santa Fe Line**

Cicero - 26th Street & Cicero Avenue, Village of Cicero

##### **Heritage Corridor Line**

Summit - Center Street & Hanover Avenue, Village of Summit (Amtrak service is also provided at this location)

##### **Southwest Service**

Wrightwood - 79th Street & Kedzie Avenue, City of Chicago

Ashburn - 83rd Street & Central Park, City of Chicago

#### ***Proposed Transportation Infrastructure Improvements***

The Study Area contains a tremendous density of transportation and infrastructure rights-of-way, the intersection of which often results in traffic delays and reduced quality of transportation service. Several major initiatives are intended to provide relief to traffic congestion and improve quality of movement and access, and are in various stages of planning. These include:

- Central Avenue Overpass Alternative

- Chicago Regional Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE)
- Extension of CTA Orange Line to Ford City Mall
- Midway Express
- Mid-City Transitway

Federal funding for these projects is dependent upon reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21), for which Congress has approved an extension through May 2005. Location of proposed projects are illustrated on Figure 9.

### **Central Avenue Overpass Alternative**

For automobile and truck traffic seeking to avoid congestion on Cicero Avenue and Harlem Avenue, I-55 has a Central Avenue entrance/exit. However, Central Avenue dead-ends into the Belt Railway Company of Chicago Rail Yard and the CSX Intermodal Rail Yard at 67<sup>th</sup> Street. Central Avenue resumes again on the south side of the rail yards at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. No north-south roads between Cicero and Harlem currently provide access over the rail yards. Consequently, north and southbound automobile and truck traffic that needs to access the areas north and south of the rail yards must detour around the rail yards via side streets to Cicero, Harlem, or Central Avenues.

The **Central Avenue Overpass Alternative** project addresses the detour and consequent traffic congestion and back-ups caused by the lack of through routes. Thus far, IDOT has conducted public input processes, and analyzed design alternatives. The Central Avenue Overpass is the preferred concept in terms of design, location, and construction costs, where it would create an overpass over the rail yards that will connect the two legs of Central Avenue. This design would create a four-lane road with median from 63<sup>rd</sup> Street in Chicago to 79<sup>th</sup> Street in Burbank. The overpass would cross over the Belt Railway and CSX railroad tracks, and will pass under the Belt Railway's hump sorting structure. Construction costs are estimated at \$220 million, which would be funded by Federal transportation grants. Cook County maintains jurisdiction of Central Avenue from I-55 to 47<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Avenue south of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street; the IDOT has jurisdiction of the arterial between 47<sup>th</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> Streets.

### **Chicago Regional Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE)**

The **CREATE** program recognizes the significance of Chicago's role in the North American railroad network. Increasing passenger and freight rail volumes on fixed infrastructure are in danger of causing bottlenecks with national economic impacts. Goals of the plan include increased safety, fewer motorist delays, more efficient commuter rail service, and increased freight rail capacity. These goals would be accomplished by a plan of improved signalization, new road/rail grade separations, rail-to-rail flyovers, and redirection of traffic along certain corridors. Specific projects in or near the Study Area include:

#### **At-grade signalization improvements along the Kenton Line**

1. 55<sup>th</sup> Street & Kenton
2. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street & Kenton
3. 67<sup>th</sup> Street (Marquette Rd) & Kenton

### Grade separations

#### 1. Archer Avenue & Kenton Line

The project would require lowering Archer Avenue to create an underpass under Kenton Line. The grade separation will require construction of a 650-foot retaining wall along Archer at each corner of the intersection. These retaining walls will permanently close Archer intersections with Knox and Kolmar Avenues on either side of the Kenton Line<sup>1</sup>.

Vehicular access to commercial businesses on Archer that previously used Archer, Kolmar or Knox will be limited to 51<sup>st</sup>, 52<sup>nd</sup> or the alleys. No alternatives or business relocations were discussed in the 2001 Dietz study<sup>1</sup>. Vehicular access to three impacted residences would be off the alley adjacent to and south of these homes. No alternatives or residential relocations were discussed in that report<sup>1</sup>.

#### 2. Archer Avenue & Central Avenue

This grade separation would need to be planned in conjunction with the Central-Narragansett Corridor project discussed above and would require the lowering and reconstruction of the entire intersection under the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Rail Branch.<sup>1</sup>

Placement of six retainer walls would require closing the intersections at Central Avenue and 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and at Central Avenue and 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Several businesses and residences around the Central / Archer intersection would lose access, and would need to be relocated. Others could have access via alleys or via new easements<sup>1</sup>.

#### 3. 63<sup>rd</sup> & Harlem Avenue

The 63<sup>rd</sup> & Harlem Avenue intersection was rebuilt in 1996-1997. This grade improvement would require the lowering of the entire intersection under the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Rail Branch. The placement of retainer walls along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and along Harlem Avenue would require closing the intersection of Nottingham Avenue and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. Several businesses and residences along the north side of 63<sup>rd</sup> around this intersection would lose vehicular access; no alternatives were discussed in the Dietz report<sup>1</sup>.

Funding for the CREATE projects will come from a public/private partnership among IDOT, the Chicago Department of Transportation, IHB, BRC, Amtrak, Metra, and the six Class I major freight railroads that operate in the area: Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), CSX, Canadian National (CN), Canadian Pacific (CP), Norfolk Southern (NS), and Union Pacific (UP). The overall program is estimated at \$1.5 billion, of which \$212 million will come from the railroads.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Clark Dietz, Inc. "Belt Railway of Chicago Grade Separation Feasibility Study." August 2001. For the Illinois Department of Transportation, City of Chicago, and The Belt Railway Company of Chicago.

## Figure 9: Existing and Planned Transportation System

The Study Area is a highly trafficked area with major arterial streets providing connections to Downtown Chicago, Chicago's interstate system, Midway Airport, numerous Chicago community areas and nearby suburbs. Cicero Avenue is the most highly traveled with 2003 average daily traffic (ADT) of over 65,000 vehicles, followed by 55th Street (33,100 ADT), Archer Avenue (29,200 ADT), 47th Street (20,200 ADT) and 63rd Street (18,700 ADT).

The Study Area is served by numerous CTA & Pace Bus Routes, as well as the CTA Orange Line Station at Midway Airport as illustrated on the map below.

In addition to heavy vehicular traffic, the Study Area includes multiple freight rail lines that together bring approximately 100 freight trains per day through the Study Area. Given both heavy vehicular and rail traffic, the Study Area is highly congested and traffic is typically slow-moving and backed-up, particularly at key intersections.

Future planned transportation improvements are expected to significantly improve traffic flow and conditions within the Study Area. These projects are discussed on the right, and are subject to passage of the next Federal Transportation Bill.

tions and commercial services. 67th provides connection for Chicago and west suburban communities such as Bedford Park, Burbank, and Bridgeview.

### Planned Railroad Crossing Grade Separations (CREATE Program).

**Archer Avenue/Kenton Line** - Improves crosstown truck access and traffic to the Midway service area.

**Archer Avenue/Central Avenue** - Improves north/south access for truck traffic accessing the Bedford Park industrial park.

**63rd Street/Harlem Avenue** - Though not in the Study Area, this improvement will relieve Cicero Avenue of a lot of Midway traffic generated from western communities.

### Public Parking Garage (6,300 spaces) Under Construction.

A 7-level 6,300 car public parking garage is currently under construction on the north side of 55th Street between Laramie and Cicero Avenue to serve Midway Airport. Phase II is planned to begin construction in 2006 and will include a 5-level consolidated rental car garage facility. This facility will consolidate the eight rental car companies currently located at the existing space-constrained terminal garage on the east side of Cicero Avenue.

### Proposed CTA Orange Line Extension

The CTA Orange Line currently runs between downtown Chicago and Midway Airport, with a terminal station at 59th Street. There are currently long-range plans moving forward to extend the Orange line to the Ford City Shopping Center.

### Proposed Mid-City Transitway

In 2003, CDOT evaluated both right-of-way feasibility and potential travel demand for the MCT, which would provide circumferential transit service throughout the city area. The MCT would follow the existing freight rail R.O.W. of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Belt Railway of Chicago. This R.O.W. parallels Cicero Avenue from Lawrence Avenue on the north to 6700 south. The proposed full build-out connects the Blue Line-O'Hare Branch at Jefferson Park with the Red Line-Dan Ryan Branch at 87th Street.



### Proposed Central Avenue Overpass at 67th Street

Design, primarily engineering and environmental studies for the proposed Central Avenue overpass are currently being planned and evaluated by IDOT. The overpass would significantly decrease the level of traffic congestion on Cicero Avenue, by creating an additional route that would run continuously from 155 south into the adjacent south suburbs. Currently, Central Avenue stops at 67th Street due to the Belt Railway Company of Chicago Rail Yard and the CSX Intermodal Rail Yard, forcing traffic that needs access

to areas south and north of the rail yards to use either Cicero or Harlem Avenues. The proposed overpass would extend Central Avenue between 63rd Street and 79th Street at an estimated construction cost of \$220 million.

### Planned At-Grade-Kenton Railroad Signalization Improvements (CREATE Program).

55th - Currently provides access to the Garfield Ridge community adjacent to the Midway Airport.

63rd - Provides access to municipal services such as the 8th District Chicago Police Station as well as adjacent fire sta-

### **CTA Orange Line Extension**

The **CTA Orange Line** currently runs between downtown Chicago and Midway Airport, with a terminal station at 59th Street. Extending the Orange Line to the Ford City Shopping Mall would complete the original Orange Line plan to provide rapid transit access to Chicago's far southwest side. This extension may include grade separations at 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Kenton and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Kenton. The primary benefit cited is the connection between downtown and the "strong employment corridor along South Cicero Avenue<sup>2</sup>." CTA would seek funding in part from the Federal Transit Agency's discretionary New Starts program, whose budget currently comes from TEA-21.

### **Midway Express Service**

The City and CTA are planning a new express train service from downtown Chicago to both O'Hare and Midway Airports. The service will be designed to appeal to airline passengers. Special cars, dedicated to the service, will include spacious seating, special acoustics, baggage racks, and video monitors with airline departure information.

The Midway Express will operate along the Orange Line tracks, but will include new tracks that bypass local trains, enabling a significant reduction in travel time. A new terminal is proposed at Midway Airport to be located immediately adjacent to the airport concourse dedicated to the Express. A new Central Area terminal will be designed for baggage check-in and airline ticketing for those passengers boarding the Midway Express from downtown.

### **Mid-City Transitway**

Chicago's transit system is composed of radial rail lines and a system of buses operating primarily on arterial streets. With the 1993 opening of the CTA Orange Line, city-wide radial heavy rail coverage was complete with each rail corridor, and the neighborhoods it serves, linked to downtown Chicago by rail. These radial rapid transit lines are fed by CTA and Pace bus service along the street grid resulting in excellent transit travel times for workers to and from downtown. However, trips that require circumferential movement across the radials may require indirect routes such as passage through downtown or lengthy travel on local cross-town bus routes to get to the destination. A high capacity circumferential transit service would address this existing gap in transit service.

During 2003, CDOT launched a study to evaluate both right-of-way feasibility and potential travel demand for the Mid-City Transitway (MCT). The MCT would follow the existing freight rail right-of-way of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Belt Railway of Chicago. This right-of-way parallels Cicero Avenue from Lawrence Avenue on the north to 6700 South. At this location the right-of-way (Belt Railway of Chicago) curves east and parallels 75<sup>th</sup> Street for several miles before turning south and intersecting the Dan Ryan Expressway south of 87<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed full build-out Transitway connects the Blue Line - O'Hare Branch at Jefferson Park with the Red Line - Dan Ryan Branch at 87<sup>th</sup> Street.

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<sup>2</sup> CTA Press Release, March 14, 2003.

## SECTION 2: MARKET OVERVIEW

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The market and demographic conditions within the Study Area and surrounding areas will have a strong influence on development potentials within the Study Area. Presented below are the key conclusions and recommendations of the Market Study completed for this project, which evaluated the potential for future commercial, hotel/hospitality, residential, airport related businesses, and industrial development within the Study Area. This analysis is critical to the planning process in that it tempers “blue-sky” creative visions with economic reality, and improves the chances of a plan’s actual implementation. The complete Market Report is included as an appendix item to this Plan.

Political, business, and community leaders have been frustrated that adjacent suburban communities have benefited from Midway Airport activity and the spending power of City of Chicago residents as new spin-off commercial, retail, and hotel development has located in those communities and not in the City of Chicago. This plan examines demand and supply characteristics of these markets and sets forth recommendations on how future development can be captured within the Study Area and lead to new economic vitality in this key Chicago corridor.

### Demographics

The demographic Study Area for the purposes of socio-economic analysis in this project has been defined as the five Chicago Community Areas of: Garfield Ridge (#56) and Clearing (#64) on the west side of the Cicero Avenue corridor; and Archer Heights (#57), West Elsdon (#62), and West Lawn (#65) on the east side of the corridor, as well as the five adjacent communities of Bedford Park, Forest View, Stickney, Berwyn, and Cicero. Together these communities have a total population of approximately 263,000 persons.

The neighborhoods of the five community areas and five municipalities within the market area share a number of common characteristics.

- More than two thirds of the 85,249 households are family households, and most live in owner-occupied housing.
- Median household incomes fall in a fairly narrow range, from a low of \$38,044 in Cicero to a high of \$49,722 in Bedford Park.
- Almost all the residential neighborhoods in the market area have population densities in excess of 7,500 persons per square mile, the typical threshold of an urban area.

Detailed tables and analysis of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Study Area are provided in Appendix A: *Cicero Corridor Market Study, August 2004 (Updated November 2004 and June 2005)*.

## Existing Issues and Characteristics

- The high population density of over 7,500 persons per square mile for almost all the residential neighborhoods in the market area presents a very desirable market for new commercial and residential development. Typically, select national retailers have preferred locations with higher median household income levels as compared to the Study Area; however, many national retailers have recently begun to capitalize on the significant purchasing power of dense urban populations similar to the Study Area with lower household incomes.

The Study Area's 2003 median household income is \$50,000, which is close to 14% more than the City of Chicago as a whole at \$44,000. However, the 2003 Area Median Income (AMI) for a family of four defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the purpose of affordable housing analysis is \$75,500. The average household size for the Study Area is 2.9 persons. Based on a per person analysis, the Study Area's median household income is roughly \$1,600 less than the AMI.

- Adjacent suburban communities have benefited from Midway Airport activity and the spending power of City of Chicago residents as the majority of new commercial, retail, and hotel development has located in these communities and not in the City of Chicago. These developments range from a multitude of big box retail (i.e. Walmart, Costco, Target, etc.) and the airport hotel cluster at Midway Hotel Center all located in Bedford Park.
- The Study Area has not been successful in capturing the commercial spin-off activity occurring from the airport, largely in part to the lack of adequately configured and sized development sites.
- In terms of spin-off office development related to the Study Area's proximity to Midway Airport, the market demand is low. As a point-to-point airport, there will never be as much demand for branch offices of regional or national businesses as found near O'Hare Airport.
- Parcels are generally small and lack the depth required to accommodate significant new commercial/retail development.
- The area faces strong competition in terms of new commercial/retail development from established shopping and hotel nodes in nearby communities of Bedford Park and Cicero.
- Current residential development projects in the area demonstrate the strong housing demand for various product types, ranging from condominium/townhomes, single-family homes, rental apartments, and senior housing.
- The one large industrial parcel/development within the Study Area exhibits signs of market weakness. The Midway Business Center, located at the southwest corner of Cicero and Archer Avenues, is 51 acres in size and has 1.3 million square feet of building space. Of this total space, approximately 1 million square feet is industrial warehouse space, which has been 60% vacant this past year. Much of this vacancy

can be attributed to the site's location and heavy traffic conditions along Cicero Avenue, making it difficult for truck traffic to access the site.

## New Development Issues and Potentials

- **Hotel/Conference.** As demonstrated by the success of nearby hotel developments, the Study Area has potential for new hotel development in the future. The South Cicero corridor can capture existing and future passenger growth from Midway Airport, as well as capture automobile travelers off of I-55.

Due to the nature of Midway Airport, which caters to the economy business and leisure traveler, limited service hotels with meeting space are forecasted to have a higher demand as compared to higher priced, full-service hotels. However, there is potential to develop a full-service hotel (250 – 300 rooms) near the airport, if it associated with a larger conference facility development, approximately between 40,000 – 60,000 square feet in size. The Midway area could serve as an economical and convenient location for businesses to hold regional business meetings, where conference/meeting attendees could fly directly into Midway Airport. Currently, there are no facilities in the immediate area, which cater to these mid-size to large business/conference events.

The following hotel development program is recommended for the Study Area within the next 10 years:

### **3 - 7 Limited Service Hotels**

120 - 150 rooms per hotel

\$80 - \$100 average room rates

1,500 - 4,000 square feet of meeting room and event space per hotel

### **1 Full-Service Hotel**

250 – 300 rooms

\$120 - \$160 average room rates

Associated with larger conference facility, approximately 40,000 – 60,000 square feet in size

- **Retail.** Based on the socio-economics of the Study Area and current retail coverage in the area as presented in Appendix A: *South Cicero Corridor Market Study Report*, there is demand for various types of new retail development over the next ten years as detailed below.

In addition to retailers being attracted to the Study Area due to its densely populated neighborhoods as discussed earlier, Cicero Avenue is also strategically located to attract retailers, with its regional access to I-55, and the heavy airport traffic along Cicero Avenue with over 65,000 average vehicles per day. The minimum threshold for daily traffic volumes that national retailers typically require is around 20,000 – 25,000 ADTs. Cicero Avenue well exceeds this threshold.

### ***Potential Retail Demand***

1. Big Box Retail: 100,000 – 200,000 sf (e.g., Lowe’s, Best Buy, Petco)
2. Highway Commercial: 75,000 – 85,000 sf (e.g., casual-dining restaurants, such as Applebee’s, Chili’s, Outback Steakhouse; fast food establishments, convenience/auto related)
3. Neighborhood Retail: 50,000 – 60,000 sf (e.g., video/dvd, dry cleaners/laundromat, and general merchandise store)

Section 4: *Opportunity Sites* of this report details key sites where retail development is recommended, helping to create a successful commercial corridor along Cicero Avenue.

Local retail brokers indicated that asking net lease rates for new retail construction in the market trade area range from \$18 - \$28 per square foot, depending on the size and location of the space. Current asking net rents of existing space within the market trade area range between \$10 - \$20 per square foot. According to CB Richard Ellis’ First Quarter 2005 Chicago Retail Market View Report, the City of Chicago’s South and North Submarkets are reporting average gross asking lease rates of \$22.38 - \$22.69 psf and \$29.46 - \$31.76 psf, respectively, which includes both old and new construction retail space.

**Office.** Office development for the small business market presents an opportunity to develop replacement space with modern design standards and amenities. Current establishments should be phased out of their existing older-quality space and into newer facilities, improving both corridor appearance and local office quality. Office development opportunities include:

#### **Professional Services/Small Business Offices**

Multi-tenant buildings, 50,000 - 100,000 square feet  
Gross rents \$14 - \$18 per square feet

#### **Airport Support Businesses**

50,000 – 100,000 square feet  
Gross rents \$14 - \$18 per square feet

#### **Office/Flex Space**

100,000 - 400,000 square feet  
Gross rents \$8 - \$12 per square feet

- **Airport.** Midway Airport has become one of the fastest growing airports in the nation, currently serving over 18 million annual passengers. However, presently it is close to capacity given its physical space constraints being land-locked on all sides. To help facilitate future airport growth, adjacent sites to the airport are recommended to be held for future airport-related operations.
- **Residential.** The primary focus of this study was on the commercial development potential within the Study Area. However, market research indicates that 47<sup>th</sup> Street

and other select areas within the Study Area could support additional residential development of various product types and price points as indicated in the following table.

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**RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SOUTH CICERO CORRIDOR**

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<u>Demand Segment</u>	<u>Product Type</u>	<u>Approx. Size of Potential Demand</u>	<u>Potential Locations</u>
Low to Moderate Income Renter HHs (Families)	Affordable rental (Rents < \$1,000)	50 - 80 units	47th Street Infill
Higher Income Renter Households	Market rate rental (Rents > \$1,000)	20 - 35 units + Midway demand	47th Street Infill
Higher Income Owner Households	Condos or Townhouses (\$200,000 - \$300,000)	70 - 135 units	47 <sup>th</sup> , 63rd, and 65th Streets

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Sources: Goodman Williams Group and URS Corporation

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- **Industrial.** Given current market conditions and site and access characteristics of the Study Area, future industrial development is generally not recommended as the most strategic use for the Study Area.

The cargo business at Midway Airport is minor, compared to commercial and general aviation activities. Major cargo carriers and freight forward services such as FedEx, Airborne/DHL and UPS AirCargo operate out of O'Hare Airport. Given Midway's current capacity constraints, cargo services at Midway Airport are not expected to grow in the future. Existing levels of cargo business currently at Midway may actually decrease in response to potential security changes by the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) which may require security screening of individual packages resulting in increased space needs for screening technology and staff. Such factors will likely minimize current and any new demand within the Study Area for warehouse/distribution space.

Currently, there is limited industrial development within the Study Area. The largest concentration of industrial space is located along Archer Avenue and 55<sup>th</sup> Street north of the airport (the Midway Business Center), which is currently underutilized.

The approximately one million square feet of industrial/warehouse space has been about 60% vacant this past year due to the departure of several key tenants. Little demand exists for this space due to increased congestion in the area and difficult truck access.

Development of new industrial facilities within the Study Area is not recommended as the most strategic use. Locating new establishments or relocating existing establishments with expansion/relocation needs to nearby industrial corridors will likely

provide the facilities, infrastructure and collaborative relationships they need to remain competitive.

Section 4 of this Plan report incorporates these market findings and recommendations with the physical assessment of select opportunity redevelopment sites within the Study Area.

## **SECTION 3: FRAMEWORK PLAN**

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While the basic land-use patterns of the Study Area are essentially established, the Framework Plan includes a range of goals and objectives which provide the basis for guiding future improvements and development projects within the Study Area.

These goals and objectives, listed below, are intended to assist the community in achieving commercial and residential revitalization and improve the overall appearance and function of these important corridors.

### **Corridor Appearance and Character**

**Goal:** *An attractive and distinctive image for each of the corridors responding to the different nature and use of the corridors.*

**Objectives:**

1. Identify Cicero Avenue as a “gateway” corridor through the use of distinct pylons, street lighting, banners, landscaping, and other design features.
2. Upgrade the image and appearance of existing commercial areas, including buildings, parking lots, signage, and the public right-of-way.
3. Promote high standards of design and construction for all development within the Study Area.
4. Create a sense of place through the use of streetscaping techniques and design guidelines.

### **Commercial, Retail and Office Development**

**Goal:** *New commercial, retail, and office development that provides local residents with employment opportunities and needed goods and services, increases the City’s sales and property taxes, and enhances the image and appearance of the Study Area.*

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain, improve and expand the range of retail, commercial, and office establishments within the Study Area.
2. Improve access, parking, traffic circulation, signage, and other operational conditions within all existing commercial areas in the Study Area.
3. Improve and upgrade Cicero Avenue as a retail and business area serving the immediate neighborhoods, Midway Airport, and the surrounding region.
4. Improve the Cicero Avenue/Archer Avenue intersection as a new commercial focal point, helping to create a sense of place and improved identity for the Study Area.
5. Maximize commercial potential along Cicero Avenue given the high traffic volumes, and proximity to I-55, Midway Airport, and surrounding dense urban population.

6. Encourage the corrective maintenance and rehabilitation of older commercial properties in poor condition.
7. Promote the redevelopment of marginal, obsolete, and vacant commercial properties.
8. Encourage compatible new office, retail, and commercial development in selected locations.
9. Promote creative site and building design and development solutions that can offset the limited depth site sizes and other constraints present within the Study Area.
10. Encourage new office, retail, and commercial uses that will utilize the local labor force.
11. Encourage new office, retail, and commercial uses that will help strengthen and support Midway Airport.
12. Minimize and mitigate any negative impact of office, retail, and commercial activities on neighboring land-use areas.
13. Discourage additional “strip” commercial development within the Study Area.
14. Encourage the combination and consolidation of small commercial and vacant lots to enhance opportunities for coordinated improvements and new developments.

## **Housing and Residential Areas**

**Goal:** *A housing inventory and living environment that supports the local population, attracts new households, and enhances the overall quality and character of the Study Area.*

### **Objectives:**

1. Discourage residential development along the highly trafficked Cicero Avenue unless incorporated into a mixed-use development with residential on the upper floors.
2. Encourage the “de-commercialization” of 47<sup>th</sup> Street and promote residential development to fill the void left by commercial businesses that are no longer viable along 47<sup>th</sup> Street. Recommended residential development along 47<sup>th</sup> include: attractive townhomes, 3 - 6 unit walk-ups, 3 - 5 story condominium and/or rental buildings, and mixed-use buildings at key intersections with neighborhood retail/services on the ground floor.
3. Protect and strengthen residential neighborhoods through utilization of the City’s *Residential Sound Insulation Program* to provide noise mitigation to homes in the vicinity of Midway Airport.

## **Midway Airport and Related Businesses**

**Goal:** *A healthy, growing, and viable airport, which generates significant economic activity for the Study Area, the City, and the region..*

**Objective:**

1. Promote and protect the continued growth of the Midway Airport and supporting businesses.
2. Protect land immediately south of Midway Airport for future airport and related operational needs.
3. Discourage encroachment of incompatible land uses near the airport.

## **Transportation**

**Goal:** *A balanced transportation system that provides for safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and trains, reinforces surrounding development patterns, and enhances regional transportation facilities.*

**Objectives:**

1. Use traffic calming and other design techniques to minimize localized traffic congestion, address safety and operational problems, reduce neighborhood traffic speeds and encourage pedestrian activity within the Study Area.
2. Minimize non-local and commercial traffic within residential neighborhoods.
3. Improve the flow of rail traffic (CREATE Program) within the Study Area and reduce the traffic delays, noise impacts, and safety concerns.
4. Support proposed at-grade and grade-separated rail crossing improvements and Central Ave/Narragansett overpass to relieve traffic congestion within Study Area.
5. Maintain and improve the condition of street and sidewalk surfaces throughout the Study Area.
6. Encourage the provision of adequate parking for all activity areas.
7. Promote continued improvement and enhancement of the CTA rail and bus routes as an important community asset.