



# Transit Friendly Development Guide

## STATION AREA TYPOLOGY

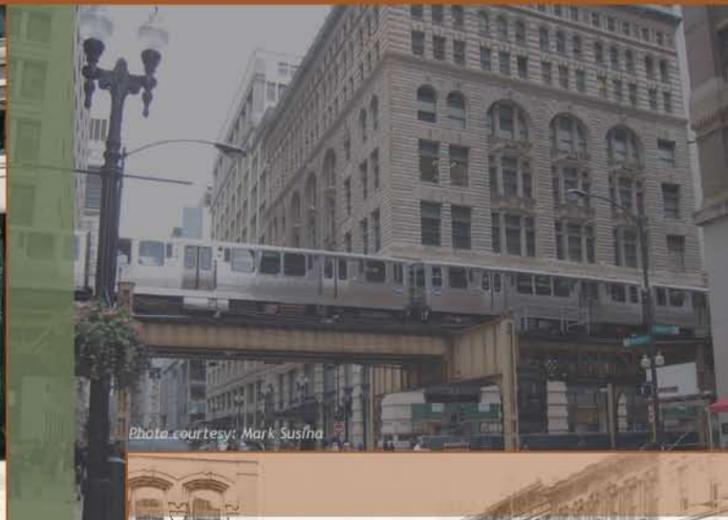
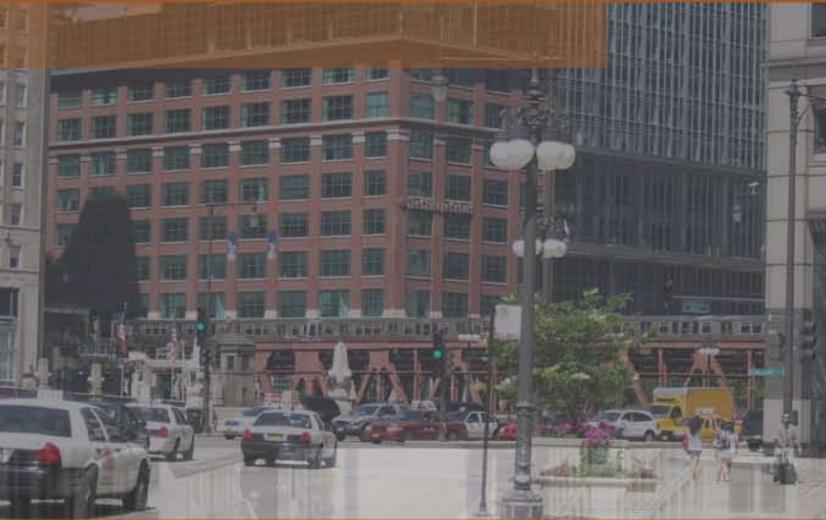


Photo courtesy: Mark Susina

Photo courtesy: Fred Schwartz



Photo from the Chicago Transit Authority Collection

Photo courtesy: Mark Susina

Photo courtesy: Chicago Transit Authority Collection





November 9, 2009

Chicagoans:

This is the final report summarizing work on the Station Area Typology Study for the CTA rail system. This effort has been a collaborative process among the City of Chicago, CTA, and the consultant group during the last eight months to arrive at the results outlined in this document.

We expect this document will be useful to the City, the CTA, and developers to drive decisions that will result in transit friendly development at CTA stations appropriate for their station area type. It is important because it will serve as a document unique to Chicago that can be referenced by all who are interested in development around transit stations.

Technical workshops were held every other week during the project and public involvement meetings were conducted at various levels. Dozens of one-on-one meetings were held with Alderman and elected officials of suburban municipalities served by CTA. Two open house meetings were conducted one in the north and one in the south. A stakeholders' meeting was also held which was attended by many agency representatives and other professionals in the transportation profession.

We appreciate the time and commitment to make this effort a success.

Signed:

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## Introduction

Chicago is known for its transit. It is a part of the City's history. Some of its active transit system is more than 100 years old. Yet there is an opportunity to increase ridership at many stations and increase development in the areas around the stations. To address this, the City of Chicago and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) partnered together to create a model to encourage transit friendly development at CTA stations. This typology study is the result of that partnership and provides a classification of all 144 of the CTA stations—19 of which are actually outside the City of Chicago—and describes appropriate development opportunities for each classification.

# INTRODUCTION



Photo courtesy: Mark Susina



### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The typology study had three specific objectives:

- Encourage transit friendly development in the vicinity of CTA rail stations and other CTA transit nodes.
- Provide a tool for elected officials and private developers to attract appropriate, desired development to station areas.
- Identify opportunities for development of CTA- and City-owned properties.

All 144 CTA rail stations were included in the study, including two new planned stations. The opportunity for new infill development varies at station areas. Vacant parcels and development sites under public and private ownership offer an opportunity to reinforce and enhance a neighborhood's character or typology with transit friendly development. In some cases the holdings, especially by the City, create a foundation on which development partnerships can be built.

In many of the station areas the CTA owns and operates large parking and bus transfer facilities. The capacity for these functions needs to be maintained to support the operation and mission of the CTA but some also represent a potential for creative partnerships for redevelopment.

*Chicago already is transit oriented. There is a rich network of transit.*

### A WORD ABOUT TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

TOD—transit oriented development—is a phrase and a concept that draws excitement in the planning profession. Hundreds of planning references focus on TOD and how to make station areas and entire cities transit oriented. TOD initiatives tend to focus on zoning and land use changes that will support transit.

One of the premises of this Typology Study was that Chicago already is transit oriented. Certainly in the heart of the City, but also in neighborhoods throughout the City, there is a rich network of transit including CTA bus and rail, Pace bus, and Metra rail.

The term transit friendly development (TFD) has been adopted in the City of Chicago to acknowledge the uniqueness of transit and land use in Chicago. TFD focuses on a more specific set of guidelines including accessibility, connectivity, scale, and a series of development incentives and partnerships focused in the area immediately surrounding the station. Defining station typologies and developing TFD guidelines inform how that station area should be developed to be consistent with the goals of CTA, the City, and individual neighborhoods.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Transit friendly development:** Development which is oriented towards and integrated with adjacent transit. The development incorporates accessibility and connectivity and is a multiuse mix of dense development that generates significant levels of transit riders.

**Typology:** The systematic classification or the arrangement of types according to their common characteristics.

**Station area typology:** Organizing transit station areas according to their character and future development potential, especially related to the development of transit friendly uses that can be strongly associated with and supportive of the functions of the transit station.

**Development guidelines:** A statement of direction and policy related to future development which specifies measurable criteria for scale, density, building height, minimum land area, and floor area ratio.

# Transit in Chicago

*In many ways transit has defined the City of Chicago.*

## FEATURES UNIQUE TO CHICAGO

The history of transit in Chicago has created certain features of the CTA system that are unique when compared to other transit systems. These unique features create special challenges—and opportunities—to encourage transit friendly development (TFD).

**Neighborhoods** – Chicago’s array of diverse neighborhoods is well serviced by rail and bus transit. The rich fabric of transit throughout and Chicago is not common to other cities. Nonetheless, many neighborhoods around stations are mature and have few if any vacant parcels.

**Configuration** – The Chicago Transit System is elevated for the most part. These elevated rail lines and stations have few direct connections to adjacent buildings. The stations are closely spaced—in some cases only blocks apart—serving a greater density and mix of uses on the blocks right next to transit stations.

**Land Use Pattern** – Chicago’s land use patterns are concentrated in a very high density core, served by the “Loop,” to a much greater extent than

most other major metropolitan areas. Most other major metropolitan areas have a smaller downtown core and higher density nodes of development around the periphery, creating other opportunities for higher density TFD at those outlying stations.

**CTA Ownership** – Because the transit system is elevated above streets, for the most part, rail lines and stations lie within public rights-of-way. Portions of the Orange, Blue, and Red Lines were built by the City of Chicago and are operated and maintained by the CTA, leaving very few CTA-owned parcels to leverage for TFD. Large stretches of these two new lines run parallel to, or are within the rights-of-way of either commercial rail lines or interstate divided highways. This is significantly different than new transit systems built in other metropolitan areas where excess land was purchased around stations for the explicit purpose of TFD construction.

**City Ownership** – Some station areas within the City of Chicago are adjacent to undeveloped properties owned by the City, as a result of the elimination of blighted conditions throughout the years. This creates the potential for larger scale developments, not normally found in urbanized areas.



Photos courtesy: Chicago Transit Authority Collection



## OTHER TYPOLOGY STUDIES:

There have been a number of typology studies done for transit systems across the country. Among those that have had the most exposure are the following:

- *Charlotte, North Carolina*
- *Denver, Colorado*
- *South Florida East Coast Corridor Study*
- *Indianapolis and Central Indiana*
- *Central Corridor in Minneapolis and St Paul, Minnesota*

A reference search was done to see what could be learned from these other studies that would be useful for this Chicago TFD guide. However, it became clear that in many ways the CTA system and the Chicago metropolitan area are different than any of the areas in which these other studies were done. Cities with long established systems have typically not done this type of typology study. The other studies were done in cities with newer systems. Most of the terminology for station types focused on the difference between downtown, region, and town center which seemed not applicable to the Chicago region. Generally it was felt that earlier studies done elsewhere in the country to promote TOD did not address the TFD planning issues which were the objective of the CTA and the City of Chicago.

# Defining Typologies

## OVERALL ORGANIZATION

Generally the CTA rail stations fall into categories which include those in the downtown core, those that are defined by the activities around them, those that serve neighborhoods, and stations that predominantly serve employment districts. Therefore, the four overall categories of stations were defined as either:

- Downtown Core
- Activity Center
- Neighborhood
- Employment District

## SEVEN TYPOLOGIES

From these four categories came subcategories to better define the station areas and a more refined definition of the seven typologies used throughout this study. They are listed with the color coded symbol used in the mapping of the typologies and the two-letter code used as shorthand to describe them:

- (DC) Downtown Core
- (MC) Major Activity Center
- (LC) Local Activity Center
- (DN) Dense Urban Neighborhood
- (UN) Urban Neighborhood
- (SD) Service Employment District
- (MD) Manufacturing Employment District



A full sized version of the typology map, along with a list of all stations assigned a given typology has been inserted here as a foldout.

# T Y P O L O G I E S

## ASSIGNING THE TYPOLOGIES

Every rail station in the CTA system was assigned one of the seven typologies. This was done initially by examining a large amount of demographic and ridership data. Then, a more refined assessment of the station areas was conducted looking at the following:

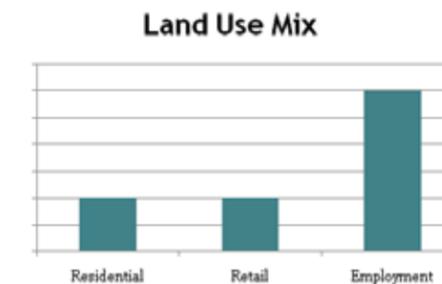
- Station area characteristics
- Land use mix and density
- Residential neighborhood character
- Retail and employment density
- Zoning designation
- Development opportunities
- Transit modes and ridership

Throughout this entire process the current conditions at the station areas were less important than the future plan for the areas. In fact, a few stations were reclassified once additional information from government officials was received reflecting long-range plans for the stations. The stations were given a typology based on their aspirational characteristics for the future. At some stations the aspirations are

significantly different than current conditions, while other station areas are close to their aspirational “build-out.”

## LAND USE MIX

One of the main focuses of assigning a typology is the aspirational land use mix. To graphically present this, a series of bar charts was developed to express the relational differences between land uses—residential, retail, and employment. This series of bar charts has no defined vertical axis—it is meant to express only the relative mix of land uses that are desired in each typology.



A more detailed description of each typology and their development opportunities is presented on the following pages.



The stations were given a typology based on their aspirational characteristics for the future.

## ● (DC) DOWNTOWN CORE

### Description

This typology includes the station areas in the Loop and the other highest density areas of Chicago's central business district. This type encompasses the primary cultural center as well as the highest intensity employment areas of the metropolitan area.



Photo courtesy: Mark Susina

#### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The development opportunities are in-fill projects within the existing zoning that will include increased residential densities to compliment the current commercial and cultural uses that already exist. This should include a dense mix of uses, access to transit by direct connections from buildings, ease of transfer among modes, and a continued focus on enhanced placemaking.

Land Use Mix

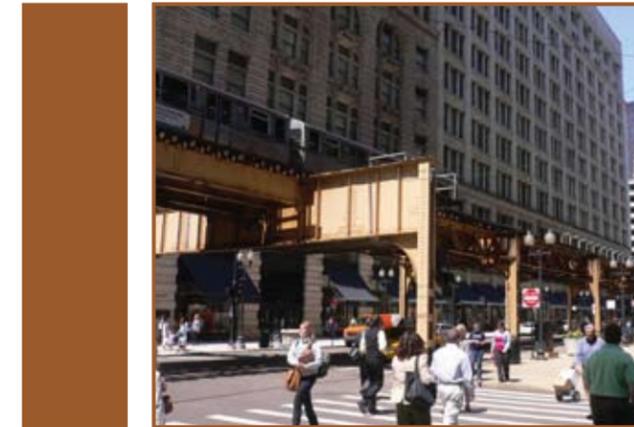
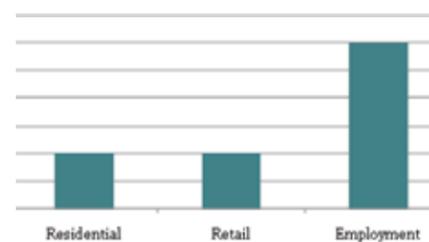


Photo courtesy: Mark Susina

## DOWNTOWN CORE



Photo courtesy: Mark Susina



Photo courtesy: Mark Susina



Photo courtesy: Steven Vance



Photo courtesy: Mark Susina



Photo courtesy: Mark Susina

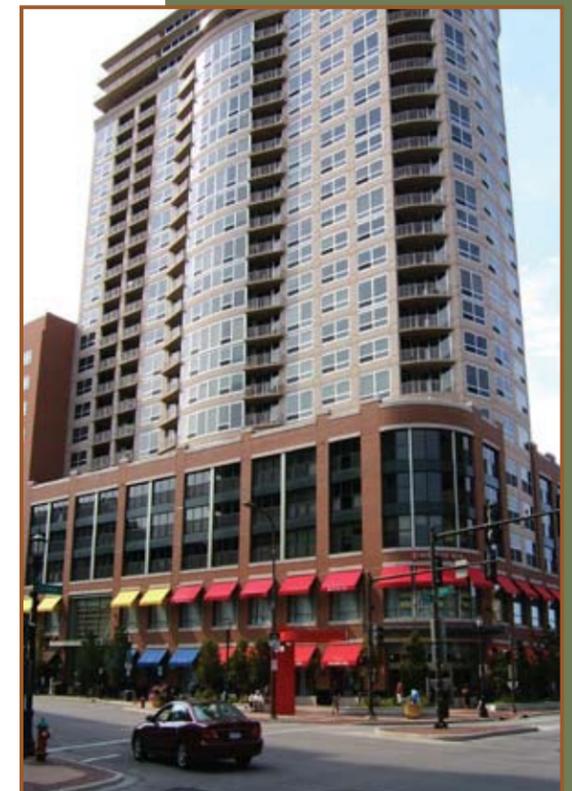
## ● (MC) MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTER

### Description

This typology encompasses the station areas serving a relatively wide range of densities, urban forms, and land uses. This type of area is intended to be developed at a significant density that supports and provides services for the region and nearby neighborhoods. These areas are outside Chicago's downtown core and provide high levels of employment, especially in the retail sector, and can include special uses like university campuses and mixed-use centers.



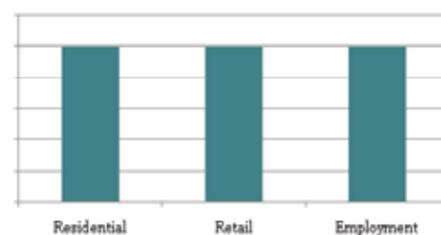
## MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTER



### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The potential development opportunities will incorporate a balance of residential and employment densities with retail or other uses that serve residents and visitors and promote activity. They will preserve or enhance the pedestrian environment, walkability, bicycling, and access to transit. CTA should work with developers and other partners toward enhanced placemaking, especially at stations that remain auto oriented.

Land Use Mix



## ● (LC) LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTER

### Description

This category includes the station areas that exist in the centers of identifiable neighborhoods. This type is focused on supporting the surrounding area or community. These centers have a mixture of higher intensity land uses and are noticeably denser than the neighborhoods that surround them providing a mix of employment in retail, service, and other sectors. Some of these centers will have civic and community uses, but this is not a defining characteristic of these areas.



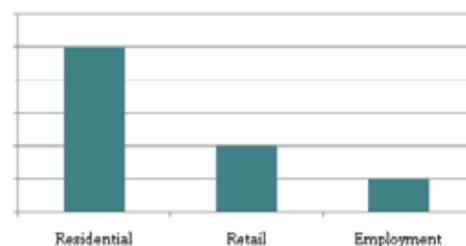
### LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTER



#### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist in some local centers for infill development with a higher density of residential and employment uses at the core of the local center immediately around the transit station. A focus on neighborhood placemaking and walkability should be maintained.

Land Use Mix



# ● (DN) DENSE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

## Description

Station areas in this classification are primarily residential in character but will have some limited neighborhood supporting retail uses in scale with the surrounding area and clustered near the station. The supporting neighborhoods in this area are generally at relatively higher densities with primarily multifamily buildings of three or more stories, including high-rise buildings.



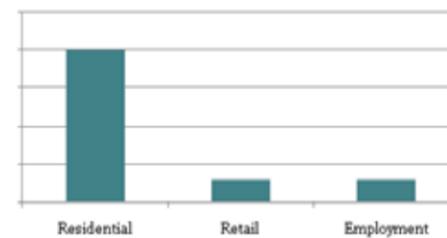
DENSE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD



### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

These areas may have opportunities for infill development with high-density residential projects adjacent to transit. Pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit should be emphasized.

Land Use Mix



# ● (UN) URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

## Description

This type includes station areas in well-established, primarily residential neighborhoods where retail development exists primarily to support the immediate area. The urban neighborhoods are often a mix of multifamily buildings immediately around the station and single-family homes on surrounding streets. This type also may include station areas with neighborhoods that have infrastructure such as an expressway, an intermodal, park-and-ride facility, or other features. Nonetheless, these neighborhoods remain meaningful and are identifiable and walkable with good access to transit.



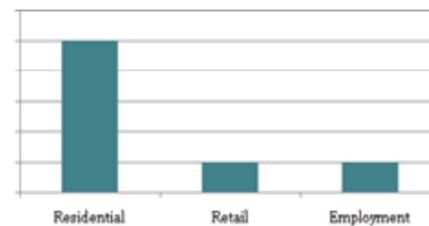
## URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD



### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist to maintain densities and to provide infill projects that maintain the stability of the neighborhood and encourage transit use. New multifamily buildings and local retail development should be directed immediately adjacent to the station area.

Land Use Mix



## ● (SD) SERVICE EMPLOYMENT DISTRICT

### Description

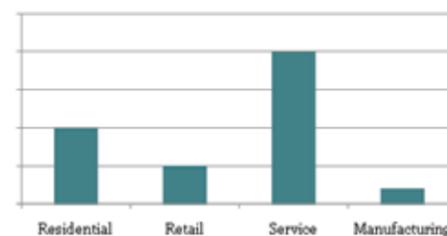
Areas around stations in the Service Employment District are dominated by large employers in multistory office buildings, as well as hospitals and university facilities. Retail and residential uses may be located nearby but activity is driven by service employment.



#### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The focus is on retaining and expanding employment opportunities. New development should improve regional mobility by locating workplaces close to the transit station and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access.

Land Use Mix



## ● (MD) MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT DISTRICT

### Description Typology

The station areas in this type have a predominance of employment in the construction, manufacturing, and wholesale sectors. It can include high tech manufacturing or R&D. The employment is low density and characterized by large building footprints with relatively few employees per square foot as compared to major service employment districts. Rail stations are used primarily as bus transfer locations. Urban neighborhoods may be located close to these districts.



#### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Although these areas may not support the typical TFD densities and intensities, there is residential development potential and selective employment-based projects. Some of these stations are close to large vacant parcels that may be conducive to larger planned developments with a mix of front-office and related manufacturing facilities.

Land Use Mix



# Other Considerations

## BUS STOP TYPOLOGIES

To address the potential for TFD at other CTA transit nodes the following 10 representative bus stops were evaluated.

- *Sheridan and Belmont*
- *North and Cicero*
- *26th and Pulaski*
- *Madison and Western*
- *Michigan and Chestnut*
- *Jackson and River*
- *55th and Lake Park*
- *79th and Jeffrey*
- *111th and Halsted*
- *Ford City Mall*

In order to accomplish TFD at these bus locations the following conditions should apply:

- *The bus facility is a part of a transit corridor and connects to the transit network for travel throughout the region*
- *The area around the site can accommodate a new project—either on vacant land or on land that can support increased density or higher value*
- *There is unmet demand for goods and services to warrant new construction in the area*
- *Current bus trips to this location are destinations more than transfers and land uses in the area are activity generators in and of themselves*
- *The bus facility whether at-curb on-street or bus turnaround off-street is sufficient to handle the volume of buses and does not interfere with the flow of traffic or business viability in the area*
- *The bus service acts as a feeder to other transit modes, that is, provides synergy between and among different transit modes*

## STATION MODIFIERS

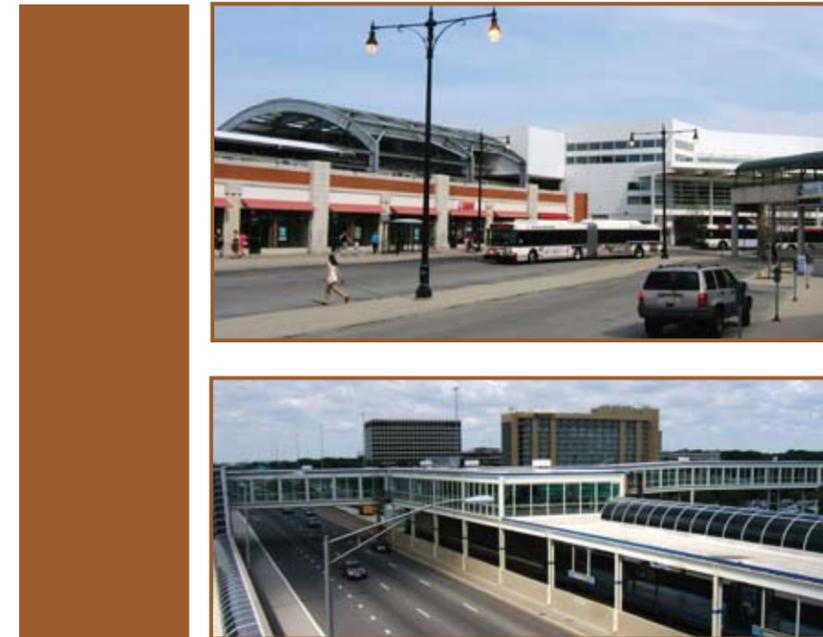
As typologies were being assigned it was clear that certain characteristics of the station had the potential to significantly modify the way TFD could be accomplished. These modifiers include:

- *Expressway – applied to stations that are located in the median of an expressway*
- *Intermodal – stations that had high transfer activity from one mode to another including CTA and Pace buses and Metra commuter trains*
- *Park-and-Ride – stations where a large percentage of the ridership is by auto drivers who park in large parking facilities at the station*
- *Airport – the TFD potential at the O’Hare and Midway stations are greatly affected because they are at airports*
- *Terminal – these are stations that are at the end of the line*

Clearly, these modifiers must be considered along with a station’s typology when assessing TFD opportunities.

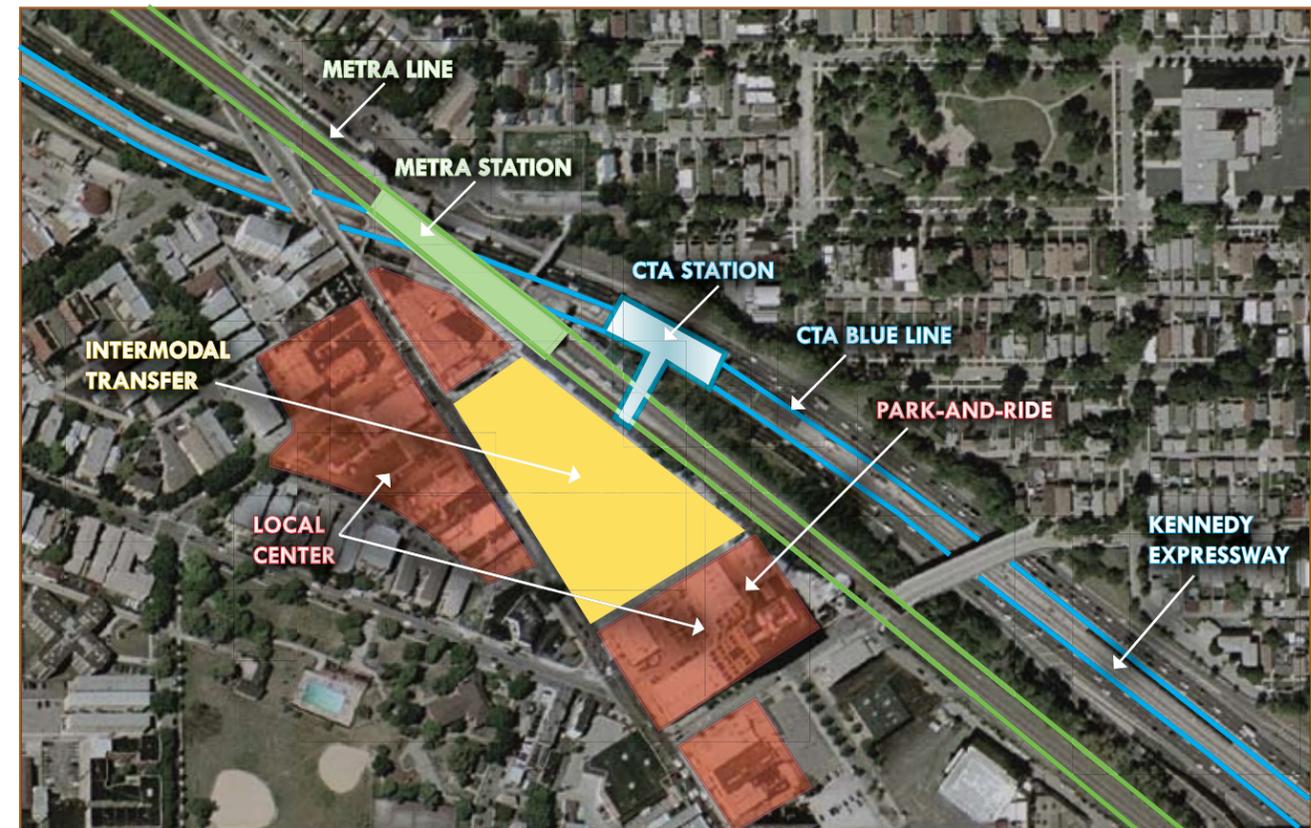


The image on the facing page illustrates how these functions operate at the Jefferson Park station on the Blue Line where there is an expressway, an intermodal facility, and park-and-ride facilities. Although these functions are fairly well integrated at Jefferson Park, there is a potential to improve connectivity and walkability and to accomplish better placemaking.



The remainder of this document focuses on guidelines and direction that result from the designation of each of the typologies. These include:

- *Connectivity*
- *Parking*
- *Placemaking*
- *Development guidelines*



# Parking

Policies supporting good parking management at transit stations include:

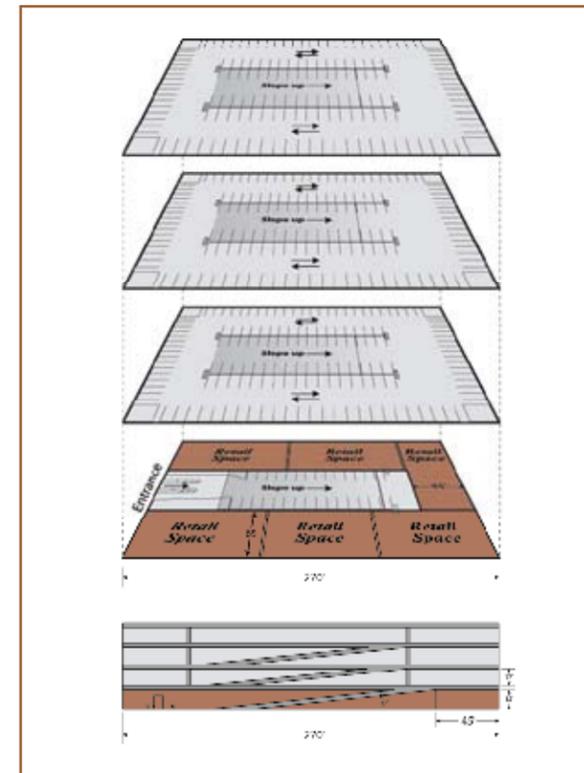
- Shared parking
- Appropriate pricing
- Car sharing
- Availability of transit incentives
- Connectivity from and through the parking facility

Some stations at the ends of the lines clearly serve a park-and-ride function while others, especially in the Downtown Core, support a purely pedestrian environment for development surrounding all stations.

Generally, parking ratios for development surrounding all stations should be reduced. However, the need for parking to serve the commuting transit rider must be accommodated. Large surface parking lots create a barrier to pedestrian access to the station and severely impact the walkability and connectivity throughout the station area. Good station area planning should consider structured parking immediately adjacent to the station with liner retail and good connections between parking and the transit platform. Many of the stations that serve a park-and-ride function have large parking lots, many owned by the CTA. Templates, like the one on the next page, should be used to guide the redevelopment of these properties maintaining the required level of parking for park-and-ride transit riders integrated with TFD projects.

Other stations have large private parking lots located close to them. Redevelopment partnerships should be explored at these locations to incorporate this parking into new development opportunities close to the station.

# PARKING



# Connectivity's Role in TFD



Photos courtesy: Mark Susina

An interconnected network of streets, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities is critical to making a station area transit friendly.

Pedestrian routes should be clearly established leading to the station. Visual cues should draw pedestrians along these routes directly to the station. Wayfinding signs and streetscape amenities improve connectivity.

Bicycle connectivity supporting transit and storage facilities should be provided at all stations.

Vertical connectivity is possible when public access buildings are adjacent to stations. Direct

connections from upper levels of the buildings to the station platforms can be accomplished. This is especially important in Downtown Core and Major Activity Center typologies.

According to the Center for Transit-Oriented Development the following connectivity issues are important:

- Strong pedestrian orientation
- Adequate room for circulation
- Safe street crossings
- Inviting station area
- Amenities for transit users

Connectivity and placemaking are closely related.

## CONNECTIVITY'S ROLE

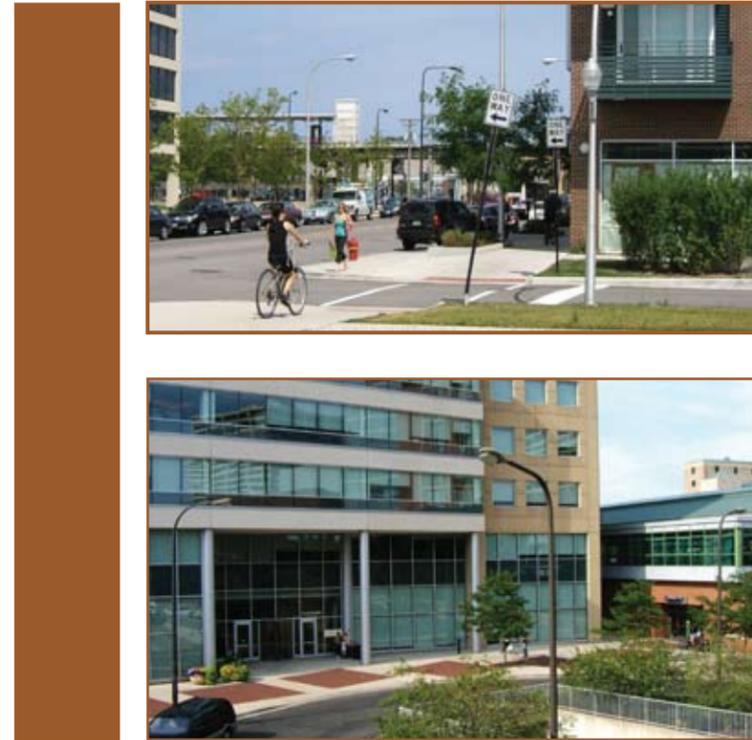
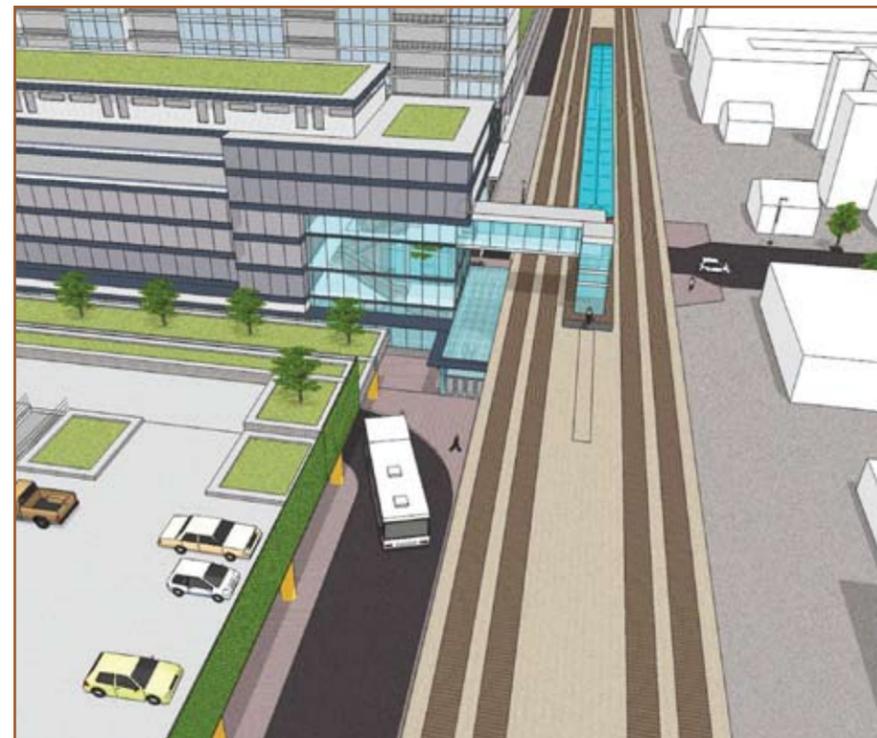


Photo courtesy: Chicago Transit Authority



# Placemaking

Transit stations should be found in the heart of special places—in fact, the station should define the place as special.



To create TFD one must create place. According to the Transportation Research Board “a focus on placemaking can bring the ridership goals of the transit agency and the livability goals of the community together.” Especially at stations that are activity centers, the connectivity and walkability of the area around the station must play a critical role in how the station area supports the surrounding development.

A few of the key elements of placemaking around transit areas include:

- Walkability and connectivity
- Use of active retail and mixed-use buildings to provide interest and increase value
- Open space opportunities
- Well managed and designed parking facilities
- Seamless transfers among transit modes

A set of development guidelines will ensure that placemaking is considered in TFD.

*Transit stations should be found in the heart of special places—in fact, the station should define the place as special.*



# P L A C E M A K I N G



# Guidelines for Typologies

## UNIVERSAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

There are some policies that should be universal to all TFDs and station areas. These policies apply to development in all of the seven typologies and include the following:

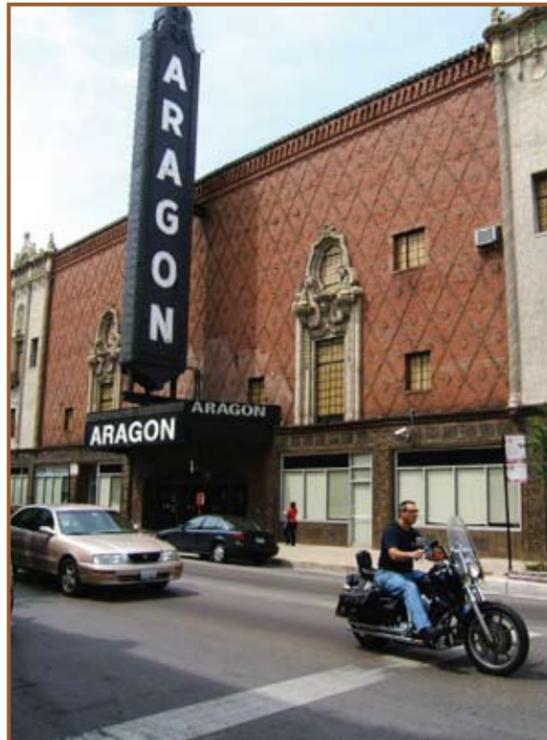
- Higher density at station areas
- Zoning considerations
- High level of connectivity including wide, unobstructed sidewalks
- Bicycle accessibility offering a secure storage for bikes, and a well planned access plan for bikes to access storage areas and the train
- Availability of car sharing opportunities in close proximity to the station
- Facilities and infrastructure supporting transit needs to be protected and maintained as an integral part of the station area, where applicable
- Ease of connectivity and transfer to other modes
- High capacity transfers to other modes

## DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES BASED ON TYPOLOGIES

There also are policies that should have more relevance at some station types than others. These policies vary with the typologies.

- Land use mix
- Desired scale
- Floor area ratio (FAR) bonus
- Building height
- Density
- Minimum land area (MLA)
- Parking ratios
- Desired housing types
- Employment types
- Connectivity, pedestrian access, and circulation
- Opportunities for public space
- Opportunities for concessions

# G U I D E L I N E S



# Development Guideline Matrix

The development policies have been incorporated into the matrix to reflect how they should be treated in each of the typologies.



	Downtown Core	Major Activity Center	Local Activity Center	Dense Urban Neighborhood	Urban Neighborhood	Service Employment District	Manufacturing Employment District
	DC	MC	LC	DN	UN	SD	MD
Land use mix	<p>Land Use Mix</p>	<p>Land Use Mix</p>	<p>Land Use Mix</p>	<p>Land Use Mix</p>	<p>Land Use Mix</p>	<p>Land Use Mix</p>	<p>Land Use Mix</p>
Zoning considerations:							
• Floor area ratio bonus							
• Greater height							
• Increase density							
• Lower minimum land area							
• Lower parking ratios							
Desired housing types	High-rise	High-, mid-rise	Various	High-, mid-rise	Mid-, low-rise	Various	
Commercial types	Highly concentrated and integrated retail on lower floors	Integrated retail, some large floor plates	Local serving retail adjacent to station	Concentrated retail adjacent to station			
Employment types	Service, office, retail		Retail, local service			Service	Manufacturing
Desired scale	Very high	High	Medium	Medium high	Medium	Various	
Connectivity, pedestrian access, and circulation	Focus on vertical and direct access opportunities	Connect to surrounding uses, vertical direct access	Connect to adjacent uses and to surrounding neighborhoods	Connect to neighborhoods		Connect to district and facilitate transfers among modes	
Opportunities for public space	Sidewalk plazas, interior lobby	Urban plazas, courtyards	Plazas, pocket parks	Plazas, parks, landscape opportunities			
Opportunities for concessions	Significant retail in station and integrated with adjacent buildings			Small retail shops, kiosks, vending			



## Conclusion and Recommendations

This report is the result of several months of collaboration among consultant team members, representatives of the Chicago Transit Authority, City of Chicago, city and suburban elected officials, and the community. The result is a set of seven typologies into which all 144 CTA rail transit stations have been assigned.

The intent of the effort is to encourage TFD in the station areas around the CTA stations. Development guidelines have been established for TFD in general and for each typology.

The results of this report will be useful to the CTA, the City, and developers as planning decisions and development decisions are made. The typologies and their respective guidelines will allow consistent and informed decisions about what type of development should—and should not—be allowed and encouraged in the station areas.

### CONCLUSION

Assigning each of the CTA rail stations one of seven typologies is a significant component of a broader initiative by the City of Chicago which includes the following:

- *Using the recommended guidelines from the station area typologies to consider a series of zoning code changes to support and implement transit friendly development*
- *Creating a similar discussion about typologies for bus corridors*
- *Expanding the reach of transit friendly development to a corridor perspective by initiating corridor studies along a few key arterials in the City*

The typologies that have been assigned each station inform developers and elected officials as to the potential development types that should be considered in these station areas and provide planners and designers a set of guidelines by which this development should occur.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the typology guidelines and the conclusions of this study the following recommendations are offered:

- *Identify station areas where property ownership is such that aggregation and other incentives can be leveraged to encourage future transit friendly development*
- *Identify infill development opportunities where existing development around the station is less dense than that which is envisioned by the station area's typology*
- *Encourage development around intermodal and park-and-ride stations that makes better use of the land surrounding the station while improving integration among transit functions and better connectivity to the station*
- *Create standards and templates by which existing surface parking can be converted to structured parking with at least as much station oriented parking integrated with transit friendly multi-use development*
- *Examine and evaluate station connectivity for all modes focusing especially on connections to existing surrounding development and potential future development*
- *Actively look for ways to better connect the stations to the community at street level and to the adjacent buildings at platform level*
- *Incorporate walkability, integrated mixed-use buildings, and open space into station areas*
- *Refine TFD Guidelines and incorporate them into the appropriate municipal codes, especially the City of Chicago Zoning Code*

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