

A CENTRAL CITY STRATEGY FOR ALL OF CHICAGO

**Chicago Central Area Committee
2019**

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INTRODUCTION

Time for Change

Chicago leaders have a legacy of responding to changing economic conditions with bold decisions and actions that shape the physical, social and cultural environment of the city. Today, Chicago is at an *inflection point*. Chicago has seen rapid Central City growth, but it faces a challenging competitive world and its own local challenges with some neighborhoods needing transformational change. Key trends include:

- Chicago now needs to compete in the rapidly evolving global network of growing cities
- Major metro areas on the east and west coasts have grown rapidly in recent years, outpacing Chicago in terms of population growth
- Smaller regional cities across the US are playing a stronger role in business attraction and economic growth
- Investment in central cities by employers is an international phenomenon
- Chicago's Central City growth and successes have not reached into all its neighborhoods and benefited all residents or local businesses.

The national economic upswing, since the great recession, brought a new wave of development to Chicago's Central Area. This growth builds upon previous decades of new office, residential and retail development stretching beyond the historic Loop and central business district, creating a vibrant live-work city center. While Chicago needs to sustain a dynamic Central Area, city leaders need to ensure all Chicago communities share the benefits of this growth.

The Chicago Central Area Committee (CCAC) proposes a new strategic direction for city leadership to ensure continued growth and vitality of the city as a whole.

Extending Central City Connections and Benefits

Today, Chicago requires a new strategy for extending the economic benefits of growth to residents across the city and a means to identify where the strongest physical connections can be made. A new physical and economic development strategy offers the opportunity to position Chicago as leader in growth, quality of place and equity. Toward this end, the Chicago Central Area Committee is committed to being at the forefront of civic discussions aimed at strengthening the city's identity as a global destination and helping to set the right priorities for investment in both its Central Area and neighborhoods.

There is a long-standing interest in connecting Central City investment and growth to neighborhood revitalization. Recently, links have been made through development contributions (Neighborhood Opportunity Fund), infrastructure investment (Pink Line reconfiguration, Red Line extension) and workforce solutions (training and job placement at City Colleges, MHub).

A Central City Strategy can help build stronger connections between neighborhoods, emerging mixed-use districts, and the historic business and government core. Neighborhood infrastructure can tie these components together and support progressive, local growth strategies. New financial and labor market connections will also be needed in a rapidly changing economy, where the life-time, public sector and single-career jobs are dwindling.

Chicago's New Urban Dynamics

Chicago and its Central Area are seeing new urban dynamics that call for a response. Since the great recession, the Central Area has seen the greatest addition of jobs in the region, growing from approximately 650,000 in 2010 to 715,000 in 2018. Almost 50% of Chicago's jobs are now in and immediately around downtown, and almost 65% of the growth since 2010 has been in this area. Since 2011, office vacancies are down 34%, while office rents are up 24%. Relocations have contributed much to this growth, with 75 companies moving to the Central Area from the suburbs since 2012, occupying 4.3 million square feet of office space. The tech sector has played a significant role in the booming Central Area office and job growth. Companies moving into Chicago include:

- Facebook
- Google
- Pinterest
- Salesforce
- Career Builder
- GoGo
- Motorola Mobility
- Walgreens
- ConAgra Foods
- Bam Suntory
- Caterpillar
- GE Healthcare
- McDonald's
- Kraft Heinz

The Central Area is also recognized a desirable place to live. Chicago's total population fell in the 1970's and 80's, grew 4% in the 90's, then stabilized until the great recession. Although Chicago's overall population has declined in recent years, the Central Area population has boomed:

- Central Area population grew from 145,000 in 2000 to 255,00 in 2018, an increase of 69%
- Chicago's population fell from 2.9 million to 2.7 million during this same period, a 6% decline
- Rental demand remains strong in the Central Area, where 62% of households are renters compared to 56% citywide

More than 13,000 downtown apartments have been completed over the past four years. It is forecast that developers will complete another 9,200 apartments in 2019 and 2020. An additional \$20 billion worth of projects is in the planning stage. Some of these projects are mixed-use developments, covering more than 150 acres of land. Other individual sites will host new high-rise office and residential developments.

A New Way of Thinking: The Central City

Chicago's Loop and downtown have long been the focus for jobs, shopping, culture and education. In recent years growth has expanded west of the Kennedy Expressway; and the private sector and City government have advanced proposals for significant mixed-use development on sites extending as far as 31st Street on the south, Western Avenue on the west and Armitage Avenue on the north.

Moreover, significant growth has occurred around McCormick Place, in the Illinois Medical District, through the Fulton Market District and the West Loop and along the North Branch and South Branch of the Chicago River. Each of these growth areas features a mix of uses and a move away from traditional single use manufacturing, medical or other districts. We now have a new network of interrelated and overlapping sub-units of the regional economy. Thus, the old idea of a single, dense, Loop focused downtown has now advanced to a bigger idea of the **Central City**. Our strategies for the future must recognize this new reality.

Chicago Challenges

While recent growth is impressive, continued success cannot be taken for granted in the highly competitive global cities. A new Central City Strategy must address current challenges:

- Other big cities across the nation – Los Angeles, New York, Boston and DC – have outpaced Chicago in population growth since the great recession.

- Moreover, since 2000, 5.5 million Americans left the nation's three largest cities, New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, for smaller cities (250,000 to 1 million population). Cities like Boise, Fort Collins, Madison and Fayetteville have grown more than 10% between 2013 and 2018. Pittsburgh, Nashville and Austin are winning inward investment and seeing year on year growth.
- In examining where employees want to be, Smart Growth America studied nearly 500 companies that added jobs to downtowns between 2010 and 2015. This research determined companies were relocating to areas that were more bikeable, walkable and transit-accessible.
- The benefits of Chicago's Central city growth have not been shared across neighborhoods and among its businesses and residents.
- The number of Central City jobs held by residents of majority African American communities decreased from 2010 to 2015 in real and proportionate terms, from 79,900 (11.9%) to 75,400 (10.6%).
- Chicago's transit system is stressed with peak-hour congestion as commuters try to reach the Central City on time.
- Chicago's housing market needs to offer choices that will retain population characterized by a broad range of income levels, including recent arrivals to the city and millennial families.
- Many city neighborhoods are digital deserts, where residents lack affordable broadband and communication services for educational needs and access to employment opportunities.

Call to Action

In 2018, CCAC initiated a strategic planning process to examine how Chicago competes with other national and international cities as it seeks to define itself as a global city. We sensed an urgency to identify and advance a set of ideas quickly that could link Central City growth to wider gains across Chicago as a whole. The process was established as a rapid and strategic initiative, offering new thinking that would be helpful to the entire community as it acts over the next ten years. Moreover, we view this White Paper as an open-source document we hope will be helpful to others.

The relationship between downtown and the neighborhoods is a critical component of this strategic planning process. For Chicago to continue to grow and thrive, local governments, the private sector and nonprofits must address the serious issues of income inequality by providing access to new forms of education, training and jobs, affordable housing, transportation and digital connectivity.

In December 2018, the CCAC convened a roundtable of 60 participants to brainstorm an agenda for the rapidly changing Central Area, where growth is overtaking traditional downtown boundaries and creating new ways of working, living and moving. There was a recognition physical and economic development, so visible in the expanding Central Area, was not translating into opportunities for all of Chicago's neighborhoods and their residents. In response, roundtable participants introduced the concept of a bigger, connected **Central City** and generated ideas – some big and broad and others more specific – to address challenges faced by civic, business and community leaders in guiding future growth. These include:

- Competing with other US cities which are growing faster than Chicago
- Redefining the Central City as a resource for all
- Connecting neighborhoods to Central City growth
- Investing in neighborhoods
- Retaining population, including recent arrivals and millennial families
- Creating the next generation of affordable housing

Early in 2019, the CCAC organized three working groups to refine and advance ideas about ways to create sustained, equitable and inclusive growth over the next five to ten years. The purpose of this collective effort is to help shape the whole city for a new era of innovation, connectivity and inclusive growth in all neighborhoods, while supporting Chicago's advance as a global city. This paper summarizes the key findings and recommendations of this process as a foundation for a Central City planning and development strategy, and an action agenda to benefit all of Chicago.

Central City Strategy Themes

The Central City Strategy focuses on three areas that can have a significant impact on the lives of residents and the success of local businesses by linking neighborhoods to Central City growth and positioning Chicago to compete on the global stage.

- A. Catalytic Economic Initiatives:** business and labor market links to share growth more widely, place based investments in retail and industrial areas, and the role of major new developments as bridges between the Central City and neighborhoods.
- B. New Mobility:** new routes, enhanced transit and new technology connecting neighborhoods to the Central City, neighborhoods to neighborhoods and districts within the Central City, and making Chicago a leader in transportation and other data.
- C. Digital Connectivity for All:** closing gaps in high speed internet services in neighborhoods and using public facilities and assets as broadband Wi-Fi hubs for use by City residents and business start-ups.

A. CATALYTIC ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

Overview

The future of the Central City is inextricably linked to the health of the surrounding neighborhoods. The development of the Central City has often been disconnected from community-based efforts to improve neighborhoods through development and reinvestment. A growth framework that encourages diverse, community-based businesses to thrive is needed to extend the flow of dollars – in the form of jobs and contracting opportunities – between the Central City and the neighborhoods. At the same time, labor market links need to be strengthened to ensure that neighborhood residents are connected to growing job opportunities in the Central City.

Collaboration between the public and private sector interests is needed to align comprehensive investment strategies that address all of Chicago. Catalytic economic initiatives identified by the CCAC roundtable participants and working groups cover a broad range of ideas for contracting, workforce, retail, housing and marketing strategies that build upon existing City programs and private sector activities.

1. Business-to-Business Connections

1.1. Extend MBE/WBE Participation to a Wider Array of Projects

The City of Chicago requires a commitment of 26% Minority Owned Business Enterprise (MBE) and 6% Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) participation in City construction projects, and a 50% city resident hiring requirement in total construction work hours as a condition of Planned Development approval. Public sector building renovation and construction projects are also subject to MBE/WBE participation requirements. In August 2017, Mayor Rahm Emanuel issued an Executive Order requiring developers seeking Planned Development zoning approval to commit to utilizing MBE/WBE participation in large, community-shaping projects.

Expanding the types of investment covered to include the private Central City developments and renovations that fall below these high thresholds can strengthen the City's MBE/WBE programs and the flow of contacts to neighborhood businesses. In addition, the successful contributions of construction professionals and community-based trade contractors that have employed them should pave the way for professional service firms, such as architectural, interiors, engineering, legal, financial, marketing and planning services, to participate in Chicago's economic and community development activities. The contracting process could be transformed from bureaucratic requirements to strategic

partnership and mentorship relationships. Expanded MBE/WBE participation and city resident hiring could be incentivized through streamlined permitting (e.g., Department of Buildings Green Permit Program).

1.2. Extend Procurement Assistance to Benefit Neighborhood Businesses

Current procurement assistance primarily focuses on linking small businesses to government contracts. These services can be extended to the Central City private sector by creating a platform for neighborhood businesses to bid for business-to-business opportunities. A procurement assistance clearing house/exchange could maintain a database of eligible businesses, matched with a database of procurement opportunities with the Central City's larger corporations and institutions. World Business Chicago's anchor institutions and businesses procurement strategy is a good example of the way forward.

2. Strengthen Labor Market Connections

2.1. Prepare Chicago's Workforce for the Future

Workforce quality is the number one consideration in economic development and business attraction worldwide. Chicago's workforce traditionally has been recognized for its strengths in both the size and skills sets of its labor market. There is an opportunity now to train and connect the next generation of workers from Chicago neighborhoods to new, relocated and expanding Central City businesses.

Today's public and private sectors require a technology literate workforce. A continued focus on technology skills in high school and City College curricula is the basic platform for access to next generation jobs.

Large-scale developments within the Central City and at O'Hare Airport offer a decades-long construction demand, while the current construction workforce is aging. There is an opportunity now to train a new generation of neighborhood residents for a lifetime of work in construction.

The manufacturing and logistics workforce is also aging, providing another sector an opportunity to train and link neighborhood residents to job growth opportunities.

Hotel, tourism and convention growth are also sources of jobs for Chicago neighborhood residents, including entry-level positions.

2.2. Increase Central City Hiring of Neighborhood Residents

Chicago would benefit from having a tool that reaches past the Indeed, Glassdoor and similar platforms to better serve neighborhood residents. A new, centralized on-line message board with a simple, user-friendly interface can be created for opportunity postings by Central City businesses and non-profit agencies. This message board should be designed for a low-cost phone platform that reaches the widest audience and is also linked to Aldermanic Ward Offices, City Libraries and City Colleges. Neighborhood job fairs can also offer larger, growing and recently created businesses the opportunity to bring their hiring requirements directly to neighborhood employment candidates.

3. Bridge Central City and Neighborhoods

There are key locations for future economic development that can bridge the Central City and neighborhoods, thereby closing the geographic gap and bringing job growth closer to the neighborhoods. The array of developments, which are at vision, planning or funding stages, reach in all directions from the Central City, including:

- Burnham Lakefront jobs and homes at the former Michael Reese hospital, alongside continued evolution of McCormick Place as a mixed-use convention and visitor district
- Bronzeville and IIT as a South Side education, innovation and residential neighborhood
- Illinois Medical District as a national scale hub of healthcare, research and education as well as commercial development and housing
- Obama Presidential Center to University of Chicago Medical Center as a growth corridor for entry-level to middle-skilled employment
- Ogden Avenue Corridor: Fulton Market to Lawndale as an innovation corridor linking Chicago's tech neighborhood, the Illinois Medical District and new investment in Douglas Park and Lawndale
- The near West Side around the United Center and including the Madison Street and Washington Street Corridors
- Creating a Multi-Modal Transit Hub around Western Avenue and Lake Street linking Metra and CTA Rapid Transit stations and future enhanced Western Avenue bus service
- The North Branch of the Chicago River from Chicago to Fullerton Avenues.

4. Advance Neighborhood Economic Development

Public sector support and collaboration with private Central City and local businesses can advance development opportunities in neighborhoods by leveraging factors such as public ownership, incentive programs, Retail Thrive Zones and Neighborhood Opportunity Zones.

4.1. Continue Support for Retail Thrive Zones

The City of Chicago has designated eight Retail Thrive Zones, offering property tax abatements, small business grants, and Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, Enterprise Zone and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) benefits to businesses and entrepreneurs located within the zones, which include:

- Austin: Chicago Avenue
- West Humboldt: Chicago Avenue
- Back of the Yards: 47th, Ashland Avenue
- Bronzeville: 43rd Street, 47th Street, South Cottage Grove
- Englewood: 63rd, Halsted Street
- Chatham: 75th, 79th Streets
- West Pullman: Halsted Street

4.2. Take Retail Corridor Revitalization to the Next Level

The neighborhood retail corridors can be made more robust and effective by expanding the scope and reach of the program with other development initiatives:

- Identify financing tools to fund front-end retailer improvements
- Leverage the City Neighborhood Opportunity Zones and IRS Opportunity Zones to revitalize the neighborhood retail corridors
- Add residential development to build local retail demand
- Focus transit, mobility and streetscaping investments to create a critical mass of investment
- Reform tax laws that incentivize the holding of vacant commercial properties
- Identify additional retail locations with assets that could be leveraged for new zone investments

4.3. Ensure a Diverse Workforce Housing Supply

The citywide need for affordable housing is pronounced in neighborhoods undergoing change. As neighborhoods are targeted for new retail and industrial development, it is crucial that existing residents with entry-level, minimum wage and lower incomes have affordable housing choices that match their wages. Neighborhood-focused housing initiatives would include:

- Target housing assistance programs to new arrivals to retain as long-term residents
- Incorporate workforce housing into City-supported and other private mixed-income developments

4.4. Grow Neighborhood Tourism

Chicago neighborhoods are renowned for their diversity, restaurants, and cultural attractions. These assets can be linked to Chicago's thriving convention and tourism markets by efforts to:

- Extend the reach of Chicago's growing tourism market to neighborhoods
- Promote neighborhood visitor destinations like landmarks, restaurants, arts, theaters and festivals
- Support the arts as a function of neighborhood of economic development
- Encourage hotel development in neighborhoods

4.5. Leverage Demand for Industrial Sites

Demand for industrial space is booming across the country, with Chicago ranking among the top regions for industrial leasing and investments. Chicago's Southeast Side is undergoing a surge in industrial development. Other Chicago neighborhoods can leverage this demand through focused industrial development initiatives:

- Respond to demand for modern, flex-use, high-ceiling, clear-span, high-bay facilities
- Attract logistics, light manufacturing, food, parts assembly and pharmaceutical businesses
- Identify and secure 40-100 acre sites for industrial development
- Promote interstate highway and rail access for shipping and distribution
- Promote workforce transit access from the neighborhoods
- Promote utility infrastructure, including broadband in the neighborhoods

5. Refresh and Fine-Tune Chicago Marketing and Branding

Chicago has strategic advantages for employers that have been marketed successfully by many public and private entities. Their efforts have contributed to Chicago's business growth and headquarters attraction in the last decade. However, there are business attraction challenges, including the need for resolution of city and state fiscal and pension issues, and a decreasing supply of suitable buildings and sites for redevelopment. It is imperative that marketing and branding efforts for Chicago are strategic, streamlined and coordinated by the public and private entities involved with these activities.

5.1. Promote Competitive Assets

- Geographic location
- Transportation infrastructure
- Higher education institutions
- Size and quality of metro area workforce
- Highly competitive cost of doing business – labor, real estate and taxes – compared with other competing US and global cities
- Airport business travel connections and growing capacity
- Chicago influencers – Nobel prize winners, celebrities and sports figures

5.2. Think Globally

- Establish global marketing focused at international business hub airports – Amsterdam, London, Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, Singapore, Shanghai, Hong Kong

6. Review Economic Development Organizational Roles

Chicago has several entities that promote and support economic development. The roles and reach of these have evolved over time, depending on the priorities of local government administrations and shifting market demands. Leadership changes in the offices of the Mayor of Chicago and Governor of Illinois are an opportunity to review the purpose and functions of entities and to assess how activities may best be organized and aligned to meet the needs, opportunities and challenges of Chicago's Central City and neighborhoods over the next five to ten years. This includes:

- Office of the Mayor
- Chicago Department of Planning and Development
- World Business Chicago
- Choose Chicago
- Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority
- Intersect Illinois

B. NEW MOBILITY

Overview

Creating stronger connections between the Central City and neighborhoods will require a comprehensive mobility system that encompasses streets, sidewalks, transit, bicycles, scooters, ride-share and future autonomous vehicles. The system needs to be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of riders, population centers and work destinations. Public-sector transportation entities can partner with private and non-profit operators to close the first/last mile gaps between home and jobs and transit stations across Chicago. Planning for new mobility should be pro-active and tied to economic and population growth centers while meeting existing Central City and neighborhood needs. A part of a Central City Strategy for all of Chicago, new mobility concepts and projects are recommended for:

- **Strengthening connections between neighborhoods and the Central City**
- **Strengthening connections between neighborhoods and jobs across the city**
- **Enhance connections and circulation within the Central City**

In addition, citywide initiatives are proposed for 21st Century infrastructure, including smaller vehicles and a variety of first/last mile solutions, such as rideshare and bikeshare. New mobility data systems and platforms provide opportunities for Chicago to break out as a big city data leader. Further, these new data systems can support evolved mobility policy and planning frameworks that integrates incremental and large-scale development on local and citywide mobility patterns and choices.

1. Connecting Neighborhoods and the Central City

New mobility connections between the neighborhoods and the Central City focus on improving transportation service to major job centers at O'Hare Airport and the Central City. The intention is to strengthen connections between neighborhoods and Central City job opportunities, and support growth along these routes through the City.

These include improved Metra electric trains and new CTA Green Line stations connecting the South Side to downtown, a new Green Line station and transit hub at Western Avenue on the Near West Side, bus rapid transit (BRT) along Lake Shore Drive and Clybourn Avenue on the North Side, a new connection between the Jefferson Park Blue Line and Kimball Brown Line, and a new high-speed connection between downtown and O'Hare Airport on the Northwest Side.

The following includes suggestions for enhanced rail, enhanced CTA Rapid Transit, new stations and Bus Rapid Transit. Some of these routes could also be enhanced with new technologies such as autonomous vehicles. These projects are described below.

Enhanced Metra Electric Service: Kensington/115th Street to Millennium Station

Service will increase the number and speed of trains running on current Metra Electric line, with CTA integrated fare. Using existing infrastructure, this proposal offers a more dynamic service through South Side neighborhoods, connecting to jobs in Hyde Park, Burnham Lakefront, McCormick Place and the Central City. Timing: <5 Years

Infill CTA Rail Stations on Green Line: 26th Street and 31st Street

New stations will provide a catalyst for South Side economic development and connect residents to Central City jobs. Timing: 5-10 Years.

Infill CTA Green Line Station: Western Avenue

A new station will provide a catalyst for West Side economic development and connect residents to Central City jobs. Timing: 5-10 Years.

Multi-modal Station and Transit Hub: Western Avenue to Grand Avenue

A new hub will connect Metra MD-W, NCS and CTA, micro-transit and ride-share, act as catalyst and focus for West Side economic development and connect West Side residents to Central City jobs. Timing: 5-10 Years

North Lakeshore Drive BRT: Hollywood to Monroe, North and South

Dedicated high-capacity lanes on North Lake Shore Drive will enable current bus and future CAV mobility options a clear right-of-way to travel along LSD, moving people from north lakefront neighborhoods to Central City and back and increase CTS ridership due to faster travel times. Timing: < 5 years

Clybourn Avenue BRT: Clybourn Avenue Red Line North Avenue to Western Avenue

New dedicated transportation route using roadway for high-capacity transit connecting Red Line with Clybourn Corridor, Lincoln Yards and Lathrop Homes. Timing: < 5 Years

Clybourn to Ogilvie Shuttle

New private shuttle service linking Bucktown and Lincoln Park to Metra Stations using existing rail rights of way. Timing: < 5 Years

Enhanced Transit to O'Hare Airport

High-speed, high-capacity link using existing transportation rights of way, whether CTA, Metra or highways, enhanced or new vehicles, with up to two stops between the Central City and O'Hare Airport. Service will increase speed and capacity to the airport and through the Northwest side, and thereby match investments being undertaken at O'Hare Airport itself. Timing: 5-10 Years.

Jefferson Park Connector: Jefferson Park Blue Line to Kimball Brown Line

Dedicated bus lanes and on-demand circulator shuttle (future CAV) will give current bus and future high capacity CAV mobility options a clear right of way to connect North and Northwest neighborhoods with access to Blue line for O'Hare Access. Timing: <5 Years

2. Connecting Neighborhoods to Neighborhoods

There are also opportunities to enhance connections between neighborhoods across Chicago where these can connect residents to job opportunities or to high capacity transit routes. This will support economic growth at interchange points along these routes and enhance access to retail and industrial jobs.

New neighborhood to neighborhood mobility improvements emphasize creating east-west BRT connections across the South Side, from 31st to 63rd Street, linking South Side residents to CTA Red and Green Lines and to jobs on the south lakefront on the east, Midway Airport on the west and to other job centers along current east-west routes. A new north-south BRT connection linking the Blue Line and Orange Line is envisioned along Western Avenue and an autonomous vehicle route connecting the Lawndale neighborhood to jobs at Midway Airport. On the North Side, dedicated park and ride areas are recommended along with circulator shuttles and autonomous vehicles to create new commuter routes between the Edens and Kennedy Expressways to the lakefront. These neighborhood-to-neighborhood mobility projects are described below.

Hyde Park to Midway BRT: Hyde Park to Midway Airport

Dedicated bus lanes on 55th Street, from Hyde Park to Midway Airport, will enable current bus and future high-capacity CAV mobility options with a clear right-of-way to travel from Hyde Park to Midway Airport, linking residents along the route to jobs at the University of Chicago, University of Chicago Hospital and Midway Airport. Timing: <5 Years

31st Street BRT: Lake Shore Drive to Ashland/Archer Orange Line

Dedicated bus lanes and BRT on 31st Street will strengthen links across the South Side, connecting residents to jobs in Pilsen, Bridgeport, Back of the Yards, Guaranteed Rate Field, Illinois Institute of Technology and the future Burnham lakefront developments. Timing: <5 Years.

Enhanced East-West Connections Across the South Side

Additional east-west BRT routes to connect Dan Ryan, Red Line, Orange Line, Green Line and Metra Electric and LSD with key lakefront areas will connect residents to jobs, cultural institutions, higher education and the lakefront. Timing: <5 Years.

- 35th Street, Lakefront to California
- Pershing Road, Lakefront to Halsted
- 47th Street, from Lakefront to Green and Red Line Stations
- 63rd Street, Metra, Green Line, Red Line

Western Ave Bus Rapid Transit: Western Ave from 35th/Archer Orange Line to Armitage Blue Line

Dedicated high-capacity lanes on Western Avenue will give bus and future high-capacity CAV mobility options a clear right-of-way to travel north and south through the West Side, enhancing access to jobs on the West Side and transfers to jobs in the Central City and at O'Hare. Timing: <5 Years.

West Side to Midway Airport: Rail right-of-way West of S. Kenton, 16th Street to Midway Airport

Dedicated CAV shuttle route along the train line connecting Lawndale to Midway Airport will establish a demand-responsive CAV shuttle service from Lawndale to Midway as a rapid transit option for Midway employees who live in West and Southwest Side neighborhoods. Timing: <5 Years.

Dedicated Park and Rides from Edens and Kennedy Expressways to Lakefront

Dedicated park and ride areas, combined with circulator shuttles (CAV in the future) on key east-west routes from the expressways to lakefront beach areas, communicated to beachgoers through advertising, digital push notifications and street/expressway signage. Timing: <5 Years

- Forest Glen Metra Station, Foster Exit to Lakefront, connecting with all north-south transit routes and CTA stations, as well as expanded river transit
- Montrose Metra Station and Kennedy Exit to Montrose Beach, connecting with all north- south transit routes and CTA stations, as well as expanded river transit

- Clybourn Metra Station and Kennedy Exit to North Avenue Beach, connecting with all north-south transit routes and CTA stations, as well as expanded river transit

3. Connecting Central City Districts

Chicago's economic core extends over previous historic boundaries and has advanced beyond single use districts to encompass as much as a 10-square mile area of diverse economic, residential and institutional activity. This is the focus of the region's hub and spoke transit, interstate highway and river systems. An array of new transportation layers and initiatives can enhance connections, reduce travel times and better integrate economic activity to support future growth. Future growth will depend on on-going investment in connectivity between its districts.

Central City districts can be better connected by encouraging people to walk everywhere by upgrading the streetscape environment, expanding river commuting on the North Branch and South Branch of the Chicago River, adding new north-south transit routes on Ashland and Racine Avenues and micro-mobility (rideshare, bikeshare, electric scooters) options. The Chicago Connector Transitway proposed by CCAC in 2016 as a new network on existing rail and transit rights of way or surplus land can also be advanced in phases or stages as the opportunity arises. <http://ccac.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Consolidated-Connector-PDF.pdf>. These Central City District concepts and projects are described below.

Enhance Walking: Everywhere

Upgraded streets and sidewalks with improvements to streetscaping, signage and street crossings throughout the Central City to efficiently, sustainably, move large numbers of people from train and transit stations to existing job destinations and new commercial and residential growth areas, and to benefit human health and the environment. Timing: <5 Years.

The Connector Concept

A four-mile, grade-separated transit line to add needed capacity in the Central City, link its multiple business districts together, and support development on the city's Near South, West and North Sides.

The Connector will link downtown 'L' lines to four Metra operations; serve destinations such as Michigan Avenue, Navy Pier, Museum Campus and McCormick Place; and provide access to new development districts in the Central City. New connections to CTA Rapid Transit stations and Metra Rail stations will enhance access to jobs for Chicago's neighborhood residents and relieve congestion on CTA Red, Brown and Purple lines.

Seventy percent of this route can run on/adjacent to existing rail right-of-way, vacant land or public property.

The Connector has several spurs, which can be built in phases to create a new transit network.

Connector/East Spur: Grand /Illinois pair, from Navy Pier (E) to Kingsbury (W)

Transit route using rail rights-of-way and underutilized routes for high capacity transit; connecting growing jobs, hotel, shopping, medical and entertainment districts, supporting access to the jobs within them and strengthening the visitor economy. Timing: <5 Years.

Connector/South Spur: McCormick Place to Union Station via 16th Street, BNSF ROW to Union Station, then on to Ogilvie Transportation Center

Transit route using rail rights-of-way connecting the Near South Side, Museum Campus and the South Loop with major transit hubs. Timing: 5-10 years

Connector/West Spur: Along the BSNF rail route, beginning at 16th Street (connection to South Spur) moving west to Western Avenue

East-west link from Pink Line at 18th Street, Illinois Medical District and UIC east to the Orange line; connectivity through the South Spur to McCormick Place, the future Burnham Lakefront and Union/Ogilvie Stations. Timing: 5-10 years

Connector/North Spur: North from Ogilvie Station on rail lines parallel to Chicago River

North Branch to Cortland Avenue

UPN Metra and freight corridor between Ogilvie Transportation Center and Clybourn stops to add a high frequency shuttle service. It will enhance connections between existing and growing job locations, increase transit access to Lincoln Yards job opportunities for city residents, reduce highway demand and relieve congestion on Red, Brown and Blue Line service. Timing: 5-10 Years

Ashland Avenue Bus Rapid Transit: Ashland Avenue from Ashland/Archer Orange Line (S) to Clybourn Metra Station (N)

Dedicated high-capacity lanes on Ashland Avenue will enable current bus and future high-capacity CAV mobility options a clear right-of-way to travel north and south, enhancing access to jobs at the Illinois Medical District, United Center, Fulton Market, Lincoln Yards and O'Hare Airport via the Blue Line. Timing: <5 Years

Racine Avenue Link: Racine Avenue from 16th Street Viaduct (S) to Kinzie Street (N)
Transit or CAV link on Racine Avenue to link new residential and jobs concentrations, will enhance growing residential and business districts with weak north-south transit options and give impetus to redevelopment plans for former CHA sites around Taylor Street and Roosevelt Road. Timing: <5 Years

Enhanced Bridges Over the Kennedy Expressway

Enhanced pedestrian, bike and micro-transit capacity and quality on expressway bridges. This will support movement from commuter rail stations to West Loop, enhance the capacity of streets, connect the West Loop residential to Wacker Drive and Loop office districts and improve the visual quality of infrastructure seen by millions of people each year passing on interstates below. Timing: <5 Years

- Lake Street
- Randolph Street
- Washington Street
- Monroe Street
- Adams Street
- Jackson Blvd.
- Van Buren Street

West Loop Dedicated Bus/CAV/Bike Route: Ashland (W) to Michigan (E)

Dedicated transportation route using existing roadway for high capacity transit. This will enhance transit capacity through district with rapidly growing residential, employment and entertainment uses. Timing: <5 Years

New CTA Rapid Transit Pink Line Station at Madison

New Pink Line Station on existing Rapid Transit line will enhance transit access to the Near West Side and United Center and act as a catalyst for economic development in the area. Timing: <5 Years

Expanded River Commuting: From Webster or Armitage on North Branch; from Ping Tom Park on South Branch

Expansion of River commuting options on North and South Branch of Chicago River, linking to transit stations and micro-mobility options. Timing: <5 Years

Enhance CTA Rapid Transit Circulation in the Loop: Racine Avenue from 16th Street Viaduct (S) to Kinzie Street (N).

Enhanced data and communications to manage circulation and route enhancements to overcome intersection back-ups. Enhanced signaling and efficiency will provide a more dynamic and responsive routing for consumers.

- The Loop, from Clinton, Merchandise Mart and Roosevelt Road
- East of Clark/Lake Transfer
- Between Harold Washington Library and Adams/Wabash

Citywide Initiatives

There is also a range of city-wide initiatives which will position Chicago as a leader in mobility, data and planning.

21st Century Mobility Infrastructure

Chicago's new mobility system will require a more dynamic public transit fleet that responds quickly to changing ridership demands. For existing transit routes, this includes new types of vehicles that support variable capacity and demand-driven hours of service operations. First and last-mile mobility solutions will also be instrumental within this mobility network and will include suburban Metra/Pace feeder lines, along with micro-mobility transit, such as rideshare, bikeshare and electric scooters, at origin and destination stations. Commercial shipping solutions include remote supply chain distribution centers located on the outskirts of the Central City and other traffic-constrained locations. Curb management programs and delivery regulations will be critical to the success of these commercial solutions.

Current large-scale development projects, such as Lincoln Yards, The 78, Burnham Lakefront Project and the cumulative development happening on the West Side, should be leveraged collectively to identify financing for a comprehensive solution that includes transit and active mobility options. Pilot projects can be undertaken in these areas to test the inter-operability and efficiencies of existing and new mobility services, including autonomous vehicles. Public assets managed by CTA, RTA and PACE and outsourced service providers can factor into cost assessments and system utilization analytics to assist in system planning and in establishing service investment costs and priorities.

Chicago As a Big City Data Leader

Creating a new mobility system provides an opportunity for Chicago to break out as a big city data leader that plans based on empirical user demand. Incremental transit routes can be informed through the establishment of an integrated mobility data platform with features that can be centralized or decentralized, depending on various user needs. The inter-operability of such new mobility system of systems can be designed to maximize efficiency and safety in mobility. Smart mobility is expected to become the backbone of

Chicago's Smart City infrastructure as 5G digital networks expand. With all of this new data flowing, Chicago can affirm itself as a leader of the public data marketplace.

Evolve Mobility Policy and Planning

Leading the new mobility charge will be an evolving policy and planning process that guides, integrates and supports public and private economic development activities. Due to an increased access to data, planning frameworks for policy assessments and directions can be supported by richer, more granular platforms. Both incremental and large-scale development projects need to be tested for their impact on, and added value to, the surrounding community's mobility patterns and choices. Changing neighborhoods and districts offer opportunities for pilot projects to apply new technologies to rapidly test mobility infrastructure service levels and efficiencies. Public and outsourced providers can apply advanced analytics on a citywide basis to assess equity impacts of public infrastructure investments and service levels. New data platforms can also be used to create and test funding models for existing and potential revenue streams to support mobility investments.

C. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY FOR ALL

Chicago's Digital Divide

Access to the Internet is a basic necessity for individuals to participate in contemporary society as citizens, business owners, employees and students. While Chicago's Central Area is one of the world's most sophisticated and comprehensive communications hubs, many city neighborhoods are digital deserts, lacking access to affordable broadband and communication services. The cost for DSL and cable is prohibitive for many lower-income residents and businesses. A cell phone cannot accommodate schoolwork or job applications. Small businesses need broadband to support basic services, such as invoicing, payroll, marketing and production. Critically, major redevelopment of vacant land and underused buildings requires broadband service to attract larger businesses and their jobs in manufacturing, distribution, healthcare and education.

Current technology can be deployed to expand the network of broadband service in ways that are practical, efficient and cost effective. Existing infrastructure can be leveraged to build out the "last mile" into underserved communities utilizing a hybrid of wired (fiber and copper) and wireless (microwave and Wi-Fi) solutions. Neighborhood centers could be used as distribution points to extend the broadband network, as well as to provide safe broadband access to residents and businesses. A hub-and-spoke system approach would be manageable in terms of operations, maintenance and time required for deployment. The equipment needed to support this solution is readily available. The wireless network can be built utilizing Point-to-Point (P2P) or Point-to-Multipoint (P2MP) technology on rooftops and street infrastructure, such as streetlights and utility poles.

Breaking Down Barriers

As a matter of equity, it is imperative that Chicago's neighborhoods share in the social and economic benefits generated by the Central Area's booming commercial and residential development of recent decades. CCAC is proposing a broadband expansion strategy that targets neighborhoods whose residents have been left behind in the digital revolution, and recommends ways to prepare these residents for success by exposing them to the educational, job training and employment opportunities that comes with easy and affordable access to high-quality internet service. To begin this work, CCAC proposes a program of 10 Chicago Community Areas with the lowest levels of broadband service and Internet use. Approaches proposed for equity-driven broadband expansion in these underserved communities and other priority development zones include:

- City-sponsored broadband infrastructure expansion, targeted to high-need neighborhoods with proximate community assets – Chicago public schools,

libraries, hospitals, CTA and police stations – where “hot spots” would be created for free Internet access. In addition, the CCAC working team made preliminary exploration of a variety of market-driven solutions that could provide low-cost or no-cost secondary devices (computers, tablets) would be provided to individuals for schoolwork, job searches and job applications.

- Direct subsidy by Internet service providers (ISP) to customers, using a standard, income-based formula to establish discount rates. Secondary devices could be supplied through the sale of customer data to the ISP, which would also provide funds for a service subsidy.
- Targeted use of various economic development funding tools to subsidize extensions of gig-speed capacity to target development zones.

Strategic Approach

An expanded broadband network is a critical path toward realizing equitable social, educational and economic opportunities in Chicago’s disadvantaged communities. Further, a stronger network can create new market opportunities for a wide range of business services. Funding the initiative will require public-private partnerships that will benefit multiple end users and service providers. Broadband investment areas should be identified and assessed for the potential impact economic anticipated through expanded service. Public partners in the systems inventory and assessments, and for approvals necessary to enable the build out along critical pathways would include:

- Chicago Department of Planning and Development
- Chicago Department of Transportation
- Illinois Department of Transportation
- Chicago Transit Authority
- Chicago Housing Authority
- Chicago Public Schools
- Chicago Public Library
- Chicago Community Colleges
- Federal Communications Commission
- US Department of Homeland Security

Organizing for Action

Chicago can lead the nation in demonstrating big city approaches to equity-driven technology that serves the social needs of targeted populations and supports neighborhood economic development. CCAC has a strong platform to Chicago's business community, public officials, Internet providers, community development experts, and educational resources to identify practical, efficient and cost-effective solutions to address these challenges. To begin the process, CCAC recommends the following actions:

- Outreach to key City and State elected officials, technology leaders, and planning and development experts to explore the feasibility and scope of an equity-based broadband service expansion program
- Under the leadership of the Mayor's Office, organize and convene a Steering Committee of City of Chicago authorities and departments, relevant State of Illinois entities, and leaders of Chicago's business, neighborhood, and not-for-profit organizations to oversee the required needs assessments, technical and market studies, and economic analyses to support implementation of a neighborhood broadband expansion program
- Organize working groups to carry out initial studies and to select **Phase I** broadband infrastructure projects, focusing on CHA and affordable housing program areas
- Identify funding for **Phase I** projects

Return on Investment

The most significant return on investment through a comprehensive broadband initiative is equity achieved in Chicago's underserved communities so that residents can fully participate in contemporary life. In addition to building network capacity, it will foster economic development and job creation, improve public safety and access to education, training and healthcare. The result is an enhanced quality of life for Chicago residents. For businesses, the network provides a framework for new market opportunities and access to a broader customer base. This will foster an environment for small businesses to locate and expand in targeted investment areas. Local governments will benefit from the economic boost and jobs a robust network can create. Further, by adding IoT devices to the network, the City of Chicago and State of Illinois will gain insight to valuable operational and safety metrics that can result in more timely services to residents, reduction in crime, and other social benefits.

D. NEXT STEPS

The ideas, concepts and proposals included in this Central City Strategy for All of Chicago white paper reflect the thoughtful considerations of a broad range of business, civic leaders and experts in Chicago's urban and economic development. This includes professionals in real estate, architecture, planning, transportation, technology and higher education who participated in CCAC's Roundtable and working groups.

The intent is to offer an initial framework, a menu of programs and projects and some recommendations for future inclusive growth within a new concept of the Central City. We believe these recommendations can be helpful in extending the reach of the Central City's growth to Chicago's neighborhoods to include contracting and job opportunities, neighborhood economic development, increased mobility and digital connectivity.

The approach suggested here can be integrated with those proposed by others as Chicago embarks on a new consideration of its future direction. There are also major topics, such as education and public safety, which are Chicago priorities that will need to be pursued alongside this agenda. There is a new opportunity, and an absolute need, to bring multiple perspectives together. This is one perspective and we hope it is a useful one.

The recommendations included in this white paper are offered to government, civic, business and community leaders for further consideration, investigation, debate and refinement. This is offered as an open source resource for all.

They are the beginning of a conversation and, we hope, a coherent and integrated one. Implementation will require consensus building among Chicago's business and civic organizations, and involvement of neighborhood economic and community development organizations throughout Chicago along with the support of City and State leadership. Where there is support, each of the proposals will need a lead sponsor from within government, the civic, business or community sectors.

Following this, each proposal will need to be defined in greater detail. Organizational responses, funding sources and implementation mechanisms can then be refined. The potential to integrate our proposals with existing programs and projects can be identified. For entirely new concepts, a sponsor and funding for feasibility testing should be identified.

Entirely new concepts may require administrative, executive or legislative changes. A program of raising operating and or capital resources will also be required.

As a first step, the CCAC is distributing this Draft White Paper and an accompanying slide show to panelists at CCAC's December 2018 symposium. We are also offering this package to Mayoral Transition Committee members as a resource during their deliberations. A full release of the CCAC White Paper is planned for May 2019.

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