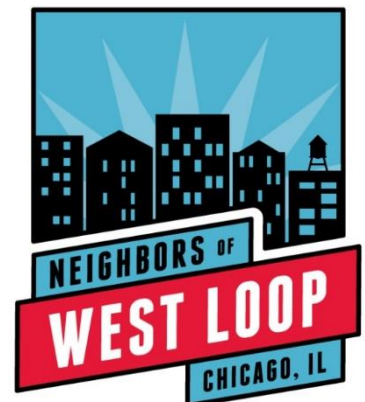


West Loop



Neighborhood Plan

Prepared by:
Neighbors of West Loop
Chicago, IL
August, 2018





In 2013, an effort was initiated to increase collaboration among residents across the [four wards](#) of the transforming West Loop. The Fulton River District Association (FRDA), a neighborhood group located in the northeast portion of the West Loop, looked beyond its boundaries to engage nearby volunteers. FRDA worked with residents that were participating in other community organizations like park advisory councils (PACs), Community Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS), local school councils, and other positive community organizations. In January of 2014, the Fulton River District Association became Neighbors of West Loop and expanded its geographic reach to include all of the West Loop as we know it today.

[Neighbors of West Loop \(NoWL\)](#) is a neighborhood organization comprised of West Loop residents who bring together others in the area who want to make a positive impact on our vibrant community. We are a non-profit organization, supported by our membership and other West Loop residents who volunteer their time to benefit the organization. The organization is founded on transparency and welcomes anyone who wants to make a difference at the local level. The positions that we establish and the initiatives that we promote are aligned with the feedback that we receive from the community.

Our goal is to empower residents who wish to volunteer their time for the West Loop. We believe in transparency and the idea that every resident should have the opportunity to be informed and to be heard on issues that affect their community. Our mission includes the following:

- to advocate for responsible development
- to encourage the preservation and expansion of green space
- to promote the safety of West Loop residents
- to inform residents about area happenings through meetings, community forums, and electronic communications
- to host community gatherings for all West Loop residents
- to connect residents with their elected representatives

All West Loop residents are welcome to join NoWL. As a non-profit organization, we depend on membership dues to help pay for operational costs that support our mission. We are always looking for new members and volunteers to join us! We welcome groups and individuals who want to work with us to make a positive contribution to the community. Check out information on [becoming a member of NoWL](#) or [contact us via email](#).



FOREWORD

From "Skid Row" to one of the hottest real estate markets in the country, the West Loop of Chicago is growing by leaps and bounds. Anticipating the potential for this growth, the City of Chicago has commissioned several planning studies over the past two decades to prepare the area for its transition from a warehouse district to a place where residents, businesses, and visitors can coexist.

However, many of the basic recommendations of these plans - especially those meant to preserve the fabric of the neighborhood - have fallen by the wayside. The post-recession spike in development across the West Loop over the past ten years has relied heavily on changes to existing property zoning. Until the past few years, most zoning changes have been granted with minimal concern voiced by residents in the neighborhood.

With over 40 active West Loop developments currently in various stages of planning, design, or construction, the pace of development has reached a fever pitch. Through community outreach on the part of local aldermen and groups like the [West Loop Community Organization](#) (WLCO), [West Central Association](#) (WCA), and Neighbors of West Loop, local residents have become more informed and more vocal about development projects.

The Neighbors of West Loop Development Committee draws from residents across the neighborhood, providing them with a forum to learn about proposed development projects, [zoning laws](#), and the City's plans for the West Loop. This includes monthly committee meetings, informational sessions, and an active [blog on the NoWL website](#).

As an organization that seeks to amplify the voice of West Loop residents, Neighbors of West Loop has developed this *Neighborhood Plan* to capture and document input from residents across the community about the future West Loop they envision. It is our intention that local elected officials, developers, and property owners will reference this document and the resident-driven guidelines it contains when making plans to develop property in the West Loop.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chicago's West Loop is a neighborhood in rapid transition. With a rich and dynamic history, the area is experiencing unprecedented growth in population, and influx of commercial enterprises, and associated development. This document, written from the perspective of residents, offers this vision for the future of the West Loop:

To preserve and enhance the high quality of life for residents and neighbors of the West Loop, allowing the neighborhood to remain a desirable place for residents to live, work, and play for decades to come.

To realize this vision, the *Neighborhood Plan* sets forth three primary objectives:

- Promote preservation, progress, and prosperity.
- Create a resident-driven plan for the future of the West Loop.
- Provide guidance to the NoWL Development Committee, developers, city planners, and elected officials regarding the community's vision for the neighborhood.

This document builds on several studies developed over the years, including the *Near West Side Area Land Use Plan* (2000), the *Central Area Action Plan* (2009), *A Future for the Near West Side* (2016), and draft *West Loop Design Guidelines* (2017). Based on input gathered from across the neighborhood, this *Neighborhood Plan* is the first developed expressly by residents of the West Loop.

Extensive outreach was made to develop the content for this plan, including a kickoff meeting on June 20, 2016; a resident survey conducted in the summer of 2016; five separate stakeholder workshops held between August of 2016 and January of 2017; and conversations at NoWL events and on social media.

The result is a series of recommendations within five separate focus areas: traffic & parking, infrastructure, parks & green space, public safety.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Development & Land Use Recommendation Summary

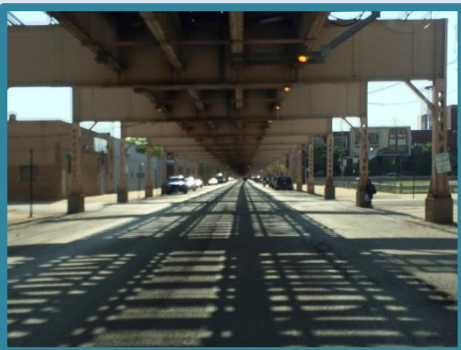
- *Consistently enforce the West Loop Design Guidelines.*
- *Observe the architectural style of historic West Loop structures while introducing new design elements.*
- *Implement building height requirements for developments that propose changes to existing zoning.*
- *Encourage and preserve local businesses.*
- *Provide open space for public use.*
- *Meet City requirements by providing affordable housing on-site.*
- *Address traffic congestion issues*



Traffic & Parking Recommendation Summary

- *Initiate a neighborhood-wide traffic study.*
- *Implement improvements for pedestrians, transit, and cyclists.*
- *Expand the proposed resident permit parking program.*
- *Promote shared parking for the different sources of demand over the course of the day and week.*

Infrastructure Recommendation Summary



- *Accelerate the rate of infrastructure repairs and provide more infrastructure amenities, commensurate with other areas that are classified under downtown zoning.*
- *Improve street lighting in poorly-lit areas.*
- *Encourage public art.*

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS - continued

Parks & Green Space Recommendation Summary

- *Develop a strategic plan to address the West Loop's green space deficit.*
- *Ensure that parks, park facilities, and green spaces meet the needs of ALL residents.*
 - *Better manage use of existing parks.*
 - *Redesign existing parks to have improved facilities.*
 - *Provide larger dog friendly areas (DFAs).*
- *Short term goals and projects:*
 - *Improve pedestrian access to Union Park.*
 - *Direct music festival revenue to park improvements.*
 - *Expand Skinner Park's green space.*
 - *Construct a new fieldhouse with indoor pool at Skinner Park.*
 - *Develop park advisory councils for Heritage Green and Fulton River Parks.*
 - *Redesign Fulton River Park.*
 - *Provide a DFA at or near Heritage Green Park.*



Public Safety Recommendation Summary

- *Encourage resident participation in the CAPS Program.*
- *Initiate neighborhood watch programs.*
- *Increase police patrols.*
- *Split the CPD 12th District and locate a new station in the West Loop.*
- *Promote the sharing of security cameras footage with law enforcement.*



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INTRODUCTION

Located just west of Chicago's downtown "Loop", the West Loop is a vibrant and rapidly growing urban neighborhood in the heart of the city. The area has undergone several transformations over the years since settlers first arrived in the area in the early 1800s.

Neighborhood Composition

The boundaries of the West Loop are generally considered to run from Grand Avenue on the north to I-290 on the south and from Ashland on the west to the Chicago River on the east. There are many distinct neighborhoods that exist within these boundaries, including, but not limited to:

- Greektown – Centered on Halsted Street from Van Buren to Monroe, Greektown (formerly known as “the Delta”, is home to many traditional Greek restaurants, the National Hellenic Museum, and the annual Greek Independence Day Parade.
- Fulton River District – This district covers the northeast corner of the West Loop, from the Chicago River on the east to the Kennedy Expressway and from Madison Street to Ohio Street on the north.
- West Loop Gate – As the western gateway to the downtown, the West Loop Gate overlaps the Fulton River District, running from I-290 to Lake Street between the Kennedy Expressway and the river. It includes the historic Old St. Pat's Church, Union and Ogilvie train stations, and the Haymarket Memorial.
- Fulton Market – The Fulton Market District (Washington to the rail tracks north of Carroll Avenue, Halsted to Ogden) is a landmarked district with a dynamic mix of meatpacking companies, world-class restaurants, and manufacturing businesses.
- Randolph Restaurant Row – Internationally known, the stretch of Randolph from Clinton all the way to Ogden is home to arguably the most popular lineup of restaurants in the Midwest.
- Madison Corridor – Known as the “Main Street of the West Loop”, Madison Street from Halsted to Ogden contains a mix of bars, restaurants, local

shops, and other businesses that cater to neighborhood residents and visitors alike.

- Jackson Boulevard Historic District – A preserved section of homes dating from the 1880s and 1890s in the area bounded by Ashland, Laflin, Adams, and one-half block south of Jackson.

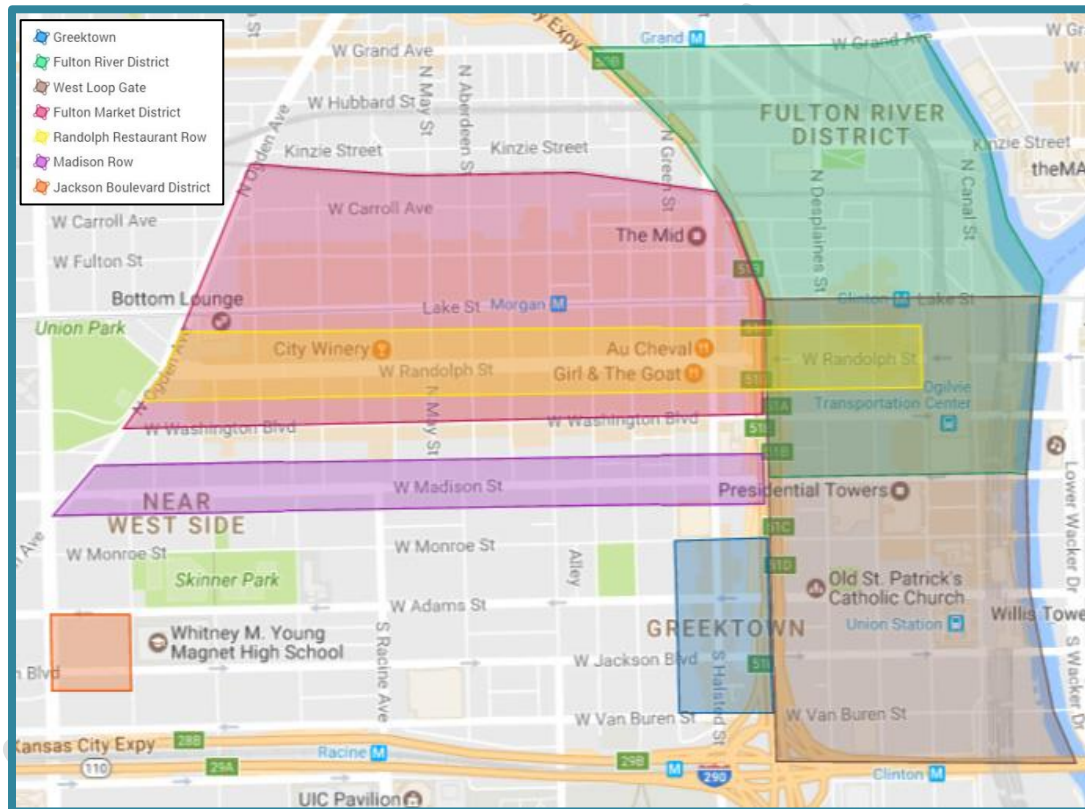
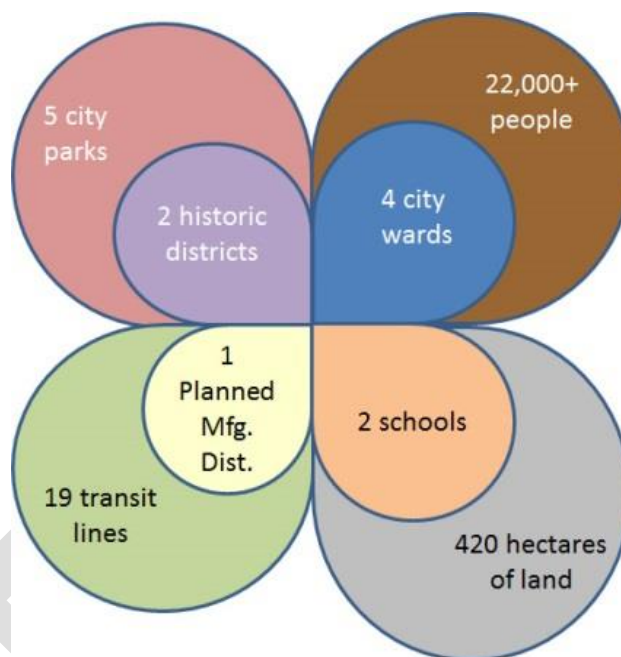


Figure 1 – Existing West Loop Neighborhoods and Historic Districts

The neighborhood includes five parks (Bartelme, Fulton River, Heritage, Skinner, and Union), four City wards (25th, 27th, 28th, and 42nd), two public schools (Mark T. Skinner Elementary, Whitney Young High School) with numerous private schools, two historic districts (Fulton Market and Jackson Boulevard), and one Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) (Kinzie Corridor). Traversing this neighborhood are nineteen (19) CTA transit lines (Blue, Green, and Pink, L lines and the #1, 7, 8, J14, 19, 20, 37, 28, 56, 60, 124, 125, 126, 151, 156, and 157 bus routes). In particular, the Morgan Street L station was re-built and opened in 2012, underscoring dramatic changes in nearby population and commerce.



Demographics

In the 1960s and 1970s, it was estimated that approximately 10,000 - 15,000 men

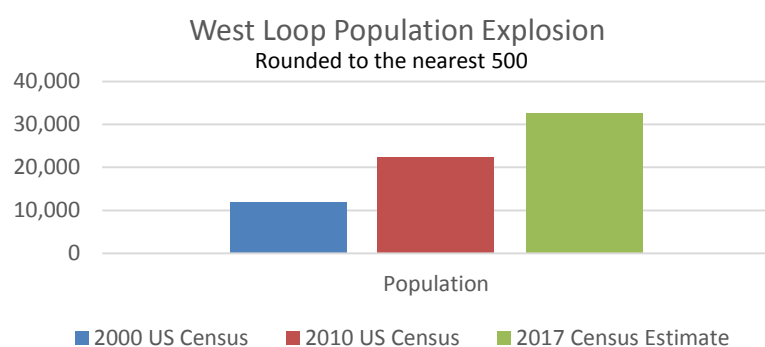


Figure 2 - West Loop Population Growth

lived along a section of Madison Street nicknamed “Skid Row” in flop houses and on street curbs. Today, that street looks very different for the nearly 33,000 West Loop residents.¹

¹ 1990-2010 Census, 2012 Estimates with 2017 Projections; Gallun, Alby. Apartment Market Starts to Tilt in Tenants’ Favor, Crain’s, February 14, 2017; McKuen, Pamela Dittmer. Since Great Recession, West Loop has been one of the City’s Hottest Housing Markets, Chicago Tribune, September 07, 2016

The changes to the West Loop of late are not only dramatic, but equally impressive in how quickly these changes have occurred. The composition of the West Loop resident group has also changed with many Millennials choosing to remain in the city and raise their children in the family-friendly West Loop. Yet, while the number of households with children has increased significantly, the West Loop remains a diverse generational neighborhood with adult households ranging from Millennials to Baby Boomers.

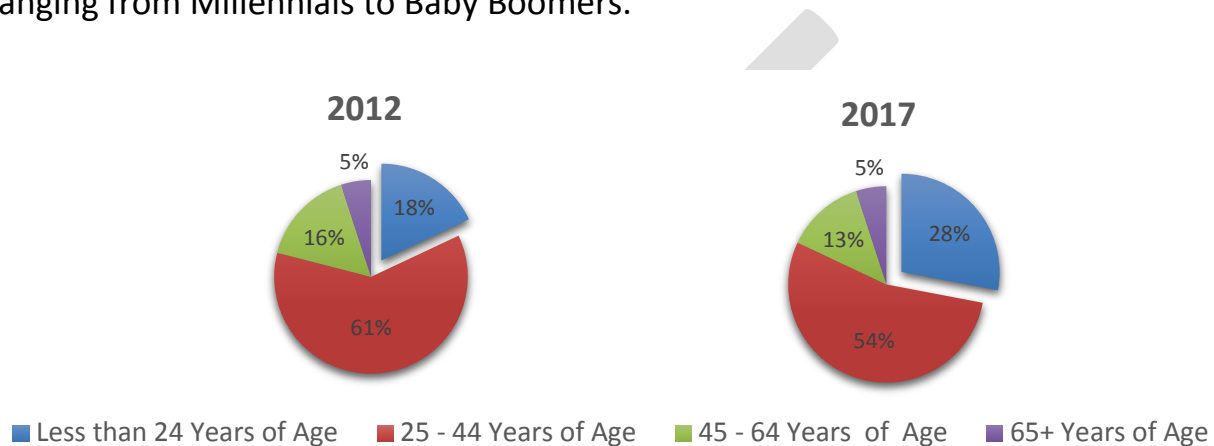


Figure 3 - Age Distribution of West Loop Residents (2012, 2017)

From warehouses and the downtrodden, to artists and entrepreneurs – it's interesting to speculate whether or not the meat-packers of the 1800s, or even the developers of the 1980s, could have imagined all of the ways that the West Loop has transformed.

Commercial development has also been unprecedented with a significant amount of office and retail space being built. Formerly home to National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) and Armour Meatpacking, the West Loop is now called home by Boeing, Google, and (soon) McDonald's Corporation. Since 2010, a total of 42 companies (each requiring 10,000+ sq. ft. of office space) have moved to the West Loop – nineteen such companies in just the last five years.

For example, at 535,000 sq. ft., the new 1K Fulton building is home to Google's Chicago office. The site of the former Harpo Studios is currently being redeveloped into a 600,000 sq. ft. retail and office building which will be home to



McDonald's new global headquarters, which will occupy 485,000 sq. ft. and serve 2,000 employees.²

The influx of so many companies and employers has significantly impacted median household incomes for the area. As shown in Figure 4, salaries for West Loop residents have nearly doubled between 2000 and 2017.³

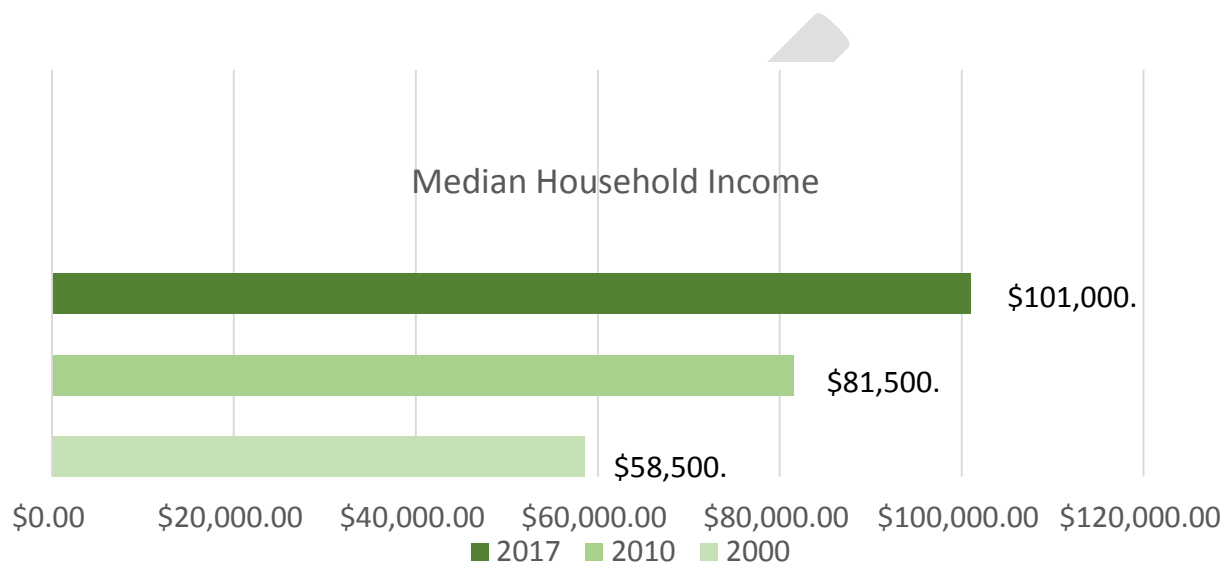


Figure 4 - West Loop Household Income

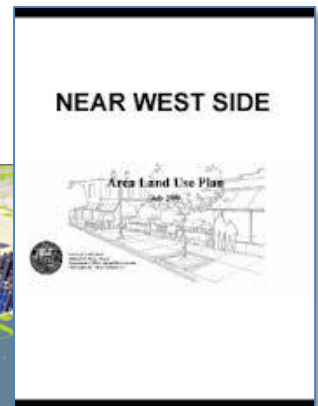
² Bentle, Kyle. Data: Which Companies are Moving Downtown, Chicago Tribune, June 15, 2016; Collier's International. Research & Forecast Report, Fourth Quarter 2016 & First Quarter 2017, Downtown Chicago/office

³ Niche.com West Loop Residents Demographics, Niche.com, June 2017

Review of Past Studies and Current Initiatives

Building on Daniel Burnham's *Plan of Chicago*, several planning documents have been developed to guide the evolution of the West Loop⁴:

- *Central West Redevelopment Plan* (Chicago Department of Urban Renewal, 1969)
- *Madison-Racine Redevelopment Plan* (1979)
- *West Loop Adaptive Reuse Analysis* (1983)
- *West Loop Task Force Report* (1985)
- *Real Estate Market Trends Affecting Chicago's Near West Side* (1988)
- *Near West Redevelopment Project Area Tax Increment Finance Program* (1994)
- *Chicago Food Wholesaling Market Districts: Revitalization Feasibility Study* (1995)
- *Randolph Street Market Planning Report* (1995)
- *Strategic Plan for Kinzie Industrial Corridor* (1996)
- *Kinzie Planned Manufacturing District* (1998)
- *Kinzie Industrial Conservation Area Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment* (1998)
- *Central West Redevelopment Project Area Tax Increment Financing District* (1999)
- *Near West Side Area Land Use Plan* (2000)
- *Central Area Action Plan* (2009)
- *A Future for the Near West Side* (2016)
- *West Loop Design Guidelines* (2017)



4

https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Planning_and_Policy/Publications/Near_West_Side_Plan/Near_West_Side_Plan_Part%201.pdf



Between the 1960s and 1990s, these efforts focused on trying to rejuvenate the area, which had fallen on hard times. However, as the 21st Century approached, studies on the West Loop shifted to preparing the neighborhood for the development that was starting to take hold. In particular, the *Near West Side Plan* included several recommendations that are echoed by residents today:

- Low to moderate density residential development
- Neighborhood-oriented retail
- Adherence to existing zoning
- New development to retain the scale of the “existing building fabric”
- Encouragement of “family-sized units”
- A “step-down” in building height from the expressways

Between the 1960s and 1990s, planning efforts focused on trying to rejuvenate the area, which had fallen on hard times. However, as the 21st Century approached, studies on the West Loop shifted to preparing the neighborhood for the development that was starting to take hold.

Land use and zoning in the West Loop has been dynamic over the last two decades, in particular since the Great Recession of the late 2000s. Acknowledging the economic benefit that development brings, the City has regularly accommodated zoning changes in the West Loop to encourage new projects and increase residential and business density. In addition, in 2016 the City established the [Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus \(NOB\) Program](#) that expanded the downtown zoning criteria west from Racine to Ashland Avenue/Ogden Avenue and north from Randolph Street to Carroll Avenue. The program also introduced a fee structure whereby developers can increase the floor area ratio of their projects after paying a fee based on the increased density.⁵ This program has already been applied on multiple West Loop developments. Under the plan, 10% of NOB funding is to be spent on improvements within 1 mile of the associated development project, as determined by the alderman with jurisdiction.

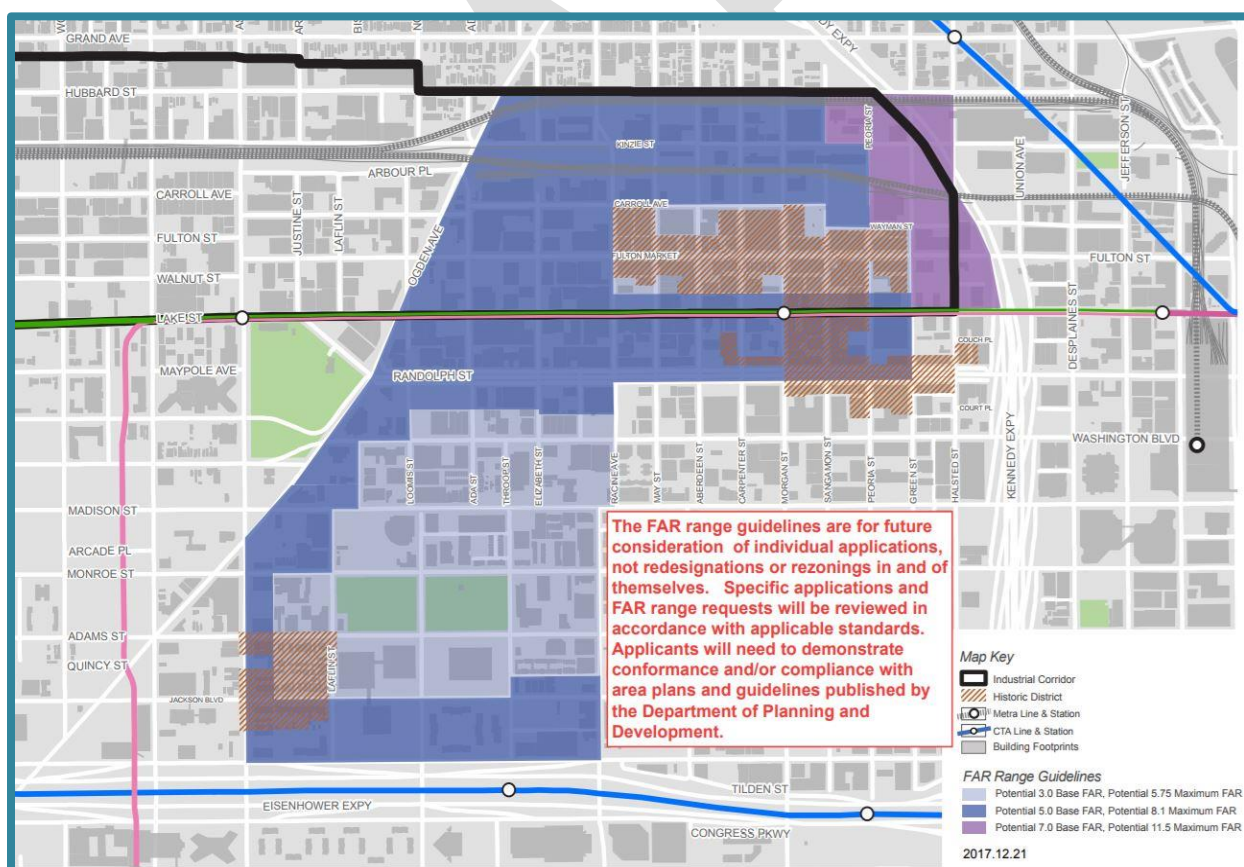


Figure 5 - Downtown Zoning Expansion Area (West), as amended on December 21, 2017

⁵ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/realigning-zoning-with-neighborhood-growth.html

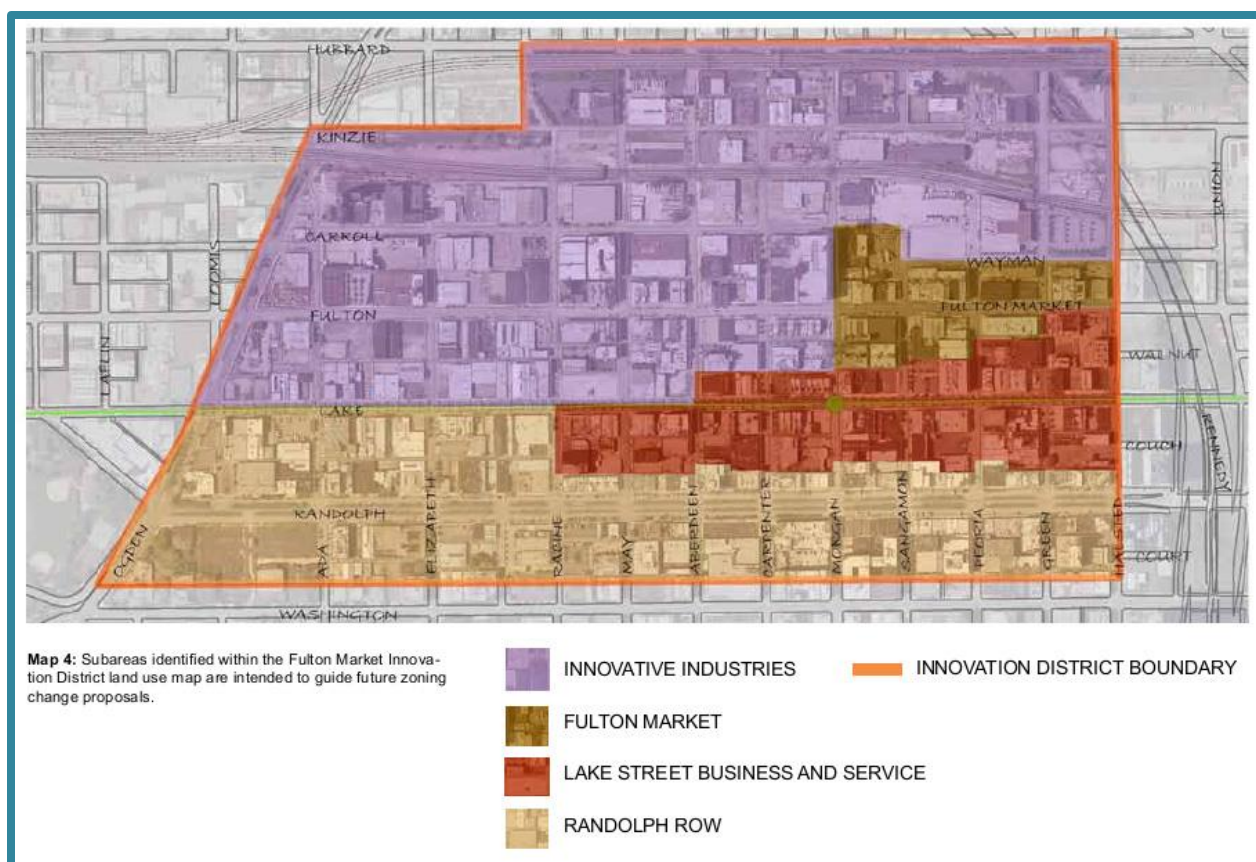


Figure 6 - Fulton Market Innovation District

The City also took the lead in helping to foster the transition from meat packing and food distribution to offices and nightlife through a land use planning process known as the [Fulton Market Innovation District](http://westloop.org/resources/files/Fulton%20Market%20Innovation%20District%20Plan.pdf) (FMID). This plan, established in 2014, is intended to “preserve existing jobs while accommodating private sector investments that reinforce the area’s expanding role as an innovation-driven employment center.” These goals are addressed through the definition of land use groupings that prescribe development guidelines like building height, the modification of the Kinzie Corridor Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) to support other business uses, the introduction of new infrastructure to support businesses, and the establishment of a historic district in Fulton Market.⁶

During a public meeting on August 24, 2017, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) put forth a proposal to repeal the portion of the Kinzie PMD from Ogden Avenue east to Halsted – a part of the area shown in under

⁶ <http://westloop.org/resources/files/Fulton%20Market%20Innovation%20District%20Plan.pdf>

Figure 7. This would cause this area to revert back to its prior zoning types, predominantly manufacturing, which could then be modified on a development-by-development basis (as is currently done across the West Loop today). The proposal was approved by the Chicago Plan Commission on October 19 and by the City Council in November, 2017.

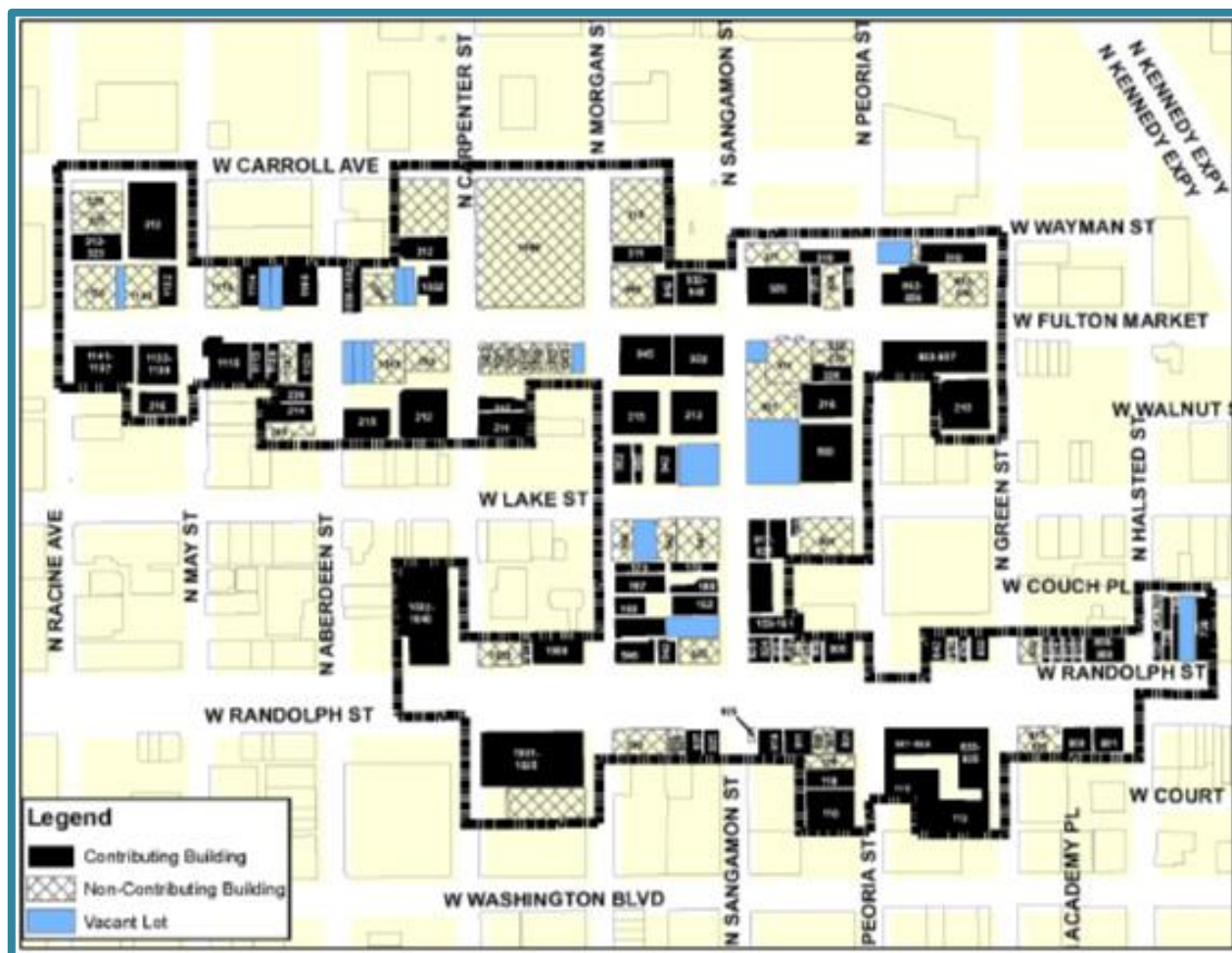


Figure 7 - Randolph & Fulton Market District

Established in May of 2015, the landmark designation of the [Fulton-Randolph Market District](https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/Fulton_Randolph_Market_Hist_Dist.html) was enacted in an effort to “recognize and preserve the historic significance and importance of the Fulton-Randolph Market District's historic streetscapes and buildings, as well as to qualify them for historic rehabilitation incentives.”⁷

⁷ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/Fulton_Randolph_Market_Hist_Dist.html

As a result of the landmark designation of the area shown in **Figure 7**, any building permit requests for the affected structures will undergo an additional evaluation against design criteria set forth by the City related to exterior building elevations, e.g., rooflines, which are visible to the public. These criteria are described in detail in the *Fulton-Randolph Market District Design Guidelines* (November 5, 2015), including instructions for the preservation, repair, and replacement of historically significant architectural building aspects, like masonry, windows, doors and grilles, storefronts, awnings and canopies, lighting, and signs. The guidelines also describe the manner in which new construction should be administered, specifically “contemporary design that does not imitate, but rather complements, existing architectural and environmental characteristics” of Fulton Market.

In 2017 the City DPD initiated a process to establish design guidelines for the West Loop. On April 22, the City DPD conducted an interactive visioning workshop with local residents to establish updated design standards for the West Loop. This meeting was followed by a presentation of initial findings on July 13, distribution of draft guidelines document on August 23, and a public meeting (without formal presentation) on August 31. The final [West Loop Design Guidelines](#) were adopted by the City Plan Commission on September 20 and distributed (along with a [checklist](#)) on October 9, 2017.



The guidelines are organized into five primary categories: general strategies; tall building design guidelines; site specific guidelines; public realm guidelines; and alley, parking, and service guidelines.⁸ In addition to providing design guidelines for new structures in the West Loop, the document also puts forth recommendations for infrastructure improvements along specific high-profile corridors in the neighborhood.

⁸ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/west-loop-design-guidelines.html

It is important to note that these guidelines do not replace elements of the previous plans developed for the West Loop. That said, the design guidelines do serve as a good starting point for developers as they formulate their West Loop projects. However, many of them are more subjective than objective, e.g., calling for “innovative” and “creative” design approaches that use “high quality materials” and “state of the art construction methods”. The guidelines also assume that tall buildings, parking podiums, and other elements that residents have spoken out against should be introduced into the neighborhood. This Neighborhood Plan will drill down further to identify the design elements that residents of the West Loop favor.

Also, in 2017, the City announced that it would implement a resident permit parking program that was originally developed in 2015. Co-sponsored by Aldermen Walter Burnett (27th Ward), Jason Ervin (28th Ward), and Danny Solis (25th Ward), the program will require vehicles parked in certain sections of the West Loop on weekdays between 7 and 9 a.m. to have a resident permit. Through online outreach efforts, Neighbors of West Loop canvassed the community to identify additional roadway sections in the area that would benefit from parking restrictions. These recommendations, discussed further herein, were then forwarded to the aldermen for consideration in the first or future implementations of the permit parking program, which is expected to begin this summer.

As the City has developed plans and guidelines for the future of the West Loop, residents have also taken the initiative to help shape the neighborhood.



Courtesy of Michael Lyons - 2018

Grass roots efforts have gained the attention and support of local aldermen to bring about the current expansion of the overcrowded Skinner West Elementary, plans for a new fieldhouse for Skinner Park, and the West Loop's very own branch of the Chicago Public Library. Community leaders continue to advocate for a neighborhood high school to support the growing number of students that reside in the West



Figure 8 - Skinner West Annex Groundbreaking (October 12, 2017)

Loop. This *Neighborhood Plan* supports these efforts due to the positive impact each will have on the quality of life for residents: stronger community services, increased property values, and the ability for residents to remain in the neighborhood as long as they desire.

VISION & PLAN OBJECTIVES

Vision for the Future

To preserve and enhance the high quality of life for residents and neighbors of the West Loop, allowing the neighborhood to remain a desirable place for residents to live, work, and play for decades to come.

Plan Objectives

- Promote **preservation, progress, and prosperity**.
- Create a **resident-driven plan** for the future of the West Loop.
- Provide **guidance** to the NoWL Development Committee, developers, city planners, and elected officials about the neighborhood in which the community wants to live.

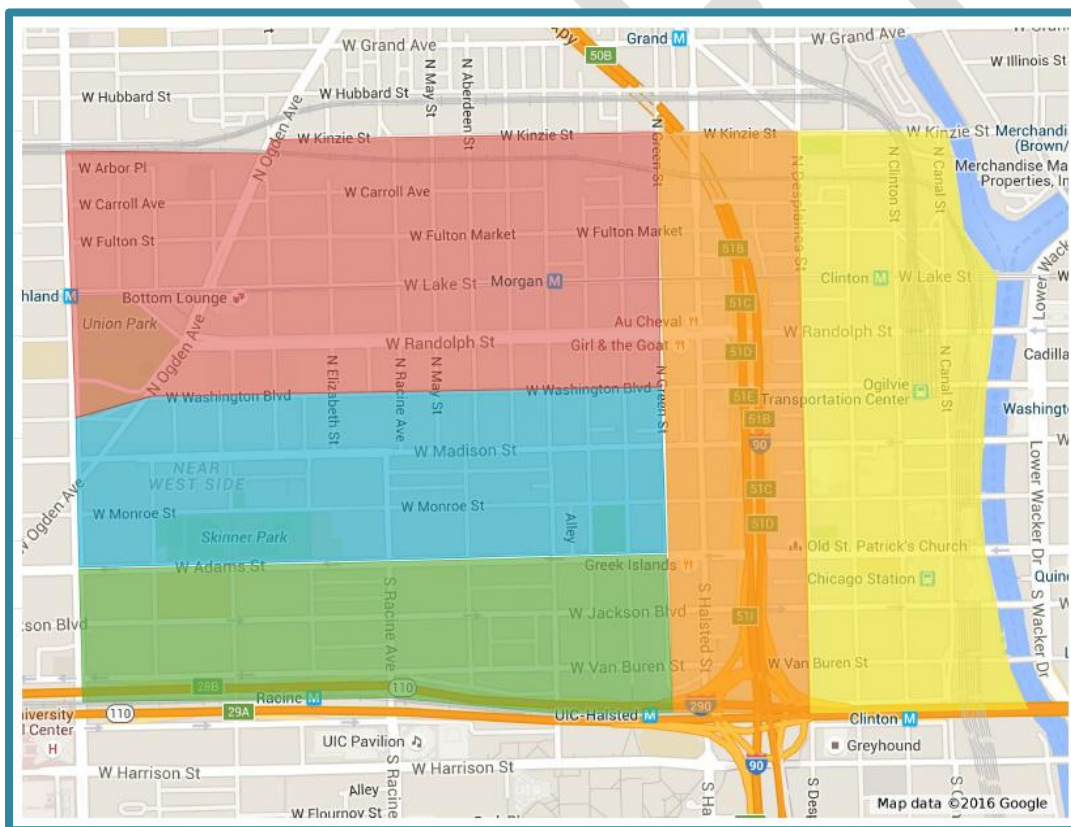


Figure 9 - Neighborhood Plan map showing study corridors



Many residents of the West Loop have lived here for decades, back when abandoned vehicles and empty lots dotted the area. Over the years they have seen the neighborhood transform into one of the most prosperous and fastest growing parts the city. With this rapid change, they have also seen some of the grit and edge that defined the neighborhood be swept away. While development provides undeniable benefit to the community, it must unfold in a balanced manner so that the fabric of the neighborhood is not lost, both for the long-time residents and the thousands of new residents that continue to arrive, drawn in by the history, the convenience, and the inviting feel of the neighborhood. This is the challenge that this Neighborhood Plan seeks to address.

While development provides undeniable benefit to the community, it must unfold in a balanced manner so that the fabric of the neighborhood is not lost, both for the long-time residents and the thousands of new residents that continue to arrive, drawn in by the history, the convenience, and the inviting feel of the neighborhood.

Outreach Effort

To gather this input, Neighbors of West Loop hosted a series of focus group meetings for each corridor shown in the Neighborhood Plan map. These meetings were designed to identify residents' priorities for the future of the neighborhood. The corridor focus group meetings were held:

- Madison Corridor: Monday, August 1, 2016 at 7 pm (Merit School of Music)
- Fulton Market Corridor: Tuesday, August 9, 2016 at 7 pm (1000 W. Washington, 5th Floor Community Room)
- Loop Corridor: Monday, August 15, 2016 at 7 pm (Jefferson Tap, 325 N. Jefferson)
- Jackson Corridor: Thursday, September 22, 2016 at 7 pm (Academy Square, 1st Floor Social Room, 318 S. Throop)

- Halsted-Kennedy Corridor: Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at 7 pm (Catalyst Ranch, 656 W. Randolph #3W)

In addition to residents, these meetings were attended by representatives of the West Loop Community Organization (WLCO), West Central Association (WCA), Greektown SSA, and local business owners and developers. Additionally, Neighbors of West Loop attended community



Figure 10 - Madison Street Corridor Focus Group Meeting

meetings for proposed developments, the presentation of WCA's study on land use and parking in the West Loop, an infrastructure improvement workshop hosted by WLCO, and the City's workshop and meetings for the *West Loop Design Guidelines*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to focus the discussion at the *Neighborhood Plan* group meetings, each was framed around six primary issues:

- Land use & development
- Traffic & parking
- Infrastructure
- Parks & green space
- Public safety

A summary of common themes from each is described below.

Development & Land Use

Prior studies have described the existing and proposed uses of land in the West Loop in great detail. In general, residents wish to see the entire area remain a desirable place to live. To promote this goal, the community envisions a cross-section of West Loop land uses similar to those in place today:



- Manufacturing and commercial projects to the northwest overlapping the Kinzie PMD
- A mix of commercial and residential developments in Fulton River District, Fulton Market District, Greektown, Restaurant Row, and West Loop Gate
- Primarily residential developments with supporting commercial uses west of Greektown and south of Restaurant Row

Above all, West Loop residents want the area to remain a true neighborhood. This will require that ***any future zoning changes - especially those in the areas that combine commercial and residential - are vetted to minimize or eliminate adverse impact on residents, either through modifications to the design, the payment of impact fees, or a combination thereof.***

During the *Neighborhood Plan* workshops, residents expressed concern for a lack of consistency in design standards in the West Loop. For example, many arrived to the neighborhood with an incorrect understanding that building heights west of Halsted were limited to 100 ft. By codifying and implementing development design standards, West Loop residents and developers will have a common understanding of the expectations and parameters under which new buildings can be constructed. The City's West Loop Design Guidelines have helped in this regard, but gaps remain. The following are the design guidelines desired by West Loop residents:

Development & Land Use Recommendations

- 1.1. **Design guidelines** set forth in the Jackson Boulevard Historic District, Fulton Market Landmark District, and *West Loop Design Guidelines* efforts **should be observed**, with any exceptions requiring approval by the community. In particular:
- Preserve and integrate existing historic buildings
 - Preserve and enhance street walls
 - Provide buffering of parking decks
 - Provide setbacks for taller structures
 - Use a stepped approach for building height (see 1.3 below)

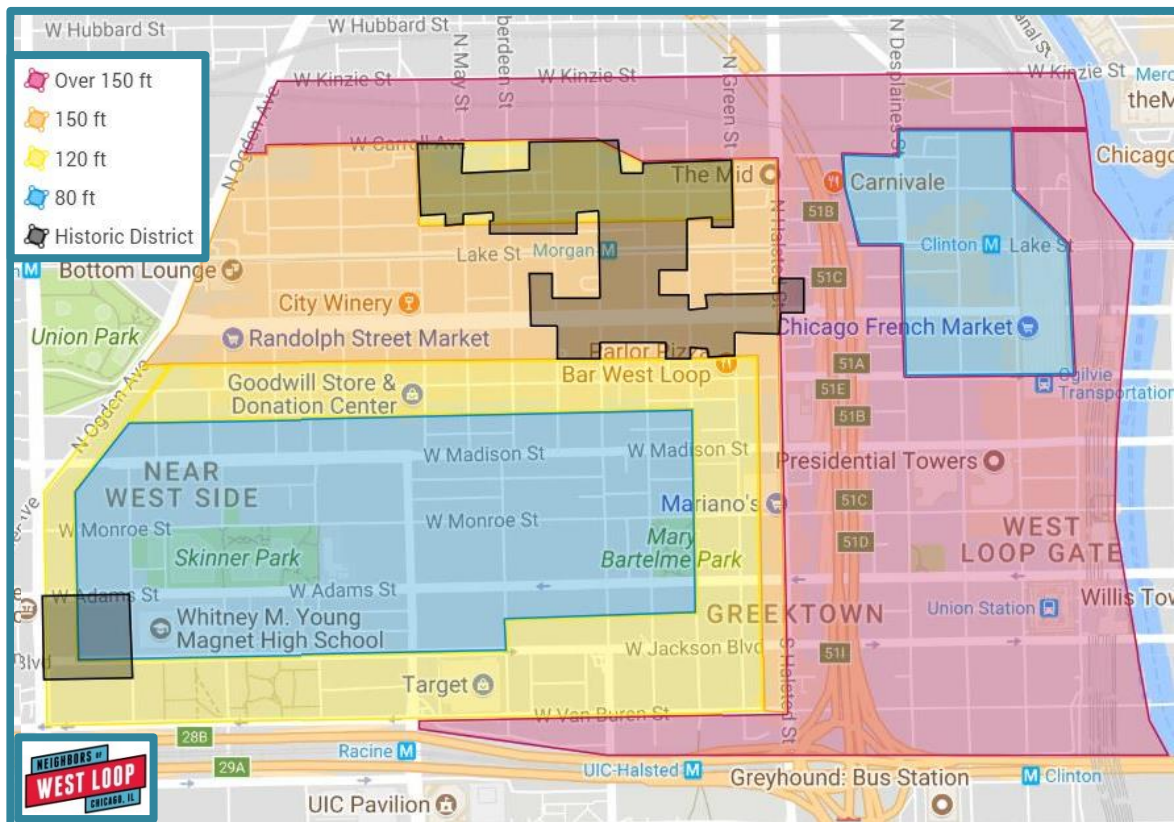


Figure 11 - Recommended New Building Maximum Height Map

Development & Land Use Recommendations (continued)

- 1.2. All new developments that require a zoning change should be designated as **Type 1** to require that any future proposed changes be brought to the community for evaluation.
- 1.3. Consistent with the [*Near West Side Area Land Use Plan*](#), heights for new buildings should be consistent with – i.e., no more than 25% taller in height than – existing (pre-2015) structures within one (1) block.
- 1.4. High-rise buildings (150+ ft in height) should be limited to areas along the expressways (east of Halsted and south of Van Buren), along the railroad tracks in Fulton Market (between Wayman/Carroll and Kinzie), and east of the freeway in the 42nd Ward. Setbacks should be used to limit the imposition of taller structures along these routes.



Development & Land Use Recommendations (continued)

- 1.5. West of Halsted, **taller buildings (120-150 ft in height) should be confined to wider thoroughfares**, specifically Halsted, Ashland, Ogden, Washington, Randolph, and Lake Streets. Setbacks should be used to limit the imposition of taller structures on these routes.
- 1.6. **Retail spaces that cater to neighborhood residents** should be provided on the ground level of new developments. **Sidewalks around new buildings should be at least 8 feet wide.**
- 1.7. Developers should **observe the architectural style of historic West Loop structures while introducing new design elements** to create a unique style for the future of the neighborhood.
- 1.8. Developers should provide **alleyways that are at least 18 feet wide**, consistent with City requirements.
- 1.9. New structures should seek **LEED certification and apply green technologies.**
- 1.10. New developments should **meet City requirements for affordable housing on-site.**
- 1.11. Developments should include **open space for public use, public art installations, and other elements that create a safer and inviting space around the building** (see 4.4 and 5.1.d below).
- 1.12. New residential buildings should provide a **parking space-to-unit ratio of at least 0.65:1 for apartment buildings and 1.0:1 for condominiums** (values based on observed residential parking rates in West Loop buildings.). Any buildings with parking levels below these values should be exempt from the future permit parking program (see 3.8 below).
- 1.13. Buildings should **provide off-street drop-off areas** while preserving sidewalk width to account for taxi and transportation network company (TNC, e.g., Uber) use.
- 1.14. **Above-ground parking should be applied against building floor area ratio (FAR)** to encourage underground parking.
- 1.15. **The community should continue to play a role in the assignment of Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus funds** through an open process.

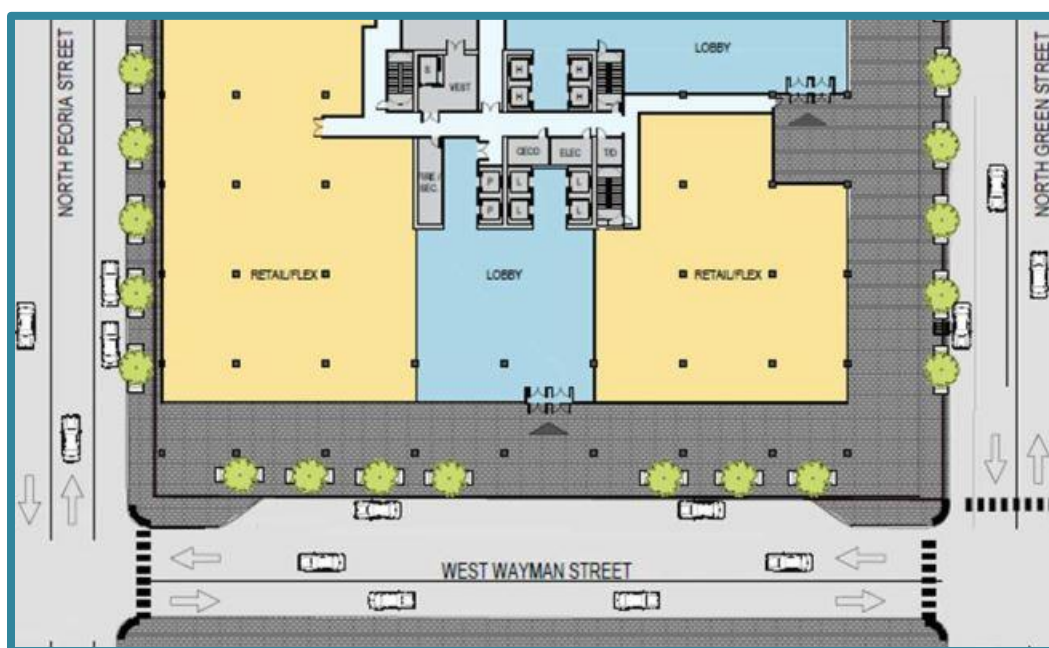


Figure 12 - Site Plan Showing Off-street Pull-out (from Sterling Bay Co.)

Traffic & Parking

Traffic

As the resident and employee population of the neighborhood continues to grow, the demand on the transportation network has increased considerably. Travel times within and across the West Loop have been adversely impacted by construction zones, more frequent deliveries, and simply more vehicles. These factors have also exposed transportation challenges that were previously known to those that lived nearby, e.g., poor sightlines on Lake Street, capacity issues on the #20 Madison bus line, limited roadway width on Racine Street north of Lake Street, pedestrian crossing safety issues on Randolph and Madison Street. The following are recommendations to address some of these issues:



Traffic Recommendations

- 2.1. A **neighborhood-wide traffic study** is needed to highlight problem areas and recommend capacity, traffic control, and traffic signal timing improvements. Ideally this would include a traffic model for the area that could be updated as new development projects are proposed so their true macroscopic impact can be determined, as opposed to localized traffic studies that do not consider cumulative effects.
- 2.2. **Improvements to the safety of pedestrian facilities** should be provided near parks, schools freeway access points, and along routes that see high vehicular and foot traffic, especially Madison, Washington, Randolph, Lake, and Ogden Streets. This should include measures that promote pedestrian and cyclist safety, such as corner bump-outs on Madison as proposed in the *West Loop Design Guidelines*.
- 2.3. As proposed in WCA's [parking and land use plan](#), residents support the idea of a **Metra stop near Ashland Avenue** and want **shuttle buses to operate between Union and Ogilvie stations** to support the increasing number of commuters headed to West Loop employment centers like Google and McDonald's*.
- 2.4. The following transit improvement recommendations are intended to manage commuters headed from the West Loop to the central business district:
 - a. **Increased CTA bus and train service** on the #20 Madison and #126 Jackson lines
 - b. **Reintroduction of the X20 express bus on Washington.**
 - c. **A new north-south bus route** within the West Loop that provides a connection to the Morgan L station.
 - d. **Extension of the Morgan L stop platforms**
 - e. **All bus stops should have shelters where space is available (new development projects should account for this concept)**
- 2.5. One or more **contiguous bike lanes** be installed to/from the West Loop to those on Washington (inbound) and Randolph (outbound) are recommended. Lake Street is not a desired bike lane route.

* McDonald's has initiated an employee shuttle between its new headquarters building and nearby train stations.



Figure 13 - Concept for Improved Pedestrian Features along Madison (from the City of Chicago West Loop Design Guidelines)

Parking

Once abundant, parking capacity across the West Loop has become scarce, especially in residential areas. As detailed in WCA's plan, this is predominantly due to the manner in which parking is controlled. Most street parking in the area is free, with a limited number of permit and "buffer" spaces that are only available to nearby residents and their guests. As previously described, the City is about to implement a resident parking permit program along a handful of north-south, mostly residential streets. The permits would be required between the hours of 7 and 9 am, which would limit parking options for suburban commuters, or "daytrippers", that park in the West Loop and use transit to complete their commute further downtown. With this program in mind, the community offers the following resident-driven recommendations:



Parking Recommendations

- 3.1. **Expand the resident permit parking program geographically**, initially to those routes highlighted in gold in Figure 14 and then to remaining West Loop residential streets that currently have free parking.
- 3.2. The program should include the ability for residents to obtain **temporary guest parking permits**.
- 3.3. Wherever the program is applied near businesses, the City should allow the **businesses to obtain parking permits**.
- 3.4. The City should **diligently enforce the resident permit parking program and consider extending it to the hours of 4 to 6 pm** (in addition to the proposed 7-9 am timeframe) to preserve parking capacity for residents on their evening commutes.
- 3.5. **Loading zones should be provided** for businesses that have frequent drop-offs/pick-ups, e.g., along Green Street north of Washington.
- 3.6. Private parking lots should be invited to offer **shared parking**, whereby commuters to the West Loop can pay to park during working hours and residents and West Loop visitors and valet services can reserve the parking spaces in the evenings, overnight, and on weekends.
- 3.7. Additional consideration should be made to **provide parking for suburban commuters** displaced by the West Loop resident permit parking program, e.g., United Center parking lots and business- or building-funded shuttles.
- 3.8. Developers of Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) should sign an agreement similar to other neighborhoods where their residents will **not be able to participate in permit parking** (see 1.12 above). Residents from TOD developments may still purchase visitor permit parking stickers.

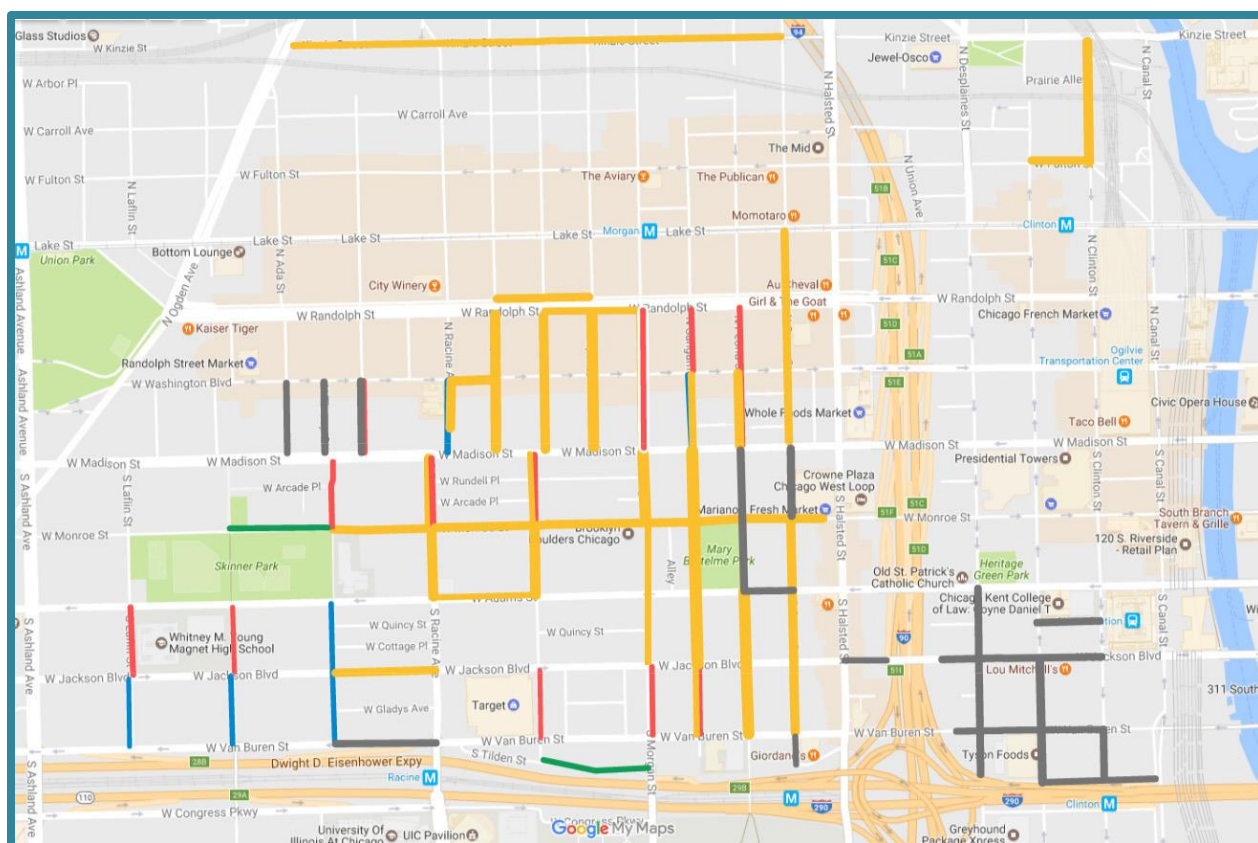


Figure 14– Proposed West Loop Permit Parking Program Routes (community-suggested additions in gold)

Infrastructure

The West Loop Community Organization held a workshop on February 16, 2017, to gather input from the community about needed infrastructure improvements around the neighborhood. NoWL supported this effort with an online survey that garnered feedback from residents. A similar event focused on potential uses of Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus dollars was held on November 28, 2017. The following list includes data gathered through these efforts and the *Neighborhood Plan* workshops.



Infrastructure Recommendations

- 4.1. Infrastructure **repairs should be made in a more timely fashion**, commensurate with other areas that are classified as downtown zoning districts. This includes broken sidewalks and ADA pedestrian crossing pads that create a safety hazard.
- 4.2. West Loop residents want more **infrastructure amenities like trash/recycling cans** (e.g., solar powered) on street corners at the same density as other areas zoned as "downtown".
- 4.3. **Street lighting should be improved in poorly-lit areas both by the City and by developers through the installation of exterior lighting on their buildings**, e.g., near Skinner West Elementary, along Lake Street (see 6.3 below).
- 4.4. **Public art projects should be encouraged** (see 1.11 above).
- 4.5. The City should provide **more consistent upkeep and more regular planting and trimming of trees**.
- 4.6. Residents in the West Loop are divided on the draft *West Loop Design Guidelines* recommendation to remove planters along Madison Street. **Existing planter installations should be removed near intersections to support corner pedestrian bump-outs but retained in mid-block locations** to optimize safety, roadway capacity, and aesthetics.

Parks & Green Space

Public open space and facilities for sport, recreation, and passive natural areas directly support the quality of life in the West Loop. They are an important element and driver to the community's health and wellness. When new development occurs it is

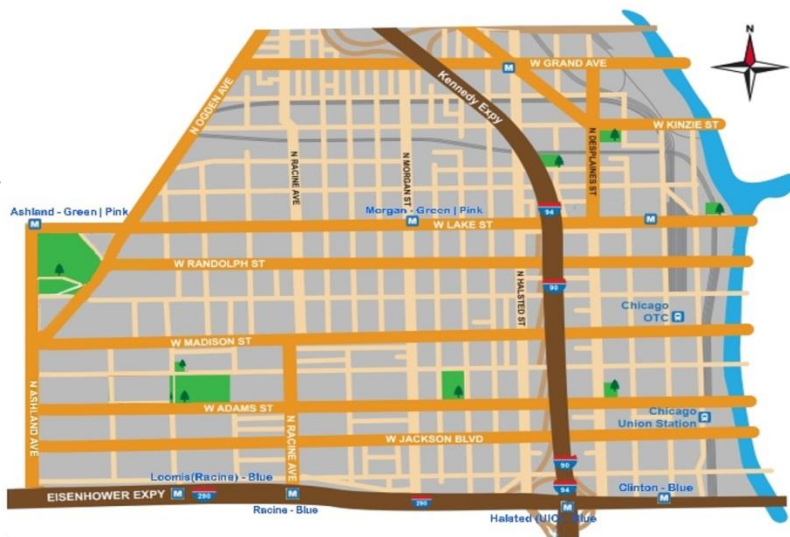


Figure 15 - Map of West Loop Green Space

important that sufficient open space in each of the above categories are created to meet the needs arising from the new development; to ensure that opportunities for play, relaxation and enjoyment are provided as well as providing green spaces for nature and even to allow new developments to “breathe”.

Open space is an important element of sustainable development and can motivate people to walk and cycle as well as providing connections for building community and to other areas. It is important that open space be included within an overall master/strategic plan and not seen as last minutes add-ons.

The West Loop has different types of green space and open space with varying degrees of public access:

- Publicly owned: Chicago Park District Parks
 - Skinner Park and the Skinner dog friendly area (DFA) are heavily used by residents as well as many public and private schools located in the West Loop. This Plan includes several recommendations developed by the Skinner Park Advisory Council (SPAC), the advocacy group that raises funds for park events and improvements. These recommendations are based on input from residents at corridor meetings and other community meetings.



- Located on the southeast corner of Desplaines and Kinzie, Fulton River Park (aka Park No. 551) was built in 2008. The park includes a playground, DFA, and sloping green space that often floods in wet weather.
- Heritage Green Park is located on the northwest corner of Adams and Desplaines across from Old St. Pat's Church. This park is a popular spot for dogs, however it does not have a dedicated dog friendly area.
- Built in 2010, Mary Bartelme Park is the newest park in the West Loop. The park has active park advisory council that advocates for the park and raises funds for park events and improvements.
- Union Park is the largest park in NoWL's boundaries. The park hosts several large scale concert festivals each year. Residents expressed that Union Park is underutilized by the community for several reasons.
- City of Chicago Parks & Community Gardens (e.g., Trio, Riverpoint, Loomis St. Gardens)
- Other Open Space: Chicago Public School (CPS) owned green space, sports fields/courts, and playgrounds at Whitney Young High School and Skinner West Main Building, Preschool & Kindergarten Branch (there is limited public access to most CPS facilities which are also privatized for for-profit uses) and privately-owned green space that is open to the community.

Despite the variety and number of green spaces, the West Loop is significantly under-served by public open space based on minimum standards set by the City of Chicago (2 acres / 1,000 residents) and national standards (10 acres/1,000 residents). Currently, there is only 12.2 acres of public open space in the West Loop. Using 2010 census statistics, the West Loop is short 30+ acres in open space (75% deficit). Union Park is not considered to be in the West Loop by the City of Chicago but residents considered it within the West Loop neighborhood due to its proximity. Even with the annexation of Union Park, the West Loop is still short more than 20 acres of open space based on the 2010 population (see Appendix D, Section 2 – Open Space Analysis).

In addition, developers and City of Chicago need to address the need for dog parks in a more comprehensive way. There is a general misconception that DFAs



are places for dogs to relieve themselves. Small dog runs in developments and small parks do not meet the needs of this significant segment of the community who are dog owners. Poorly designed and sized facilities lead to conflicts within the whole community especially considering the green/open space deficit.

The following is a summary of recommendations for improvements to parks and green space. Recommendations are broken out by strategic vision and goals to address the critical open space deficit that grows with each new development and more immediate short term goals to address current improvements needed for existing green space:

Parks & Green Space Recommendations

- 5.1. Develop a strategic plan to address the West Loop's green space deficit.
 - a. **Develop a holistic strategic plan to address the deficit of public green/open space in the West Loop** especially in the subareas of Fulton Market, West Loop Gate, and Fulton River.
 - b. First proposed in the 2003 Central Area Action Plan, **CAP the Kennedy** should be made a priority. This is an elegant solution to address the open space deficit in a substantial and meaningful way. Public funding sources and private donations (including by developers that will benefit financially from the project) should be gathered to make the project a reality.
 - c. **Increase the open space impact fees structure for the West Loop;** the current fee structure is insufficient to meet the open space needs of the West Loop especially given the skyrocketing cost of land acquisition.
 - d. **Reprioritize the use of CPS facilities,** e.g., green space, gymnasiums, pools, for public access vs. private programs.



Figure 16 - Klyde Warren Park over the Woodall Rodgers Freeway - completed 2012, Dallas TX

Parks & Green Space Recommendations

- e. New development projects should include **ground-level public green space**, e.g., pocket parks at corners - especially larger projects (see 1.11 above). The minimum size to these pocket parks should be 3,500 sq ft and should increase proportionally relative to the size of the building/development.
 - f. **Expand existing parks**, acquiring land where necessary.
- 5.2. Ensure that parks, park facilities, and green spaces meet the needs of ALL residents.
- a. **Better manage use of existing parks** to ensure all residents have quality access.
 - b. Coordination should take place to **limit permit types issued** for each park so the community has access during quality times.
 - c. Concert promoters, City officials, the Park District, and residents should continue to **coordinate ahead of major concerts/festivals at Union Park** to minimize adverse impacts on residents.
 - d. Parks should be **monitored to curb illegal usage**, e.g., unauthorized parties and gatherings.



Parks & Green Space Recommendations

- e. Develop a **plan to help address the conflicts between some dog owners and other park users** over the sharing of the green space at Bartelme and Fulton River Parks.
 - f. **Redesign existing parks with improved facilities** to better meet community needs.
- 5.3. Provide more dog friendly areas (DFAs).
- a. **Build quality and larger dog friendly areas** that are designed to meet the needs of dog owners to resolve some of the conflicts of sharing common green space and parks in the West Loop.
 - b. **Developers should fund the development & upkeep of large public DFAs near their projects** that will benefit the residents and users of their properties as well as the larger community, including progressive companies in the neighborhood that allow employees to bring dogs to work.
 - c. **DFAs should have small & large dog areas.**
- 5.4. Park-specific recommendations: Union Park (27th Ward)
- a. As identified in the Near West Plan, **pedestrian access to Union Park should be improved**, in particular from the east.
 - b. The Union Park outdoor **swimming pool should be improved** and better promoted to attract more residential use.
 - c. Recommendations for **ongoing improvement** from the Union Park Advisory Council should be taken into consideration to better activate Union Park in the future.
 - d. Ensure that more **music festival revenue is retained for improvements** at Union Park.
- 5.5. Park-specific recommendations: Skinner Park (27th Ward)
- a. **Build a new fieldhouse** with an indoor community pool to replace the 1950s era fieldhouse which is outdated and undersized to serve the community.



Parks & Green Space Recommendations

- b. **Expand Skinner Park's green space** to meet the green/open space needs of the growing residential community as well as the 4,000+ students from nearby public and private schools who rely on Skinner Park for recreational and sports fields.
 - c. **Retain usage of the Whitney Young High School pool and gym by the Chicago Park District** for lifeguard training & testing, city wide programs and events like swim meets, and additional programs.
 - d. **Expand the vegetable community garden in Skinner Park** which has a long waiting list.
 - e. **Develop a public DFA for small dogs** to complement the current DFA near Skinner Park. Opportunities exist with new developments near Skinner Park especially in the 28th Ward.
- 5.6. Park-specific recommendations: Fulton River Park & Heritage Green Park (42nd Ward)
- a. **Park advisory councils** should be developed for Heritage Green and Fulton River Parks to advocate and identify needs for programs and events, maintenance and repairs, and capital improvement projects to better serve nearby residents.
 - b. **Develop a plan/redesign of the parks** to balance the sharing of park space to resolve current conflicts with some dog owners and to better serve all park users, e.g., a dog friendly area (DFA) at Heritage Green Park, redesigning Fulton River Park to better serve the community.
 - c. **Create community gardens in Heritage Green Park and Fulton River Parks.**



Public Safety

Though the West Loop is considered one of the safest neighborhoods in Chicago based on metrics gathered over the last few years, a recent spike in property and violent crime has highlighted areas where public safety needs improvement. Residents have provided a number of suggestions to keep the community safe:

Public Safety Recommendations

- 6.1. **Participation in the CAPS Program should be encouraged, possibly through consolidated CAPS meetings and better promotion.**
- 6.2. **Neighborhood watch programs and other grass roots public safety initiatives should be started.**
- 6.3. **Street lighting should be improved in poorly-lit areas both by the City and by developers through the installation of exterior lighting on their buildings, e.g., near Skinner West Elementary, along Lake Street (see 4.3 above).**
- 6.4. **Safety improvements to pedestrian facilities** should be made, including measures that promote pedestrian safety through increased visibility, especially at night.
- 6.5. **CPD should continue to increase the number of police officers and patrols assigned across the West Loop.***
- 6.6. **The Chicago Police Department (CPD) 12th District should be split into two districts** with a new station located within the West Loop.
- 6.7. Business owners and residents should install camera systems that support the **sharing of security camera footage with the police and Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC).****

* CPD announced new officers for the neighborhood during a news conference for the District 12 Decision Support Center on March 4, 2018.

** OEMC recently announced the [Private Sector Camera Initiative](#).



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The West Loop has grown from its gritty past to become an economic driver for the City of Chicago. Revenues collected from development fees, property taxes, and the commerce that takes place in the neighborhood leads to prosperity for all Chicagoans. The recommendations defined in this document will help to nurture prosperity for both the city and the West Loop, while preserving the neighborhood's history as it progresses further into the 21st Century.

"Success follows those adept at preserving the substance of the past by clothing it in the forms of the future."

— Dee Ward Hock

As demonstrated in the numerous references to other organizations and studies, implementation of these improvements will require cooperation and coordination amongst City government (including the Department of Planning & Development, the Department of Transportation, the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Park District, and the Mayor's Office), the West Loop Community Organization, the West Central Association, park advisory councils, and other resident and business groups.

Neighbors of West Loop will use this plan as guidance for the comments that we provide to developers on their projects, the positions that we take in letters to local aldermen about development, and the neighborhood improvements for which we advocate at every opportunity. We will take these steps to achieve the vision contained herein:

To preserve and enhance the high quality of life for residents and neighbors of the West Loop, allowing the neighborhood to remain a desirable place for residents to live, work, and play for decades to come.

APPENDIX A

HISTORY OF THE WEST LOOP

History of the West Loop

First settlements – From its earliest days, the West Loop has been an area of contrast. In the mid-1800s, while Chicago's poor were erecting shanties on the prairie land west of the river, nearby some of the wealthiest families in Chicago lived in large homes near Union Park and along Washington Boulevard, Jackson Boulevard, and Ashland Avenue.⁹

Randolph-Fulton Market – Strategically positioned as the hub of waterway and rail commerce for the Midwest and beyond, Chicago has long been an economic powerhouse. Much of this success traces back to the agricultural processing and distribution systems that were defined by its famous historic markets. The Fulton-Randolph Market is the oldest and last of the great Chicago wholesale markets, which included the Union Stockyards and the Maxwell Street Market. The Fulton-Randolph Market took shape in 1850 when the Town of Chicago erected the Randolph Street Market Hall at Randolph and Desplaines. While Randolph Street focused on produce, Fulton Market Street two blocks to the north housed much of the city's meatpacking industry. The markets expanded westward, eventually reaching Ogden as wholesalers displaced from other downtown markets joined the area. The busy markets also drew other businesses – first those associated with the markets, like bakeries and barrel makers, then unrelated businesses like furniture makers and foundries that introduced manufacturing to the West Loop. Many of the historic warehouses, commission

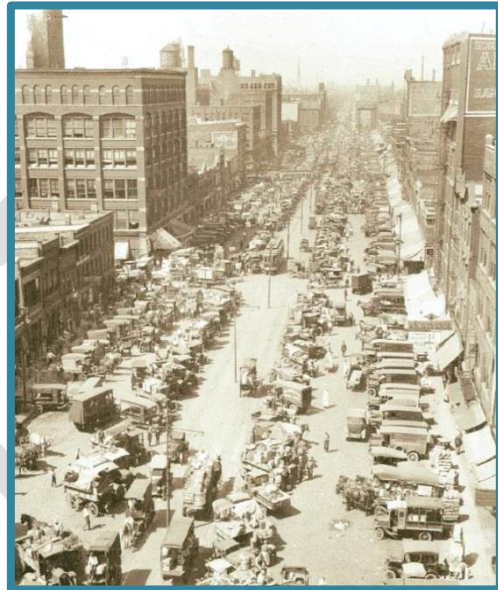


Figure 17 - Randolph-Fulton Market

⁹ <http://westloop.org/about/history/>

houses, and meatpacking buildings that still line these streets were built to support the bustling Nineteenth Century market.¹⁰

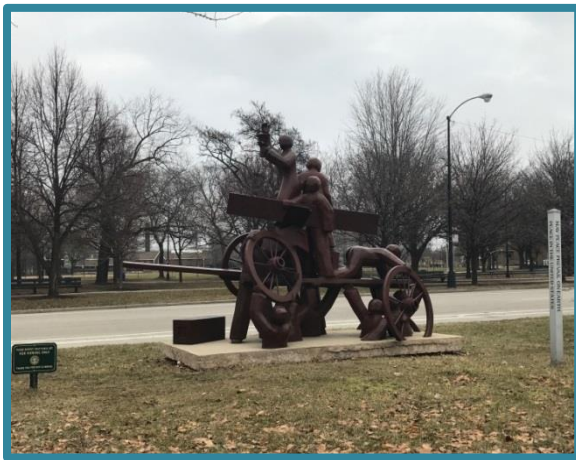


Figure 18 - Haymarket Riot Memorial

Haymarket Square Riot – As the industrial revolution took hold in Chicago, labor unions gained strength as they worked to improve conditions for workers. In an effort to reduce their work day to eight hours, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions staged a strike on May Day, 1886. After an altercation between police and the strikers led to the death on the third day of the strike, a rally was staged at Haymarket Square (in present

day West Loop) to protest police brutality. The ensuing riot led to four more deaths and subsequent trials, but also served as a rallying cry for the eight-hour work day movement.¹¹ Though the Kennedy Expressway cut through Haymarket Square, a memorial statue now sits just north of Randolph Street on the east side of Desplaines Street.

Plan of Chicago – The area held an important position in Danial Burnham's 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, with the intersection of Congress and Halsted set aside as a municipal center for the city including a domed civic center building that would tower over the city.

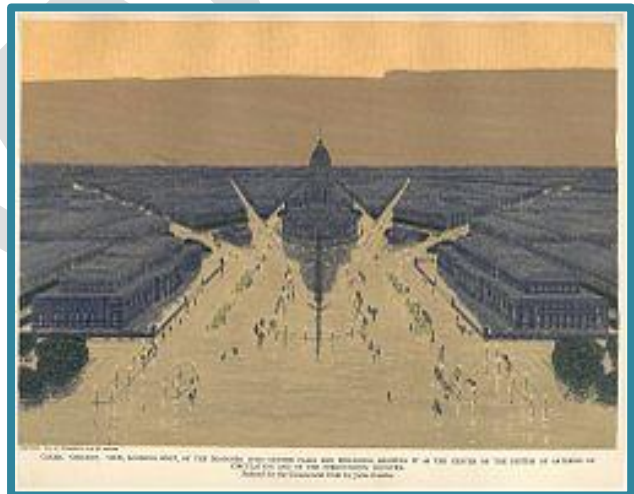


Figure 19 - Civic Center Plaza from 1909 Plan of Chicago

Skid Row – As the Great Depression set in, the area's economic activity ground to a halt, with many warehouses being abandoned. The introduction of Interstate

¹⁰

https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Historic_Preservation/Publications/Fulton_Randolph_Market_District_Prelim_Sum.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.illinoislaborhistory.org/the-haymarket-affair/>



90 (later named the Kennedy Expressway) between Jefferson and Halsted and Interstate 290 (Eisenhower Expressway) in place of Congress Parkway west of Halsted in the 1950s and 60s splintered existing West Side neighborhoods.¹² Crime rates increased through the 1960s and the area came to be known as Skid Row, “a stretch that into the '70s was notorious...where flophouses charged 80 cents a night for a cot and where missions competed with saloons for the souls of the men who milled around the streets.”¹³



Harpo Studios – In 1988, a team of investors including Oprah Winfrey purchased a former cold storage warehouse at 1058 W. Washington Blvd. and established the building as the headquarters for Harpo Studios.¹⁴ Starting in 1989, the Oprah Winfrey Show was filmed at this location, shining a spotlight on the West Loop. As of the most popular shows on

television, the Oprah Show drew thousands of visitors each year, in addition to its 200 employees.¹⁵ The resulting economic impact to the West Loop is still felt today.

Restaurant Row – After Oprah established her anchor in the West Loop, a series of successful restaurants were soon to follow. Italian mainstay Vivo (recently closed¹⁶) was the first to arrive in 1991 (coincidentally the year the Bulls began winning championships), followed by Marché (now Nellcôte), Red Light (now Little Goat), and Blue Point Oyster Bar (now Haymarket Pub & Brewery), followed by One Sixtyblue (now BellyQ), Blackbird, and Avec. These restaurants formed

¹² <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/878.html>

¹³ http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1996-08-21/news/1996234102_1_chicago-river-chicago-life-madison-street

¹⁴ <http://www.chicagoarchitecture.info/Building/1342756910/Harpo-Studios.php>

¹⁵ <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/2693.html>

¹⁶ <http://chicago.eater.com/2016/7/1/12079930/vivo-west-loop-closing-amk-replacing>

what has become known internationally as the Randolph Street “Restaurant Row”.¹⁷

1996 Democratic Convention – The rejuvenation of the West Loop continued as the City made major infrastructure investments in the area ahead of the 1996 Democratic National Convention at the United Center. However, the West Loop still struggled to find its identity as the 21st Century approached.

Post-recession development – The West Loop emerged from the Great Recession of the mid-2000s as one of the hottest development markets in Chicago. Between 2008 and 2016, over 4,100 residential units were built in the neighborhood, with thousands more planned.¹⁸ Led by Sterling Bay, Shapack Partners, R^2 Companies, Michigan Avenue Real Estate, and others, the development boom is showing little sign of slowing down.

Many factors combined to spur this growth, including the convenience associated with living blocks from major employment sites downtown and a societal shift towards the urban lifestyle. Restaurant Row on Randolph, popular art galleries along Washington Boulevard, and nightclubs in

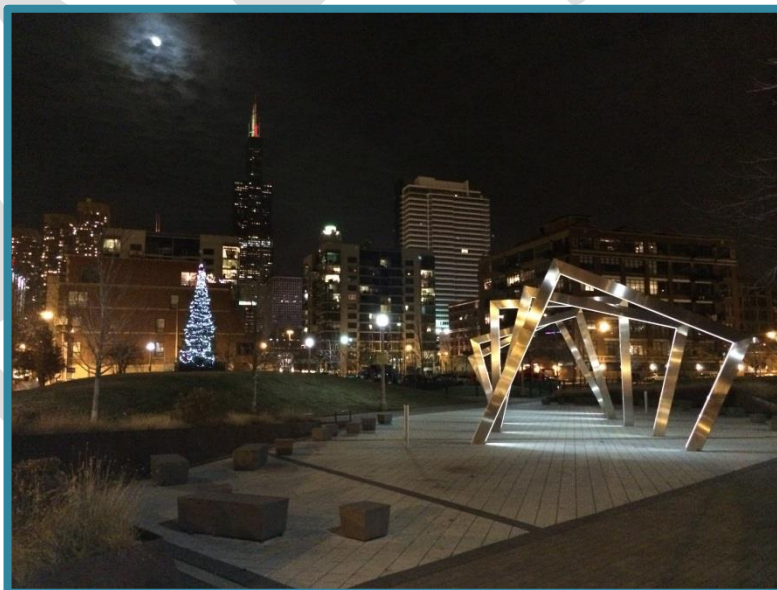


Figure 20 - Mary Bartelme Park

Fulton Market also add to the energy of the community. In addition, strategic developments have made the West Loop a particularly attractive place to live and play, especially the 2009 reopening of

¹⁷ <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/May-2012/Best-New-Restaurants-2012-How-Randolph-Street-Became-a-Foodie-Destination/>

¹⁸ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/realestate/ct-booming-west-loop-re-0911-20160908-story.html>



Mark T. Skinner West Elementary (recently rated by Chicago Magazine as the top public school in the city¹⁹) and the dedication of Mary Bartelme Park in 2010.

Residential growth in the West Loop over the last ten years has been matched by the explosion of new businesses that have planted roots in the community. This has added more convenience for residents and made the neighborhood a hub for employers, led by Google, Boeing, Uber, Motorola, and United Airlines. The announcement of McDonald's decision to relocate their global headquarters from Oak Brook to the former site of Harpo Studios by 2018 has signaled a sea change for the West Loop.²⁰ In addition to being the most visible example of the corporate migration from the Chicago suburbs to downtown²¹, it has already led to developers to plan for a McDonald's "vendor village" of developments for businesses associated with the fast food giant. As with Harpo Studios a generation earlier, the West Loop may feel the effects of McDonald's arrival for decades to come.

The things that make the West Loop a great place to live and work also make it a top destination for tourists. World-class restaurants line our streets, including Michelin star-rated Oriole, Blackbird, Roister, Sepia, and Smyth²² and other citywide favorites like Au Cheval, Avec, Girl & the Goat, Greek, Islands, Lena Brava, Monteverde, and Next. After many years with the Crowne Plaza as the only large hotel in the West Loop, Soho House opened in 2014 and has become a gathering place for networking and collaboration amongst those in the creative fields.²³ The success of Soho House, combined with the huge growth of businesses of all sizes, has led to a sharp increase in the number of planned West Loop hotels, with more than 850 rooms scheduled for delivery in the next eighteen months.

¹⁹ <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/September-2016/Best-Public-Schools/Chicago/>

²⁰ <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20160601/west-loop/mcdonalds-plans-move-headquarters-old-harpo-studios-lot-report>

²¹ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-company-moves-suburbs-to-city-20160615-htmlstory.html>

²² <http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20161102/BLOGS09/161109973/26-chicago-restaurants-awarded-michelin-stars>

²³ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-soho-house-0810-biz-20140810-story.html>



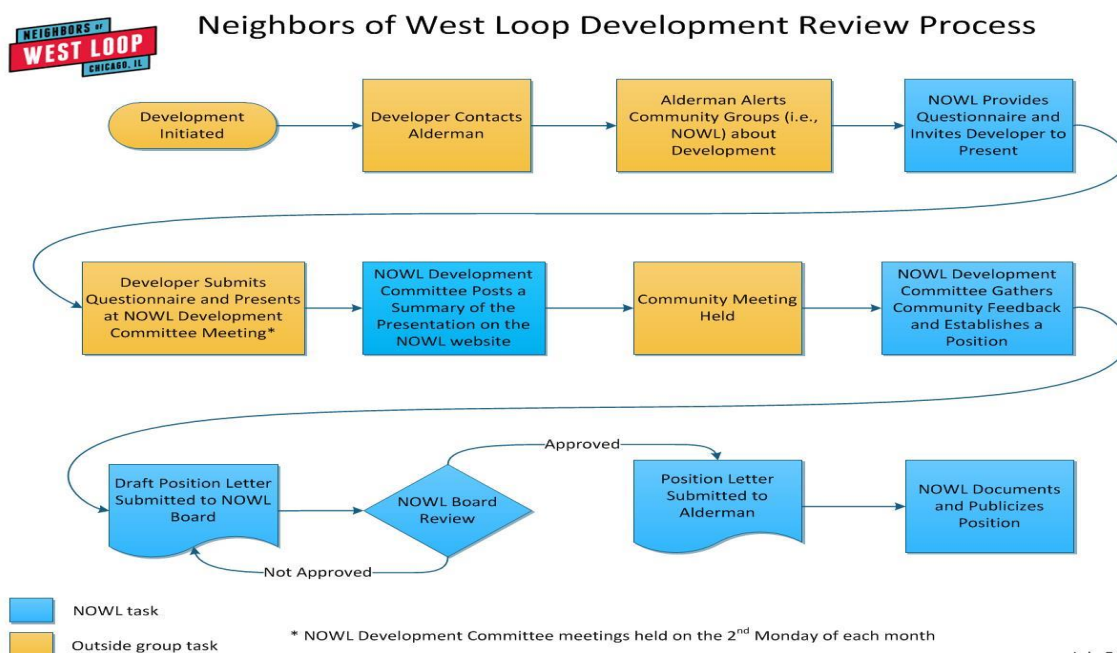
APPENDIX B

NEIGHBORS OF WEST LOOP DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The NoWL Development Committee strives to engage West Loop residents in the development process, to keep them informed about potential changes to our neighborhood, and to give them a voice in decisions affecting the West Loop of tomorrow.

We do this in several ways. First, working with the Communications Committee, we publicize West Loop developments through social media and at our events. We also host monthly Development Committee meetings, which are open to members of our committee. At these meetings, developers present their projects, providing answers to the committee's questions and considering modifications based on our feedback. Representatives of the NoWL Development Committee attend community meetings on specific developments to gather opinions from residents. Through these steps, we are able to compile a comprehensive understanding of the community's views on a given development, which informs our position letters to the aldermen.

You can learn more about the NoWL Development Committee at <http://neighborsofwestloop.com/committees/development/>.





APPENDIX C

CURRENT STATE OF GREEN/OPEN SPACE IN THE WEST LOOP

1. Publicly Owned Open Space

A. Chicago Park District Parks

There are six public parks owned by the Chicago Park District in the West Loop. Union Park is the largest at 3.4 acres and located on the Western edge of the West Loop. Union Park is not considered to be in the West Loop by the City of Chicago but residents considered it part of the West Loop neighborhood due to its proximity. Even with the annexation of Union Park, the West Loop is still short 20+ acres in open space based on the 2010 population. Union Park was recently improved with a new playground and new fieldhouse windows.

Skinner Park (5 acres) comprises of 1 square block and is bounded by Throop, Loomis, Adams, and Monroe and like Union Park is located on the Western part of the neighborhood. Skinner's playground and athletic fields currently support the recreational and athletic needs of not just residents but over 4,000+ students from private schools and the two adjacent public schools: Skinner West Elementary and Whitney Young High School. Recent improvements include a large playground, community ornamental and vegetable gardens, new basketball courts, large DFA, and a newly sodded sports field.

Heritage Green Park (1.0 acre), located at Adams and Desplaines, just east of St. Patrick's Church was built to add more park space in the park deprived sub-area east of the Kennedy. It's a passive park with a small garden, pathways, and a small grass field and is used for sports by local residents such as cricket and football. Heritage Green is also popular as an event space for many companies located nearby. Fulton River Park and Heritage Green Park are popular with dog owners.

Fulton River Park (Park No. 551, 1.0 acre) is situated at Desplaines and Kinzie, just south of Blommer's Chocolate Factory and has a small playground, a small dog run, and a grass hill creating a "terraced" park. Both Fulton River and Heritage



Green were built to address the lack of green space east of the Kennedy, specifically in the Fulton River and West Loop Gate sections of the West Loop.

Bartelme Park (1.5 acres) was built in 2010 to help address the lack of green space in the West Loop. Bartelme is bounded by Sangamon, Green, Monroe, and Adams and currently hosts the Green City Farmer's Market in the summer as well as other special events during the year. Mary Bartelme Park offers a large playground, a dog park, and iconic public art.

Skinner DFA (Park No. 569 | 0.4 acre) is located on the NE corner of Monroe and Loomis across from Skinner Park. This large size DFA resulted from many years of advocacy by SPAC's Dog Advocacy Committee.

There are currently three active Park Advisory Councils (Union, Skinner, and Bartelme) and they are tasked with representing the community voice as well as being the advocates for these parks. PACs are the official community liaisons to the Chicago Park District. Many PAC members help to fund raise as well as volunteer for their respective parks for improvements, programs and special events. The Skinner Dog Friendly Area is also supported by a DFA committee.

B. City Owned Parks & Community Gardens

In addition to the Chicago Public Parks, there is a small number of City-owned pocket parks that were built as part of a development agreement.

- Trio Park (0.5 acre pocket park)
- Riverpoint Park (1.5 acre pocket park & riverwalk).
- Loomis St. Gardens (0.5 acre closed section of Loomis St. between Adams and Monroe that was “greened”).

These city-owned public spaces are currently maintained without public funds thru developer agreements or community garden agreements. There are concerns associated with the Trio agreement which suggests that these operational maintenance agreements are not viable for small condo buildings and corresponding small pocket parks. These agreements seem to be more feasible as part of a large commercial / large rental development.



2. Other Open Space & Facilities

A. Chicago Public Schools (CPS) – Publicly Owned

The Chicago Public Schools also owns open space and sports/recreation facilities in the West Loop that are part of the Whitney Young High School Campus and Skinner West Elementary.

The Whitney Young HS Physical Education Building and outdoor athletic fields and courts west of Loomis St. were built and financed by the Chicago Park District as a field house and expanded park space to serve the West Loop community and Whitney Young High School in 1975. In 1995, the Chicago Park District transferred ownership of the WYHS PE building and the outdoor sports fields to CPS and the community lost use of these facilities. In 2000, the newly formed Skinner Park Advisory Council successfully advocated for part of the Whitney Young facilities (pool & small gym) to be reopened for Park District programming to serve the community. Swim and indoor programs were added to serve the community and after school needs of Skinner West Elementary school. The Park District also run part of the after school program in the lunch room of Skinner West.

There is limited public access to these CPS facilities via the Park District and public community access is further challenged by the privatization of these taxpayer funded public facilities to for-profit businesses. Alderman Ervin during the State of the 28th Ward has suggested that the privatization of CPS facilities should be revisited in light of the need for community access.

B. Privately owned open space that is open to the community

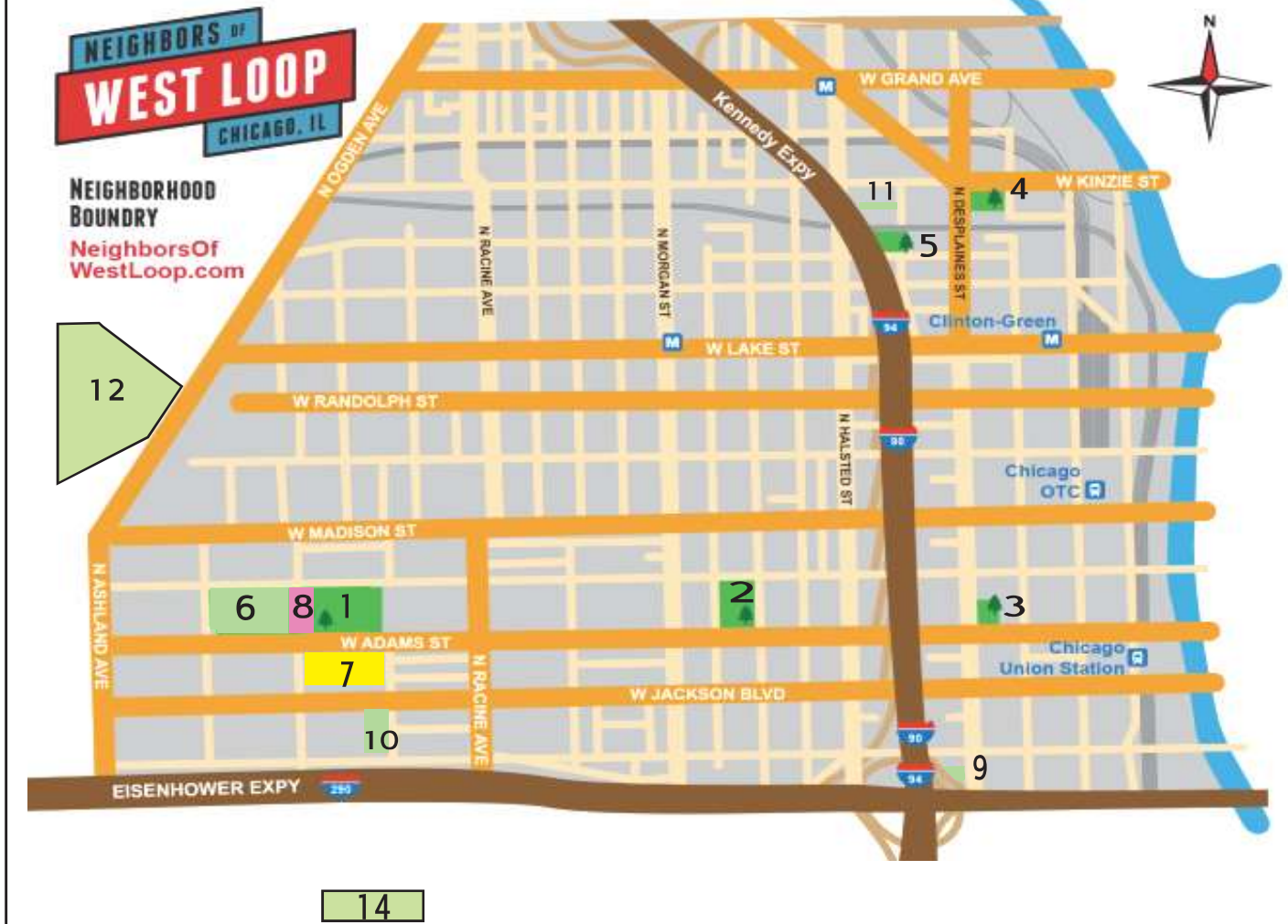
There are several examples of privately owned open space that is open for public use. The most notable is the 0.5 acre dog park that is part of the K2 apartment building. Another example is the PepsiCo building roofdeck which is open to the general public during normal businesses hours. The main difference between these two examples is that the public use of the K2 private dog park is that there is a formal agreement granting public use of the dog park.



APPENDIX D

WEST LOOP OPEN SPACE DEFICIT ANALYSIS (2013)

DRAFT



Parks within NOWL Boundaries

- ♦ 1) Skinner Park - 5.0 acres
- ♦ 2) Bartelme Park - 2.4 acres
- ♦ 3) Heritage Green - 1.0 acres
- ♦ 4) Fulton River Park (Park 551) - 1.0 acres
- ♦ 5) Trio Park - 0.5 acre

Shared Public Places between Chicago Public Schools and Park District (Limited Access for Community - Currently)

- ♦ 6) W. Young Field - 4.0 acres - (Sports Fields and Courts)
- ♦ 7) W. Young Physical Education Building (Public Place)

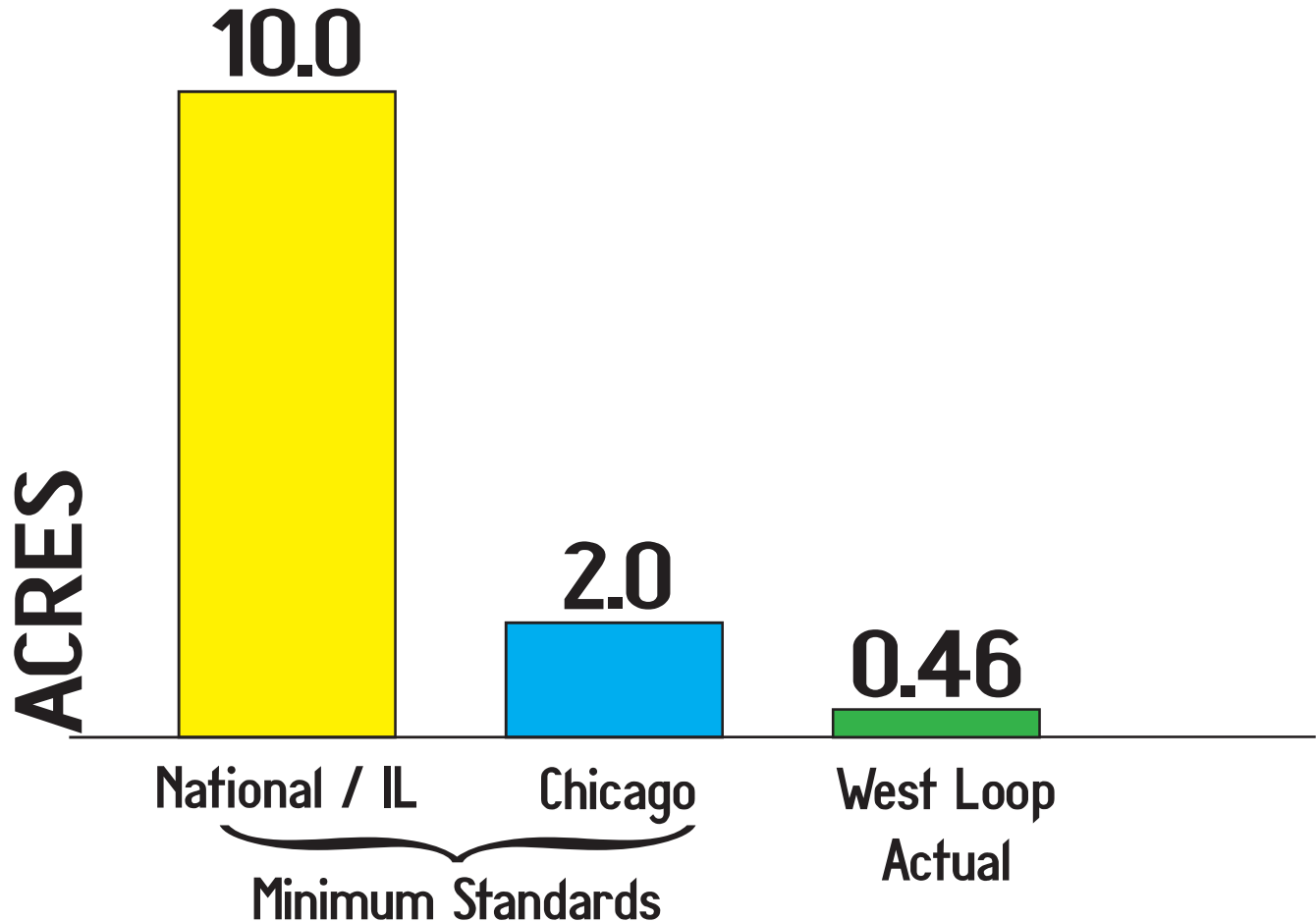
Other Open Space

- ♦ 8) Loomis St. Community Gardens 1.0 acre (Public Space - Community Managed and Maintained by SPAC)
- ♦ 9) IDOT - Desplaines - Van Buren Dog Park
- ♦ 10) Young Park - 1.0 acre - Chicago Public Schools
- ♦ 11) K2 - Dog Park (0.5 acre)

Closest Parks outside of NOWL Boundaries

- ♦ 12) Union Park 13.4 acres (Just outside NOWL western boundaries)
- ♦ 13) Montgomery Ward Park 3.4 acres (River North - approx. 1/3 mile NE of boundaries)
- ♦ 14) Arrigo Park (Little Italy) 5 acres- approx. .5 miles south of I290

Open Space per 1,000 residents

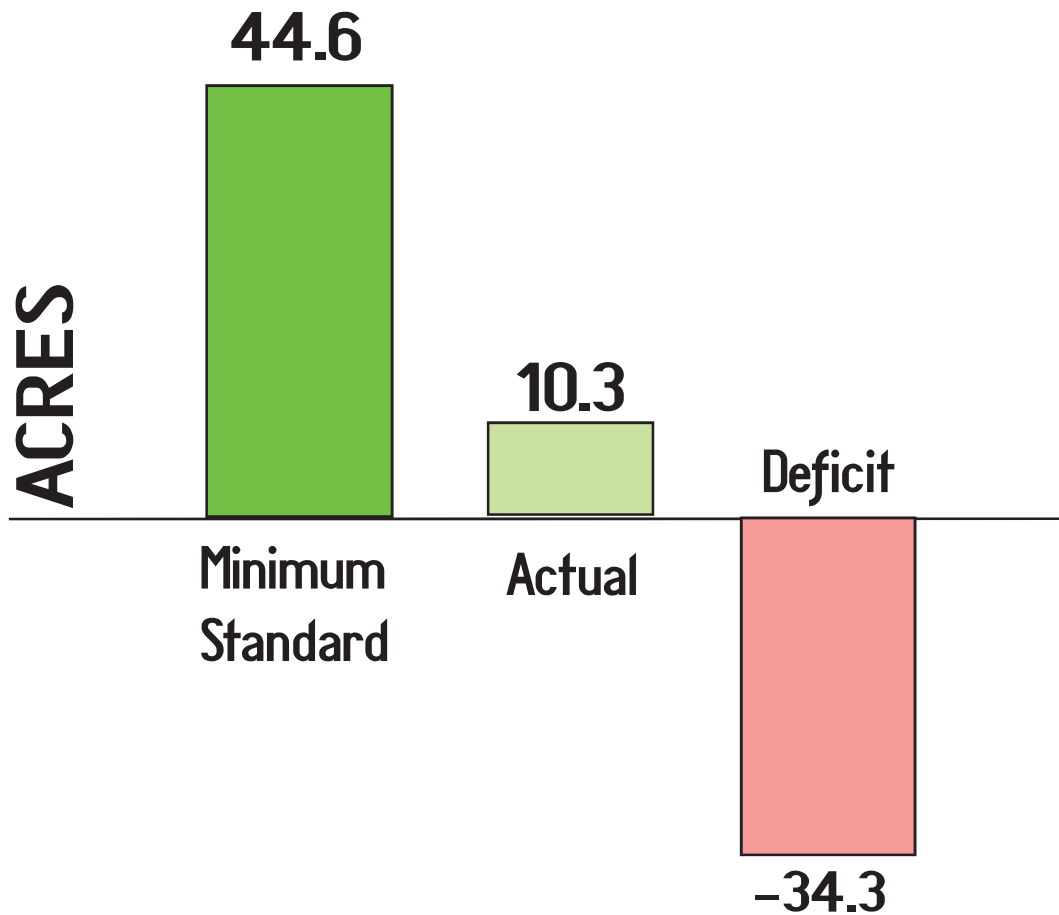


National Parks & Recreation Association and Illinois Park District Association established a minimum standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents.

In 1998, the intergovernmental CitySpace plan assessed the public open space inventories of every Chicago community and established a minimum acceptable standard of two acres of open space per 1,000 residents.

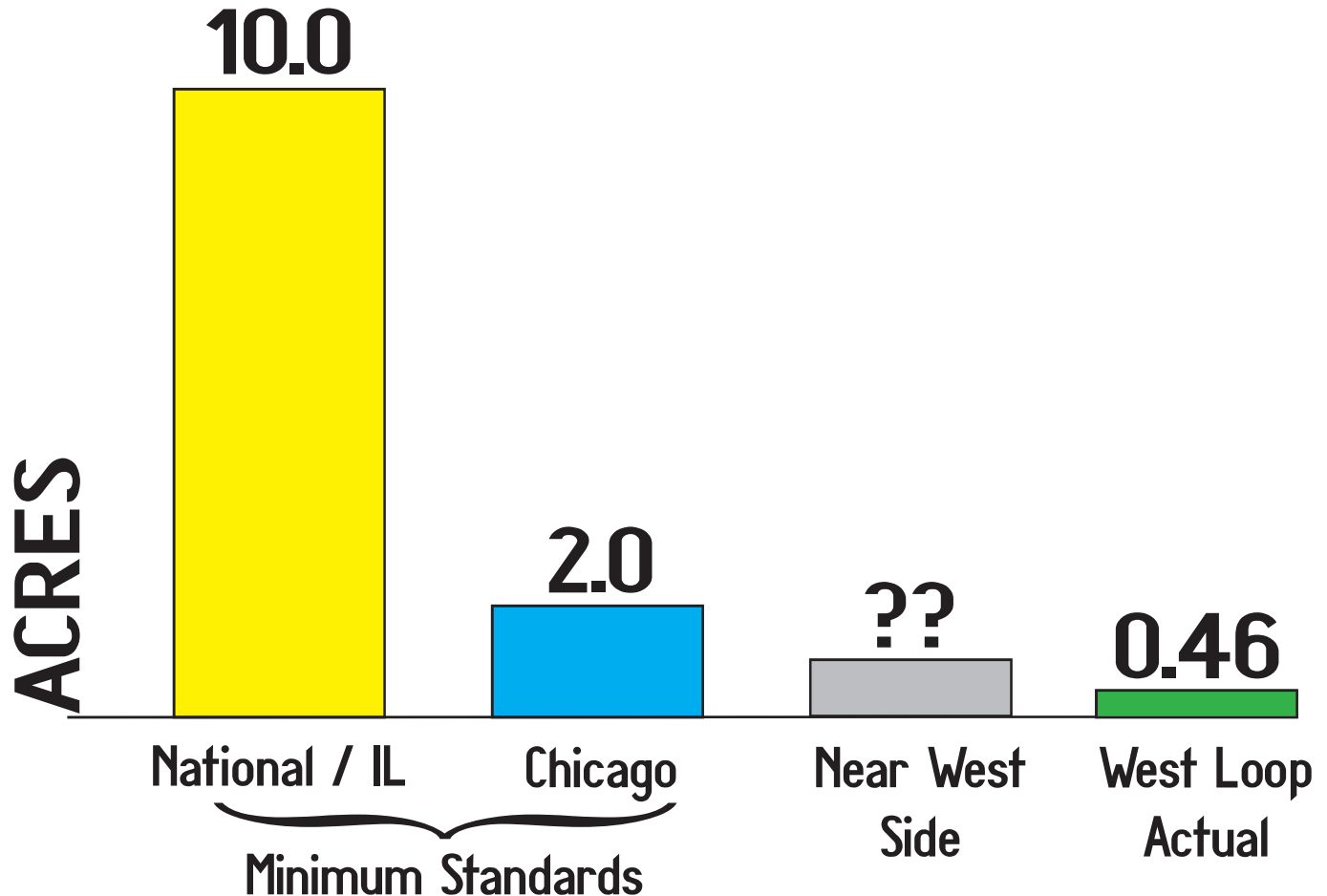
West Loop has 0.46 acres per 1,000 residents based on actual acreage of park land and 2010 census data.

Open Space Deficit



Total West Loop Population (2010)	22,316
KEY STATS	ACRES
Total West Loop Park/Open Space	10.30
Park Space per 1000 residents (Acre)	0.46
Minimum Goal of Park Space per 1000 residents per CitySpace Plan	2.00
Minimum Park / Open Space Based on 2010 population	44.63
Open Space Deficit	34.33
Open Space Deficit if Union Park is included in inventory	20.93

Open Space per 1,000 residents



National Parks & Recreation Association and Illinois Park District Association established a minimum standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents.

In 1998, the intergovernmental CitySpace plan assessed the public open space inventories of every Chicago community and established a minimum acceptable standard of two acres of open space per 1,000 residents.

West Loop has 0.46 acres per 1,000 residents based on actual acreage of park land and 2010 census data.



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We would also like to thank former NoWL board member and Development Committee Chair Bob Aiken for identifying the need for this document and his support in making it a reality. Likewise, we thank Larry Gage, Patti Mocco, June Kirchgatter, and Daniel Honigman for their leadership, vision, and dedication to the West Loop.

And, most importantly, we would like to thank all of the engaged residents and property owners in the West Loop that participated in *Neighborhood Plan* workshops, attended community meetings, and initiated constructive discussions around the topics contained in this document. Your contributions are the foundation of this *Neighborhood Plan* and direction we hope it leads the West Loop.

Sincerely,

Neighbors of West Loop Board of Directors

President, Matt Letourneau

Secretary-Treasurer, Nick Sickler

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Vice President, May Toy

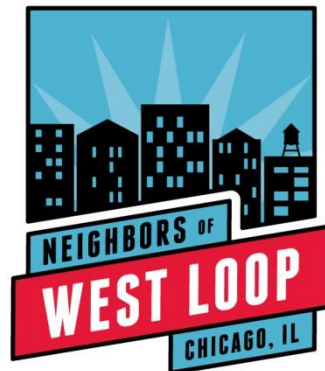
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