

LECLAIRE COURTS

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS STUDY

FINAL DRAFT

2013

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In preparing this plan, URS Corporation and project team members made assumptions and estimates that are subject to uncertainty and variation. Some estimates are based on data obtained in interviews with third parties, and such data are not always completely reliable. In addition, we make assumptions as to the future behavior of consumers and the general economy that are highly uncertain. Therefore, while our analysis has been conscientiously prepared on the basis of our experience and the data available to us, we make no warranty of any kind that the plan concepts will, in fact, be achieved. URS Corporation shall have no obligation to update our findings and conclusions for changes in market conditions, transportation service levels, or agency priorities that occur subsequent to completion of this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Study Goals

This study is meant to further the GO TO 2040 regional plan goals, particularly those of creating livable communities that are healthy, safe and walkable, offer choices for timely transportation to schools, jobs, services and basic needs, and provide an alluring “sense of place.”

CHA seeks to gain realistic guidance for a balanced, market-oriented strategy to develop a progressive working class neighborhood as part of the overall community.

CHA intends to serve as the master developer of the property and develop and implement a redevelopment program consistent with the recommendations of this study.



Site and Study Area

Existing Conditions

- The LeClaire Courts buildings were demolished in 2011 and site now stands vacant and wooded.
- The site is immediately south of I-55 and there are high traffic counts on Cicero Avenue (40,800-61,600 ADT), which borders the site to the east.
- Although Midway Airport is one mile to the south, there is much land and vacant commercial space along Cicero Avenue.
- The surrounding neighborhood is made up of middle class single-family or small multi-family homes. The demographics are shifting to increasingly Hispanic, some black.
- The Cicero Avenue streetscape is in poor condition, the neighborhood street grid is disconnected, and there is little to no non-vehicular transportation infrastructure.
- No recent city plans include the study area.

Strengths

- The site is large (44 acres), vacant and controlled by a single owner
- The site has 1,800 feet of street frontage on Cicero Avenue
- There are three access points to the site from Cicero Avenue (one is signalized)
- There are many large, established trees

Opportunities

- Improvements to the site would bolster Cicero Avenue's image as a gateway to the City
- Site is well located to attract a diverse range of users (retail, institutional, industrial, and residential)
- The site is largest development opportunity between I-55 and Midway Airport
- Cicero Avenue may be considered for Bus Rapid Transit

Weaknesses

- The site is isolated from adjacent neighborhoods
- The site's street network is inconsistent with adjacent neighborhoods
- West 43rd Street traffic light is too close to the underpass
- The CN Railroad and I-55 on the north boundary of the site are elevated
- Pedestrian amenities along Cicero Avenue are lacking

Threats

- There are multiple commercial vacancies along Cicero Avenue
- Cicero Avenue is busy and wide; pedestrian crossings can be difficult



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Existing Access & Traffic Counts

Transit / Transportation Options

- I-55, the railroad embankment, and the Illinois-Michigan Canal present formidable barriers to the existing street network to the north and creates a small enclave around the proposed redevelopment site. This isolation decreases the market shed of potential transit riders.
- Although Metra trains (Heritage Corridor) run along I-55, the addition of a new station is unlikely. Similarly, there are no plans to expand nearby Pace routes to serve the site.
- Four CTA bus routes serve the study area, connecting to CTA Pink and Orange lines. Improved service levels on CTA bus route #54B South Cicero may be warranted with a commercial and residential development of substantial size. An increase in the number of riders on the route may justify more frequent service than the current 15 minutes during the rush hours and 20 minutes during midday and evenings. Cicero Avenue may be included in a later stage of the City's BRT plans.
- This study proposes that West 44th Street be designated as a future bicycle and pedestrian route (or path/lane). As the street grid is restored through the site, West 44th Street would provide a main east-west connection for all traffic modes. The multimodal nature of the street would be reinforced by the proposed traffic signal at West 44th Street and Cicero Avenue.

Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines

The guidelines seek to enhance the transit-friendliness and walkability of the redevelopment by focusing on five areas:

1. **Setting a high bar for redevelopment** - Foster positive neighborhood change by showcasing best development practices and elevating the existing site assets.
2. **Enhancing the site** - Maximize the development potential by relocating the traffic light to West 44th Street, addressing awkward parcel configurations, and projecting a new image along Cicero Avenue.
3. **Restoring the street grid** - Integrate the site into the surrounding neighborhood and diminish isolation by extending existing streets into the site's interior.
4. **Serving as a neighborhood catalyst** - Demonstrate commitment to livable communities by maintaining mature trees, physically/visually tying the site to adjacent neighborhoods, and developing infrastructure and "complete streets" that are friendly to pedestrians and transit users.
5. **Accommodating future transportation improvements** - If Cicero Avenue is identified for future BRT implementation, modify right-of-way design elements to support the new service. Additionally, include enhanced transit and flexible services (carsharing, vanpooling, shuttles, etc.) in site development planning.



Neighborhood Commercial Corridors and Land Use



Neighborhood Access Analysis

Market Analysis

- The large development-ready site (44 gross acres) is a scarce commodity in the City of Chicago; the site size and shape provides good flexibility to accommodate one or more uses in varying layouts. The site benefits from 1,800 feet of frontage along the preferred (west) side of Cicero Avenue.
- The analysis focused on commercial and institutional uses, not on housing. Commercial uses studied included: convenience retail, big box retail, and medical clinics. Institutional uses were a library and an educational use.
- The analysis found that the potential big box retail user pool is very limited and that a hotel use is unlikely due to the existing hotel cluster south of Midway Airport.
- If the current traffic signal at West 43rd Street were relocated to the middle of the site at West 44th Street (with a protected left turn signal), retail uses on the site would have a competitive advantage over other centers along Cicero Avenue. Types of supportable tenants include: casual sit down restaurants, service uses, pharmacy, and/or a cell phone store.
- The study concluded commercial development would likely be phased and that the preferred development program would be a mixed-use retail, medical, and institutional complex covering 9-15 acres.

Preferred Site Program

Site Program Options	Building Square Footage	Site Acreage
Mixed-Use Retail, Medical, and Institutional Complex		
Convenience Retail	20,000-25,000	1.5-2
Federally Qualified Health Center	15,000-25,000	1-2
Institutional - Branch Library	8,000-10,000	0.5-1
Institutional - Charter School	60,000-110,000	6-10
Total SF Range	103,000-170,000	9-15



Land Use and Transportation Access Recommendations

Conclusions

- The site has redevelopment potential, but the economic climate, along with the site's history and isolation present significant challenges.
- The economic climate is beyond the control of CMAP and CHA, but mitigating the site's history and isolation should be achievable.
- Balance must be maintained between maximizing the commercial potential of the Cicero Avenue frontage and developing a cohesive, livable community overall.
- Developing a phased mixed-use retail, medical, and institutional complex on the site appears to be the more reasonable commercial redevelopment program.
- The site redevelopment should facilitate already-programmed transit enhancements and the potential use of flexible transportation services.
- Adhering to the Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines will enhance livability and transit-friendliness.
- CHA should promote the implementation of the preferred site redevelopment program and land uses: commercial and institutional along Cicero Avenue, institutional within the site, and housing at the site's southwest corner.

Implementation and Next Steps

CHA will need to play the lead implementation role, with support from numerous other entities, as identified in the table.

Tasks and Responsibilities

Implementation Task	Primary Party	Other Involved Parties
Site Planning & Redevelopment		
Select Master Developer through RFQ/RFP Process	CHA	City, Consultants
Develop Master Redevelopment Site Plan	CHA	Alderman, City, Community, CMAP, Consultants
Incorporate high level of site development standards	CHA	Alderman, City, Community, CMAP, Consultants
Develop specific site plans	CHA	Developer(s), Consultants
Re-parcelize sites as needed	CHA	City, County, Developer(s), Consultants
Transit/Transportation		
Relocate traffic signal from West 43rd to 44th Street and remove cul-de-sac on West 44th Street	CHA	City, IDOT, Alderman, Community
Restore city street grid	CHA	City, Alderman, Community
Extend walkability improvements to neighborhood	CHA	City, Alderman, Community
Improve existing bus service & infrastructure	CHA	City, CTA, Alderman, Community
Provide enhanced transit services	CHA	City, service providers, Alderman, Community

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2012 the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), in collaboration with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), engaged a consulting team led by URS Corporation (URS) to conduct a study involving the proposed redevelopment of the former LeClaire Courts public housing development on Chicago's southwest side. The study was part of CMAP's Local Technical Assistance program, which provides planning assistance to communities across the Chicago metropolitan region to help implement the principles of GO TO 2040 – the comprehensive regional plan for the seven-county Chicago region under CMAP's jurisdiction. Funding was provided by a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The study primarily focuses on potential transportation and access-related enhancements that can support the eventual redevelopment of the site.



Figure 1. Site and Study Area Map



The Site and Study Area

The former LeClaire Courts property (the site) encompasses approximately 44 acres on the west side of Cicero Avenue between Interstate Highway 55 (Stevenson Expressway) on the north and West 45th Street on the south. Although CHA retains ownership of the property, the former residential structures were demolished in 2011 and the site is currently vacant, with the exception of the former site roadways and numerous mature trees.

CHA has also assembled additional property on the east side of Cicero Avenue, across from the former LeClaire Courts site. This smaller, narrower CHA landholding stretches from I-55 on the north to West 44th Street to the south. The redevelopment potential of the property east of Cicero Avenue will need to be more fully evaluated at a later date, but for the purposes of this study, the URS team did consider accessibility to and from both sides of Cicero Avenue.

For the purposes of analyzing the site in a broader community context, the URS team analyzed a larger study area for its work. The approximate study area extended from I-55 on the north to Archer Avenue on the south and from freight rail tracks on the east to Central Avenue on the west. While the majority of the study area is within the jurisdiction of the City of Chicago, a portion to the Study Area is within the Forest View community in unincorporated Cook County.

CHA seeks to gain realistic guidance for a balanced, market-oriented strategy to develop a progressive working class neighborhood as part of the overall community.

Study Goals

CMAP wishes for this study to further the goals in its GO TO 2040 regional plan, particularly those of creating livable communities that are healthy, safe and walkable, offer choices for timely transportation to schools, jobs,

services, and basic needs, and provide an alluring “sense of place.” CMAP also wishes for this study to further CHA’s and the City of Chicago’s goals for the former LeClaire Courts property and the surrounding community.

CHA’s goals for this study are to gain realistic strategic guidance that will allow it to pursue redevelopment of the property in a market-oriented and opportunistic manner, balancing between the goals of making the “highest and best use” of the property, and developing a progressive working class neighborhood as part of the overall community. CHA intends to serve as the master developer of the property and develop and implement a redevelopment program consistent with the recommendations of this study.

Study Process

The URS team approached this study as a set of discreet but interconnected analyses aimed at answering the following questions:

- **Existing Conditions** – what are the current land use and transportation conditions in and around the former LeClaire Courts property, and how might these conditions impact the site’s redevelopment?
- **Transit Options** – what is the current transit service in and around the former LeClaire Courts property, and how might realistic potential transit improvements enhance the site’s redevelopment?
- **Market Analysis** – what are the market conditions along Cicero Avenue in and around the former LeClaire Courts property, and what are realistic market scenarios for the site’s redevelopment?
- **Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines** – what types of generalized site development guidelines could enhance the livability and accessibility of the site’s redevelopment?



Each analysis was developed and documented using a multi-phase process consisting of data collection and review, key person interviews, and formulation of conclusions and recommendations. Each analysis included formal reviews by CMAP and CHA and their input and feedback was incorporated into the study.

Throughout the study, URS maintained communications and held conversations with key stakeholders, including transportation and transit agencies, business entities and organizations, and public officials. The URS team convened and, with CMAP and CHA, held informal conversations with the current and previous Chicago aldermen within the study area and received their guidance and insights.

Report Organization

This project report is a compilation of the URS team's analyses: Existing Conditions, Transit Options, Market Analysis, and Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines. It can be used in several ways:

1. Readers can read from start to finish to gain a comprehensive and roughly sequential sense of the overall study
2. Readers can jump to any of the specific analyses to dive right into that subject matter
3. Readers can focus primarily on the project's Executive Summary and use this report simply to support or further explore items of interest

What this Study Is & What this Study Isn't

This study is a high-level information tool that is intended to help CHA and the City of Chicago redevelop the former LeClaire Courts property as a livable, walkable and transit-accessible community that is woven into the greater southwest side community.

This study is not a detailed site redevelopment plan, program or feasibility assessment. This study was not intended to include, nor did it assess or offer judgment as to the number, type or mix of residential units to be included in the Project Area or within the broader Study Area.

This study is intended to help CHA and the City of Chicago redevelop the former LeClaire Courts property as a livable, walkable and transit-accessible community that is woven into the greater southwest side community.



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CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing conditions analysis concentrated primarily on the Cicero Avenue corridor, extending from I-55 on the north to West 47th Street on the south. The former LeClaire Courts property fronts Cicero Avenue on the west side of the street, between I-55 and West 45th Street.

Demographics

The 2011 estimated demographic characteristics of the population within a two mile radius from the former LeClaire Courts site¹ are summarized in Table 1. The population around the site grew faster than the overall city of Chicago over the past decade (2.69% versus -6.9% growth rate). Residents of the area are slightly younger than the citywide average (31.3 versus 32.9 years). A larger share of the population is white and Hispanic (54.1% versus 45% white; 69.3% versus 28.9% Hispanic). And a smaller percentage of the study area population is black, compared to the city overall (4.2% versus 32.9%). Median household income exceeds the citywide average, yet per capita income is lower (\$48,807 versus \$47,371 per household; \$18,310 versus \$27,940 per capita). This is because the average household size near the site exceeds the citywide average (3.38 versus 2.57 people per household). While the owner occupancy rate is higher within the study area, the median home value is lower than in the city overall (88% versus 47.0% owner occupancy; \$218,005 versus \$260,800 median home value).

Population	The population of 80,221 grew by 2.6% over the last decade.
Age	The median age is 31.3 years .
Race / Ethnicity	The population is 54.1% white and 4.2% black . The population is 69.3% Hispanic origin (any race).
Income	The median household income is \$48,807 and average per capita income is \$18,310 .
Housing	There is an owner occupancy rate of 88% and a median home value of \$218,005 .

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

¹ Circular Area Profiling System (CAPS); Ground Zero Coordinates: Latitude=41.812377, Longitude=-87.745838; Missouri Census Data Center, <http://mcdc.missouri.edu/>, accessed 24 September 2013.



Figure 2. Roadway Network

Prior Plans and Studies

The City of Chicago's *South Cicero Corridor Study* (June 2005) provides a guide for physical improvements along Cicero Avenue between Midway Airport and I-55. The former LeClaire Courts site is not included in this study. This plan identifies Cicero Avenue as a Gateway for the City of Chicago and proposes development opportunities and right-of-way improvements to revitalize the corridor.

There is a previous *LeClaire Courts Redevelopment Plan* from July 2005. Circumstances have changed in the last eight years and this plan is now outdated.

Traffic

Cicero Avenue runs north-south and includes three through lanes in each direction with a center median that accommodates dedicated left-turn lanes at each intersection. The lanes are ten feet wide and the center median is 14 feet. The distance from curb-to-curb is 80 feet. Traffic signals are located at West 43rd and 47th Streets as well as the I-55 ramps.

Traffic volumes along Cicero Avenue range from 40,800 vehicles per day (vpd), just north of I-55, to 61,600 vpd, between I-55 and West 47th Street. Traffic generally moves smoothly, except the northbound direction of travel at the intersection of Cicero Avenue and West 43rd Street which frequently experiences backups resulting from heavy traffic volumes wanting to enter the I-55 ramps. The underpass at I-55 is also narrow and slows northbound and southbound traffic moving through the area.

Side streets connecting to Cicero Avenue generally discourage through traffic. Through traffic crossing Cicero Avenue is blocked in three places in the study

area. On West 44th and 45th Streets cul-de-sacs just east of Cicero Avenue block through traffic and access/egress at West 46th Street on the east side of Cicero Avenue is limited to right turning movements only.

Pedestrians

Sidewalks within the corridor are generally six feet wide and some sidewalks include a two-foot planting strip between the sidewalk and the road. In many areas along the corridor sidewalk conditions are poor. Often sidewalks are over grown, broken, or obstructed by utilities and signs. Between West 45th and 47th Streets multiple oversized curb cuts interrupt the sidewalk.

The only corner in the study area that is ADA compliant is the northwest corner of Cicero Avenue and West 46th Street and this corner is partially obstructed by a fire hydrant. Crossing Cicero Avenue as a pedestrian can be difficult. In the study area, only West 43rd and 47th Streets have pedestrian crossing signals and there are no protected islands (a safe place for pedestrians to stop in the middle of the crosswalk).

The current land uses and streetscape conditions are detailed in the following series of full-page figures (Figure 6 through Figure 11).

Bicycles

There are no bicycle lanes along Cicero Avenue, and no bike parking areas. The closest bike lanes are on Central and Archer Avenues, well south and west of the site.

Transit

CTA Bus 54B South Cicero has stops at every block both north and south bound along Cicero Avenue in the study

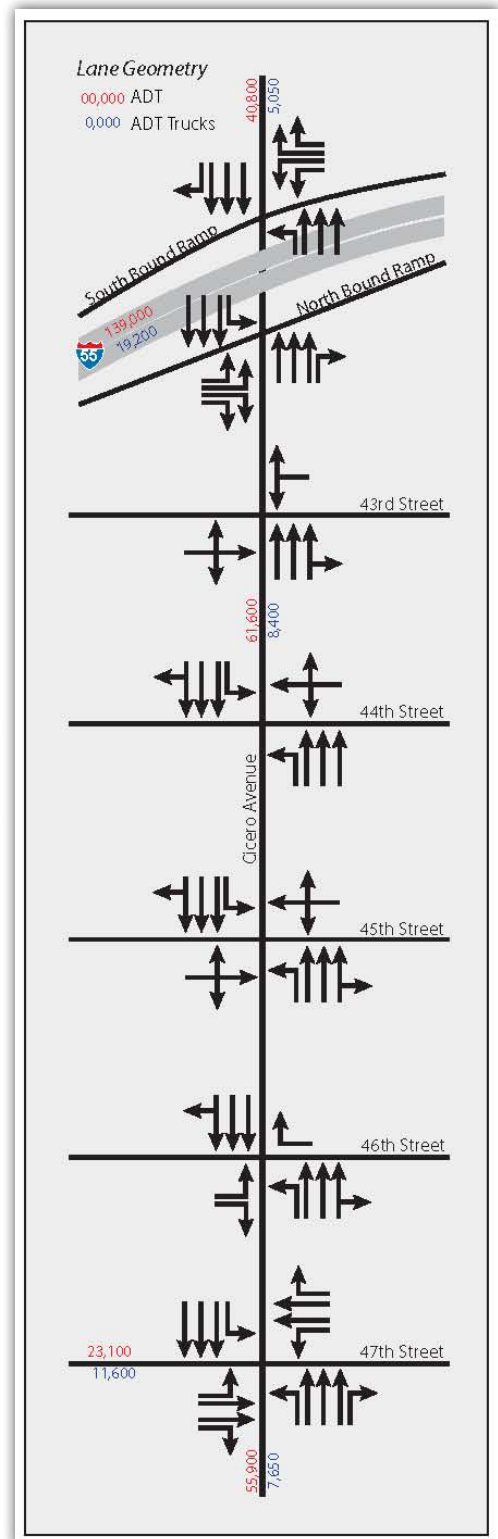
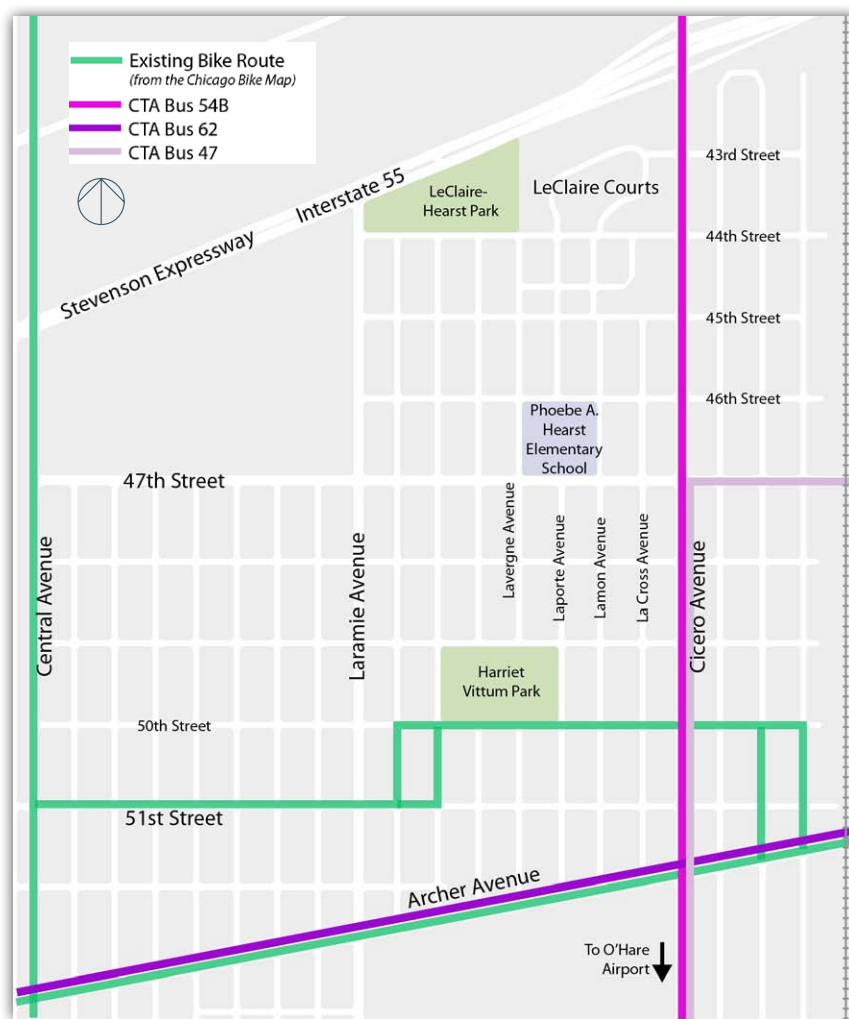


Figure 3. Lane Geometry



area. There are three bus shelters in the study area, all on the southbound side of the street (at West 43rd, 44th, and 45th Streets). Route 54B connects to the Pink Line Cermak “L” Stop, Orange Line Midway “L” Stop, and the Ford City Mall.

Figure 4. Bicycle and Transit Routes



Freight

The northern edge of the study area is bordered by I-55, a railroad embankment, and the Illinois-Michigan Canal. The CREATE program (a partnership between freight railroads, transit providers, and local, state, and

federal agencies) is intended to resolve rail congestion in the corridor. A proposed grade separation “flyover” project would be located very near to this location; however, there are no other known issues or potential improvements for freight lines within the study area.

Land Use

The majority of the street frontage along the corridor is vacant land and about half of the vacant frontage is the former LeClaire Courts. The majority of the vacant land has been razed; there is only one vacant building. Commercial uses are clustered on the south side of the corridor between West 45th and 47th Streets. Renaissance at Midway Retirement Home and The Sportsman’s Inn are on the east side of Cicero Avenue Between West 44th and 46th Streets.

The entire former LeClaire Courts site, including the street frontage on the west side of Cicero Avenue, is currently zoned Single Family (RS3). CHA-owned property on the east side of Cicero Avenue is zoned Community Shopping District (B3-1) and Planned Development (PD 1081).

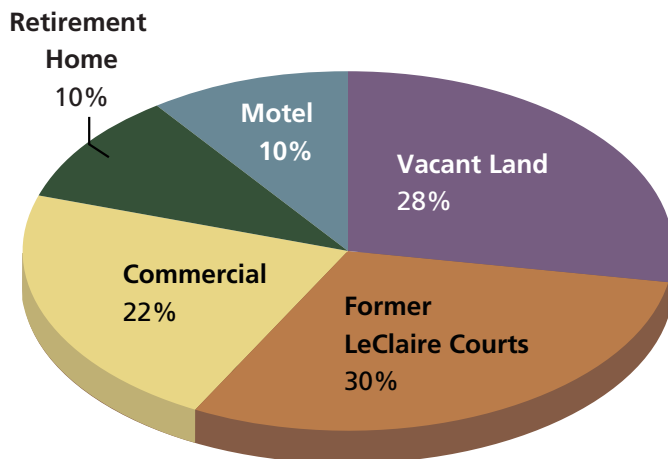


Figure 5. Land Use of Street Frontage along Cicero Avenue



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- Sidewalk Conditions**
 - Poor Sidewalk Condition
 - ||||| Curb Cuts
- Sidewalk Amenities/Impediment**
 - Bus Stop
 - Bus Shelter
 - Utility Pole
 - Side Walk Obstruction
- Intersection**
 - ADA Curb at intersection
 - ◇ Pedestrian Signal
 - ||||| Crosswalk
- Street Conditions**
 - Raised Median
 - Planted Median
- Land Use**
 - Commercial
 - Residential
 - Industrial
 - Vacant Land
 - Vacant Building

NOTES:

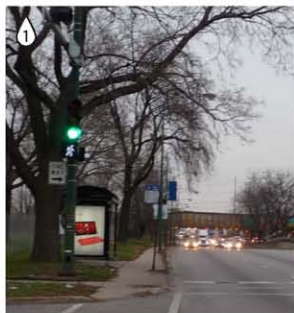
- narrow underpass
- traffic congestion
- poor sidewalk condition
- obstacles (light poles, street signs, fire hydrants) in sidewalk

Figure 6. Land Use and Right-of-Way Conditions (1 of 6)





Figure 7. Land Use and Right-of-Way Conditions (2 of 6)





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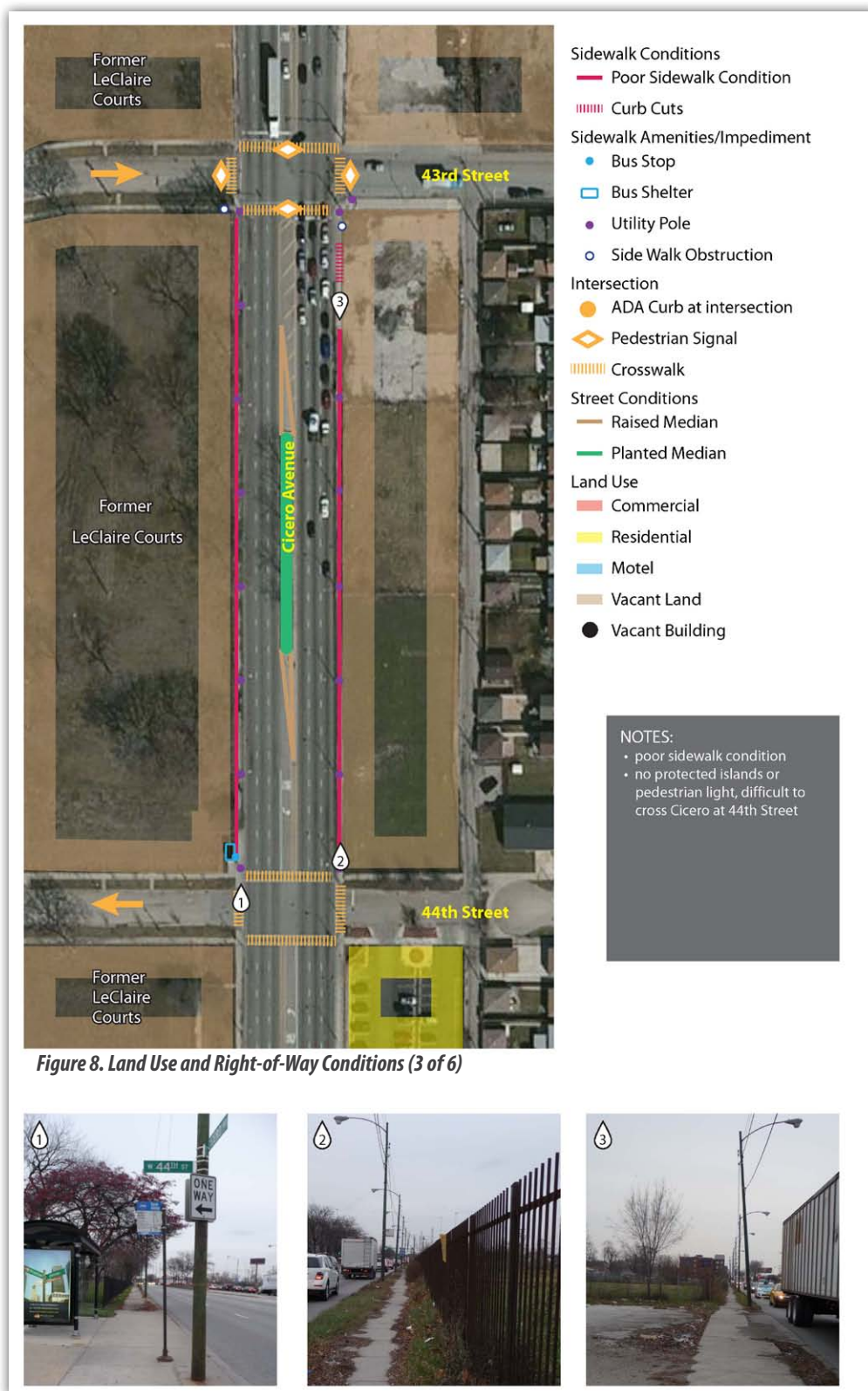




Figure 9. Land Use and Right-of-Way Conditions (4 of 6)





LECLAIRE COURTS

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- Sidewalk Conditions**
- Poor Sidewalk Condition
 - Curb Cuts
- Sidewalk Amenities/Impediment**
- Bus Stop
 - Bus Shelter
 - Utility Pole
 - Side Walk Obstruction
- Intersection**
- ADA Curb at intersection
 - Pedestrian Signal
 - Crosswalk
- Street Conditions**
- Raised Median
 - Planted Median
- Land Use**
- Commercial
 - Residential
 - Motel
 - Vacant Land
 - Vacant Building

- NOTES:**
- no protected islands or pedestrian light, difficult to cross Cicero at 46th Street
 - obstacles (light poles, street signs, fire hydrants) in sidewalk
 - sidewalks in decent condition
 - multiple curb cuts

Figure 10. Land Use and Right-of-Way Conditions (5 of 6)





Figure 11. Land Use and Right-of-Way Conditions (6 of 6)

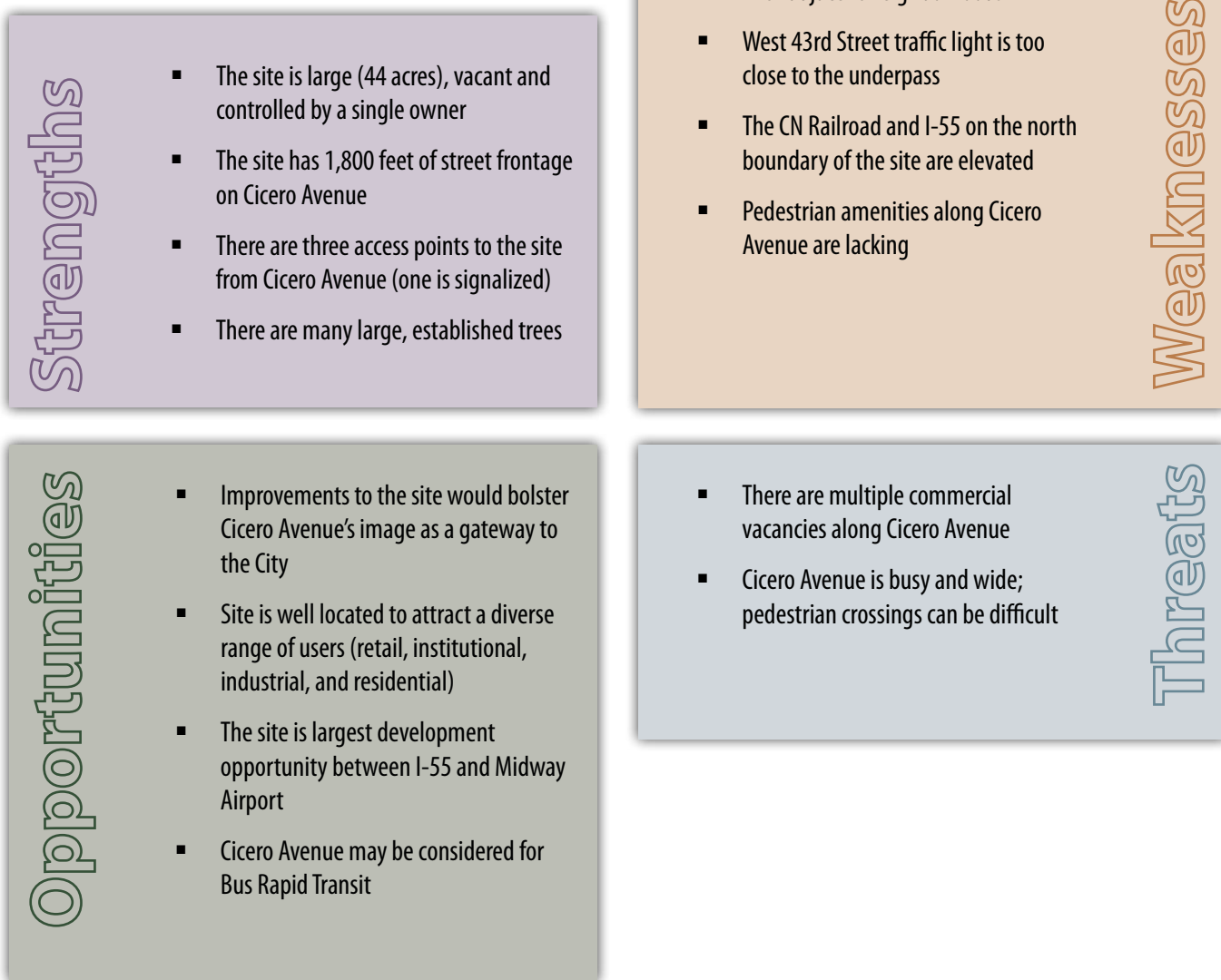




Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The following figure is an assessment of the site's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the site and opportunities and threats are external. Among the site's greatest assets is its size and location on Cicero Avenue. Several of the site's challenges relate to disconnection from the surrounding street grid and the lack of pedestrian and bicycle amenities in the area.

Figure 12. Summary: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats





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CHAPTER 3: MARKET ANALYSIS

SB Friedman Development Advisors (“SB Friedman”), part of the consultant team led by URS, conducted a market assessment for commercial development on the Cicero Avenue frontage of the LeClaire Courts site. The market findings are intended to provide guidance to CMAP and CHA regarding the scale, size and type of commercial development that may be supportable on the site. Based on the scope of the project, analysis was restricted to the LeClaire Courts site, but the market conclusions outlined in this chapter for the LeClaire Courts site may have implications for future development on the east side of Cicero Avenue.

The former LeClaire Courts site is owned by the Chicago Housing Authority (“CHA”) and its redevelopment is being undertaken by CHA as part of their *Plan Forward*. Although the site’s development is being launched by commercial uses, the long-term intent is to create a mixed-use development including a mixed-income residential component. The residential program has not been determined at this time, but recent CHA mixed-income housing developments featured an array of housing types and have historically been structured as one-third reserved for CHA leaseholders, one-third affordably priced, and one-third market rate. Directly across from the LeClaire Courts site, CHA is also acquiring vacant property on the eastern frontage of Cicero Avenue in a continued effort to ensure a productive and vibrant community.

To complete the commercial market assessment, SB Friedman evaluated site characteristics, conducted targeted interviews with local developers and brokers, analyzed local demographics, and inventoried

Although the site’s development is being launched by commercial uses, the long-term intent is to create a mixed-use development including a mixed-income residential component.



competitive uses in the vicinity of the site. The following sections provide a summary description of the site characteristics, basic demographic profile of the area around the site, and the market outlook and potential feasibility of each commercial product type. Based on the assessment of market feasibility of each commercial product, a summary section presents potential commercial development program options for the site and offers strategic recommendations to enhance its marketability.

Site Characteristics

Advantages

Most commercial uses require sites of an appropriate size and shape, good visibility, and convenient transportation access. Key advantages strengthening the LeClaire Courts site's market potential for commercial use are as follows:

- It is a large development-ready site containing approximately 44 gross acres (including right-of-way) of vacant land, with a depth of approximately 1,200 feet and a frontage of 1,800 feet on Cicero Avenue. The availability of such a large development-ready site is a scarce commodity in the City of Chicago. The site size and shape provides good flexibility to accommodate one or more uses in varying layouts with limited physical constraints.
- The site's proximity to I-55 as well as the three CTA bus stops at West 43rd, 44th and 45th Streets provides good access and connectivity to both the broader region and the local community. Furthermore, the site has two right-turn access points for southbound traffic and one signalized exit from the site at West 43rd Street.
- The property is on the west side of Cicero Avenue, approximately one-and-a-half miles north of Midway International Airport, and benefits from the heavy average daily traffic flow of 48,000 to 61,000 vehicles

headed toward the airport and other industrial employment centers.

- Lastly, single family residential surrounds the site on the west, south and east; this residential population could have a favorable impact on the development potential of neighborhood or community serving retail.

Challenges

Accessibility is an important feature for a variety of commercial uses as it influences the boundaries of the trade area, and reflects possibilities for activities, such as working or shopping, available to residents of a particular geographic area. Neighborhood access at the LeClaire Courts site is challenged by the following:

- Side streets connecting to Cicero Avenue do not provide through traffic. From West 43rd to 46th Streets, cul-de-sacs, two adjacent industrial parks and railroad tracks prevent through traffic; these blockages currently limit access to the residential population east of Cicero Avenue.
- West 43rd Street is a one-way, eastbound road providing access out of the site, but preventing both right and left turn access into the site for auto traffic from Cicero Avenue.

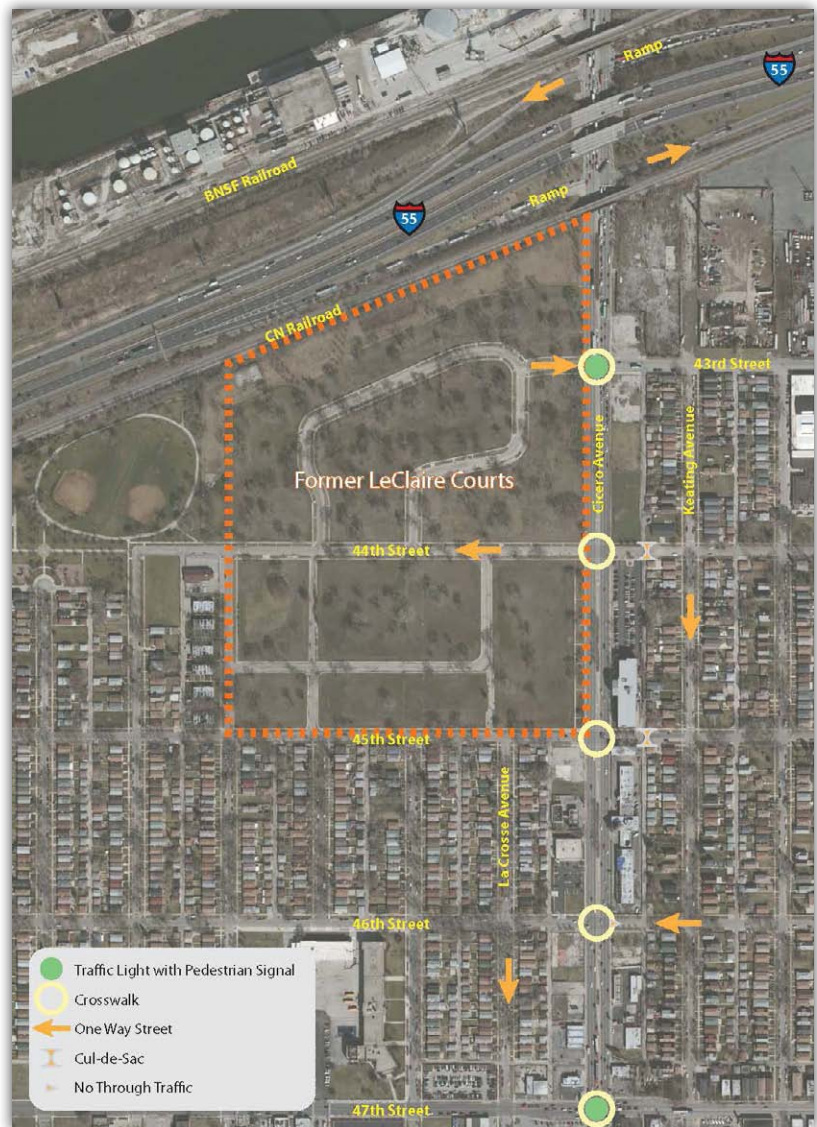


Figure 13. Site Context



Demographic Profile

Five-year forecasts indicate that population growth in a three-mile radius (0.4%) lags expectations of growth in Chicago (1.4%) (see Table 2, below). While median household income is slightly higher relative to income in Chicago, estimates show a lower rate of increase at 18 percent by 2017 relative to the City's increase of 20 percent. The area surrounding the former LeClaire Courts is 76 percent Hispanic, a concentration that is two and a half times greater than the broader City of Chicago. Forecasts indicate this trend will continue through 2017.

Table 2. Demographic Profile Comparison

	3-Mile Radius from LeClaire Courts Site			City of Chicago		
	Year 2012	Year 2017	Change	Year 2012	Year 2017	Change
Total Population	123,404	123,888	0.4%	2,730,305	2,769,695	1.4%
Median Household Income	\$44,416	\$52,406	18.0%	\$41,403	\$49,725	20.1%
Percentage Hispanic Population (any race)	76.0%	78.3%	2.3%	29.7%	31.7%	2.0%

Market Potential

Based on an initial assessment of site suitability, demographic factors, and community desires expressed through key stakeholders, it was determined that the following three commercial real estate products should be assessed further as they had the greatest likelihood of being market feasible.

1. Convenience/strip retail
2. Big box retail
3. Medical clinics/health centers and medical office buildings

The analysis also included a review of public/institutional land uses, such as a library or an educational facility,

because they are compatible and complementary to both residential and some forms of commercial development. A full analysis of hotel uses was not included within the scope of work due to the specialized nature of the use and budget constraints. However, the study provides a very preliminary assessment of the potential feasibility of a hotel use on the site.

Convenience Strip Retail

Convenience strip retail centers provide convenience goods, such as food and beverage, general merchandise, pharmacy, and personal services such as dry cleaning and hair salons. They rely heavily on drop-in traffic and are therefore typically located on high traffic corridors such as Cicero Avenue. Besides high traffic volumes, ease of access, visibility, and convenient ingress and access are critical to the success of such centers.

SB Friedman inventoried convenience retail in the vicinity of the site and conducted a “presence-absence” analysis to identify missing or under-represented retail categories. In addition, interviews were completed with retail brokers familiar with the market area to provide additional insight concerning retail market potential and the competitive position of a new convenience retail center at the LeClaire Courts site.

Existing Neighborhood-Scale Retail Supply

Cicero and Archer Avenues are currently the primary locations for neighborhood retail. As shown in Figure 14, the adjacent railroad and industrial parks reduce residential access east of Cicero Avenue, streamlining commercial uses along these two primary corridors. Pulaski Avenue presents additional retail competition to the east; this dynamic is discussed in the Big Box section of this chapter.



There are approximately 350 total businesses operating along the Cicero and Archer Avenue commercial corridors between West 43rd Street and Archer Avenue, and Pulaski Road and Narragansett Avenue. However, retailers are predominantly within the Food and Beverage and Personal and Financial Services categories, with a total of 62 and 87 respectively (Table 3). Auto-oriented uses also present ample competition with auto part dealers and gas stations prevalent in the area surrounding the site.



Figure 14. Neighborhood Commercial Corridors and Land Use

Although many of the primary chains in each of the retail categories are represented along the corridors, several appear to be under-represented or missing. Within the Food and Beverage category, there are numerous fast food restaurants available, but there is an absence of quality, casual sit-down dining options, such as Panera Bread, Taco Del Mar, or Noodles & Company. In addition,

CVS pharmacy is not present among the general merchandisers or pharmacy retailers, and there appears to be additional retail opportunity within both the Furniture and Home Furnishings and Electronics and Appliances segments.

Table 3. Existing Retail Competition

	<i>Food & Beverage</i>	<i>Auto Retail/Service</i>	<i>General Merchandise</i>	<i>Personal & Financial Services</i>	<i>Furniture & Home Furnishings</i>	<i>Electronics & Appliances</i>
Total Businesses	62	14	2	87	3	3
Chain Retailers	McDonald's Starbucks Subway Popeye's JJ's Chicken & Fish Beggars Pizza Dunkin Donuts Pepe's Burger King Wendy's Jewel Osco Aldi	Auto Zone O'Reilly Auto Parts Chicagoland Truck Parts Firestone Tire Gas Stations	Family Dollar Walgreens	PLS Loan Store Currency Exchange Cash 4 Gold Cash America Allstate Insurance State Farm Insurance Bank of America TCF Bank	Bedding Expert Quality Furniture	Radio Shack Boost Mobile

A relatively new retail strip center, at the northeast corner of Archer and Cicero Avenues, is an example of the type of convenience retail that could be built on the LeClaire Courts site. Built in 2007, the site is approximately one acre, and the center is almost 50 percent vacant as of January 31, 2013. Current tenants are Beggars Pizza and Boost Mobile. Though this center appears to have an optimal location at a key intersection, poor access and low visibility of side/rear parking have been a challenge. The center does not benefit from a protected signalized left turn, making it difficult for southbound traffic to cross the heavy traffic flow for ingress and egress. Though northbound entry on Cicero Avenue seems straightforward, the side and rear parking lots are difficult to see due to the constrained half-block site.

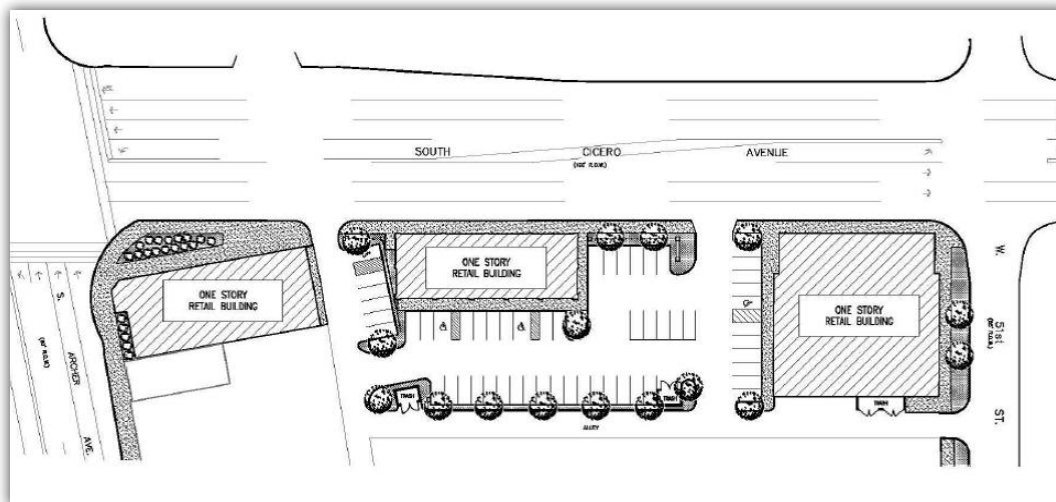


Figure 15. Archer Cicero Plaza Site Plan



Figure 16. Archer Cicero Plaza Street Frontage

Market Outlook

A retail strip center at the LeClaire Courts site may be able to better leverage the high traffic volume on Cicero Avenue. If the current traffic signal at West 43rd Street were to be relocated to the middle of the site at West 44th Street, along with a protected left turn signal, a retail center at this location would have a

competitive advantage over other centers along Cicero Avenue. It would provide superior access via a signalized intersection and the potential for a better layout due to the site size, frontage and depth. Types of supportable tenants include: Food & Beverage (casual sit down and fast food), service uses, pharmacy, and/or a cell phone store. The size for such a shopping center would likely range from approximately 20,000 to 25,000 square feet.

Big Box Retail

Big box retail facilities are large, industrial-style stores. While some operate as single-story, freestanding



buildings, others function within a community center configuration, often co-anchored by a grocery store and other mid-box anchors. Generally, in an urban environment the community center format has a trade area that ranges from a seven to ten minute drive time (about two and a half to three miles).

To assess the market outlook for big box retail, SB Friedman analyzed the spatial distribution of major big box retail clusters around the site. Based on the presence or absence of anchor stores and interviews with retail brokers, we present a market outlook for a big box anchored retail center.

Supply and Spatial Distribution

As illustrated in the big box distribution map (Figure 17), most major big box retailers are represented in established clusters surrounding the LeClaire Courts site, creating a highly competitive retail environment.

There are five big box clusters within a 25-minute drive time of the site. The two closest clusters are within a 10-minute drive time, one located north of the site along Cicero Avenue at West 22nd Street, the other located east of the site along Pulaski Avenue. Many of the general merchandise, home improvement and office supply stores are represented in these clusters. In addition, grocery is well represented within the 10-minute drive time. There is a Target with fresh grocery within both the West 22nd Street/Cicero Avenue and Pulaski Avenue developments, a Pete's Fresh Market on Pulaski Avenue, and both a Jewel Osco and ALDI on nearby Archer Avenue.

Furthermore, several of the fastest growing mid-box clothing and general merchandise stores have already committed to locating in the new Pulaski Promenade, a planned development located at West 42nd Street and Pulaski Avenue. These retailers include: Burlington



LECLAIRE COURTS

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS STUDY

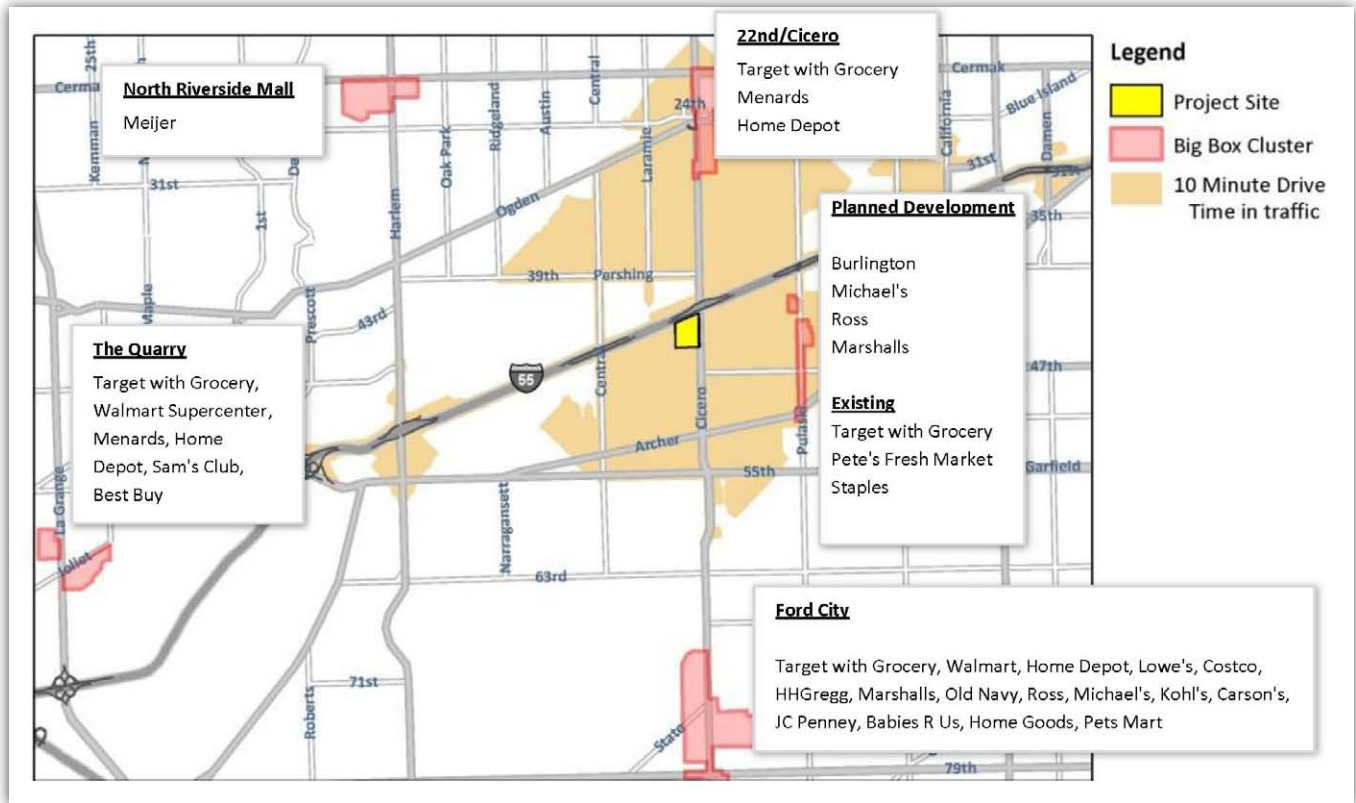


Figure 17. Supply and Spatial Distribution of Big Box Retail

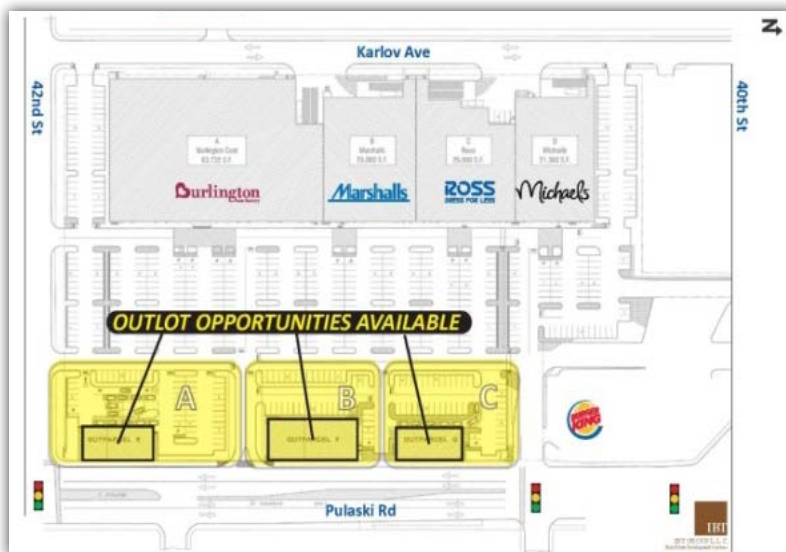


Figure 18. Pulaski Promenade: Planned Development

Coat Factory, Ross, Michaels and Marshalls. This new development poses considerable competition as it is on a well-established and growing segment of Pulaski Avenue with access to I-55. The development is bordered by three signalized intersections with favorable access points, and is located just north of Target, Pete's Fresh Market and Staples.

Of the few major retailers that are not currently represented, the Michigan-based big box retailer Meijer may be a potential option. Meijer offers

grocery and general merchandise and has been looking to expand into the Chicago market. The retailer opened its first concept store, Meijer Marketplace, in Melrose Park, Illinois in 2011. Though there appears to be an abundance of grocery options already present in the LeClaire Courts area, the Marketplace concept could be tailored to neighborhood scale and preferences. The potential Meijer Marketplace could shift its retail balance toward general merchandise and include a targeted focus on Hispanic grocery items (as executed in Melrose Park) to meet the needs of the growing Hispanic population in the community. Co-anchor tenants for the retailer often include: Famous Footwear, LA Fitness, Marshalls, Best Buy and Office Max. Meijer has fourteen stores in the Greater Chicagoland area but none currently within City limits; therefore, the LeClaire Courts site may be a potential candidate if the retailer is considering a City of Chicago expansion.



Figure 19. Meijer Marketplace

Market Outlook

Success of the big box retail concept is contingent upon attracting an anchor tenant, such as Meijer. The traditional Meijer store has an average selling space of about 225,000 square feet but the Marketplace format ranges from 90,000 to 96,000 square feet. However, given the highly competitive retail environment created by established nearby corridors, the potential of mid- to big box locating at the subject site appears to be limited.

Medical Use

Throughout the nation, health care institutions are a growing economic force in their communities. This movement is being fueled by the increased need for health care services for an aging population, as well as the additional insured population resulting from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. These



changes in demand will be driving the need for new and refurbished medical office buildings, which will likely be established through three primary avenues, indicating varying levels of market potential for the LeClaire Courts site:

- **Hospitals:** In response to the growing health care needs and legal requirements created by the Affordable Health Care Act, hospitals are expanding their role and placing physicians in local communities through new satellite medical office buildings. However, they are locating primarily in more affluent areas with patients who have private insurance. The area in the vicinity of the site has a substantial uninsured population, estimated at approximately 21 percent, the third-highest level among the Chicago community areas and slightly higher than Chicago's citywide average of 20 percent of residents uninsured.
- **Independent Physician Groups:** These groups, un-affiliated with a hospital, are providing either primary care and/or outpatient surgical procedures. The patient base needed for a physicians group is also primarily one with private insurance. Approximately 60 percent of physicians in the U.S. work for a larger group or hospital - this trend is accelerating due to the Health Care Act. Still, the high level of uninsured population encompassing the LeClaire Courts area poses a challenge for a physicians group. Additionally a relatively new medical office facility built in 2011 on Cicero Avenue in Bedford Park, approximately four miles south of the site, is 39 percent vacant, suggesting that near term demand for this use is relatively weak.
- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs):** These community health centers operate in lower-income communities designated as having a health professional shortage (primary medical, dental or mental health) and/or a medically underserved area or population. As indicated



*Figure 20. Independent Surgical Center
Magna Medical Campus, Bedford Park: 60,000 SF (39%
vacant)*

by the map on the following page, the LeClaire Courts site is within a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area and a Medically Underserved Area/Population, although not in a Primary Care or Dental Care Shortage Area. In addition, the site is located in a low-income census tract (5602) eligible for the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program, which could provide financing for an FQHC. An example of the use of this program is the Austin Family Health Clinic, also located in a low-income medically underserved area on Chicago's west side. It benefited from \$6.5 million in NMTC financing in 2010 and is anticipated to serve approximately 10,000 patients per year.



*Figure 21. Federally Qualified Health Center
Austin Family Health Clinic: 18,300 SF*



Figure 22. Medically Underserved Areas, 2012



Market Outlook

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has identified that the area has a shortage of mental health professionals, as well as a medically underserved Asian-American population. There is therefore potential for a new FQHC; new centers range in size from 15,000 to 25,000 square feet. In contrast, the likelihood of a hospital or independent physicians group locating at the site seems low in the near term due to several factors: the relatively lower-income and high uninsured demographic, the high vacancy at the new medical facility in nearby Bedford Park, and the uncertainty surrounding the actual impact of the Affordable Care Act. For example, the estimates of newly insured people have been questioned, and although the law mandates that uninsured individuals buy health insurance and businesses with more than 50 full-time equivalent employees provide insurance to staff, the extent to which people or organizations will comply or opt to pay the resulting fines is still highly debated.

Public/Institutional Use

Public/institutional land uses include governmental office buildings, hospitals, social services, recreational and cultural facilities, schools, and libraries. They help provide meaningful community activities and services, and serve as both community anchors and activity generators for adjacent commercial uses.

Libraries and Charter Schools

There are three branch libraries within five miles of the LeClaire Courts site, the closest being Archer Heights Public Library at one-and-a-half miles. On average, branch libraries in this area are generally between two and four miles from each other. However the local community has expressed a desire to have a branch

library in the neighborhood.

The population of school-aged children within three miles of the site is expected to remain somewhat stable, with a slight increase projected in ages 10 to 14 (fourth to eighth graders) and a slight decrease in high school-aged children between the ages of 15 and 19. A representative of a charter school has shown interest in locating at the LeClaire Courts site.



Figure 23. Chicago Public Library and School Institutions within 5 Miles

Examples of recently built library and school community anchors are shown in Figure 24. No closures of neighborhood schools or libraries are known.

Outlook

Institutional uses, such as libraries or schools, can serve as community anchors as well as activity drivers, and are compatible alongside the suggested commercial uses such as an FQHC or convenience retail strip. In addition, institutions complement the existing and future residential development, and stakeholder interviews revealed particular interests in a new library and school for the community.



Figure 24. Example Community Anchors



Greater Grand Crossing Library

- Built in: 2010
- Building SF: 8,800
- Site Acreage: 0.5 acres



Gary Comer College Prep High School

- Built in: 2009
- Building SF: 45,000
- Combined Site Acreage: 3.2 acres
- Students: 650



Gary Comer Youth Center

- Built in: 2006
- Building SF: 80,000
- Combined Site Acreage: 3.2 acres
- Serving: South Shore Drill Team of 250 youth and broader community residents
- Facility Programming: college readiness, athletics, tutoring, performing and visual arts, health and wellness, technology, media, and horticulture

Hotel

Analyzing hotel feasibility was beyond the project scope. However, a high-level assessment of local market competition determined that there is an existing hotel cluster just south of Midway Airport, between West

65th and 67th Streets, with remaining site availability of approximately six acres (see Figure 25). The development-ready sites within this existing cluster could easily accommodate one or two additional hotels, and may be more attractive options than the LeClaire Courts site due to closer proximity to the airport and the nearby Ford City power retail center.

Further study would need to be completed if a competing hotel cluster is to be considered. However, given that CHA is purchasing portions of land on the eastern side of Cicero Avenue, this area may be an option for hotel uses as it would complement the commercial development on the LeClaire Courts site.



Figure 25. Hotel Cluster South of Midway Airport

Recommended Development Program Options

Based on our market assessments, we recommend the following two development program options, detailed in Table 4.

Option 1, Mixed-Use Retail, Medical and Institutional Complex, appears to be a more likely development scenario and provides the most community benefit as the product types are compatible with each other as well as complementary to existing and future residential uses. In addition, the maximum program utilizes the site area more efficiently as the convenience retail and FQHC can occupy the Cicero Avenue frontage allowing the



institutional uses to locate toward the preferred middle and rear portions of the site.

Although potential may exist for Option 2, Community Serving Retail Center, it is a less attractive choice in terms of compatibility with adjacent residential uses and is contingent on attracting a big box anchor. Given the steep retail competition existing on well-established nearby corridors, securing a mid- to big box anchor presents a challenge.

Table 4. Site Program Options

Site Program Options	Building Square Footage	Site Acreage	Estimated Employment*
Potential Option 1 (Most Likely): Mixed-Use Retail, Medical, and Institutional Complex			
Convenience Retail	20,000-25,000	1.5-2	33-44
Federally Qualified Health Center	15,000-25,000	1-2	60-100
Institutional - Branch Library	8,000-10,000	0.5-1	4-5
Institutional - Charter School	60,000-110,000	6-10	34-63
Total SF Range	103,000-170,000	9-15	132-210
Potential Option 2: Community Serving Retail Center			
Big Box Anchor (e.g. Meijer)	100,000	9-10	167
Other Supportive Retail	15,000-50,000	1-5	25-83
Total SF Range	115,000-150,000	10-15	192-250

* Employment Estimates based on the following factors (SF/employee): retail, 600; health, 250; library, 2,000; school, 1,750.

Figure 26 illustrates potential generalized land use recommendations for the site, based on the viable uses suggested by the market analysis. The Cicero Avenue street frontage is lined by commercial and/or institutional uses, with additional institutional campus space in the northwest corner of the site. Residential uses and a restored street grid are suggested for the southern portion of the site. Site planning and potential layouts for various combinations of potential non-housing uses will be a future responsibility of the selected site planner/developer.

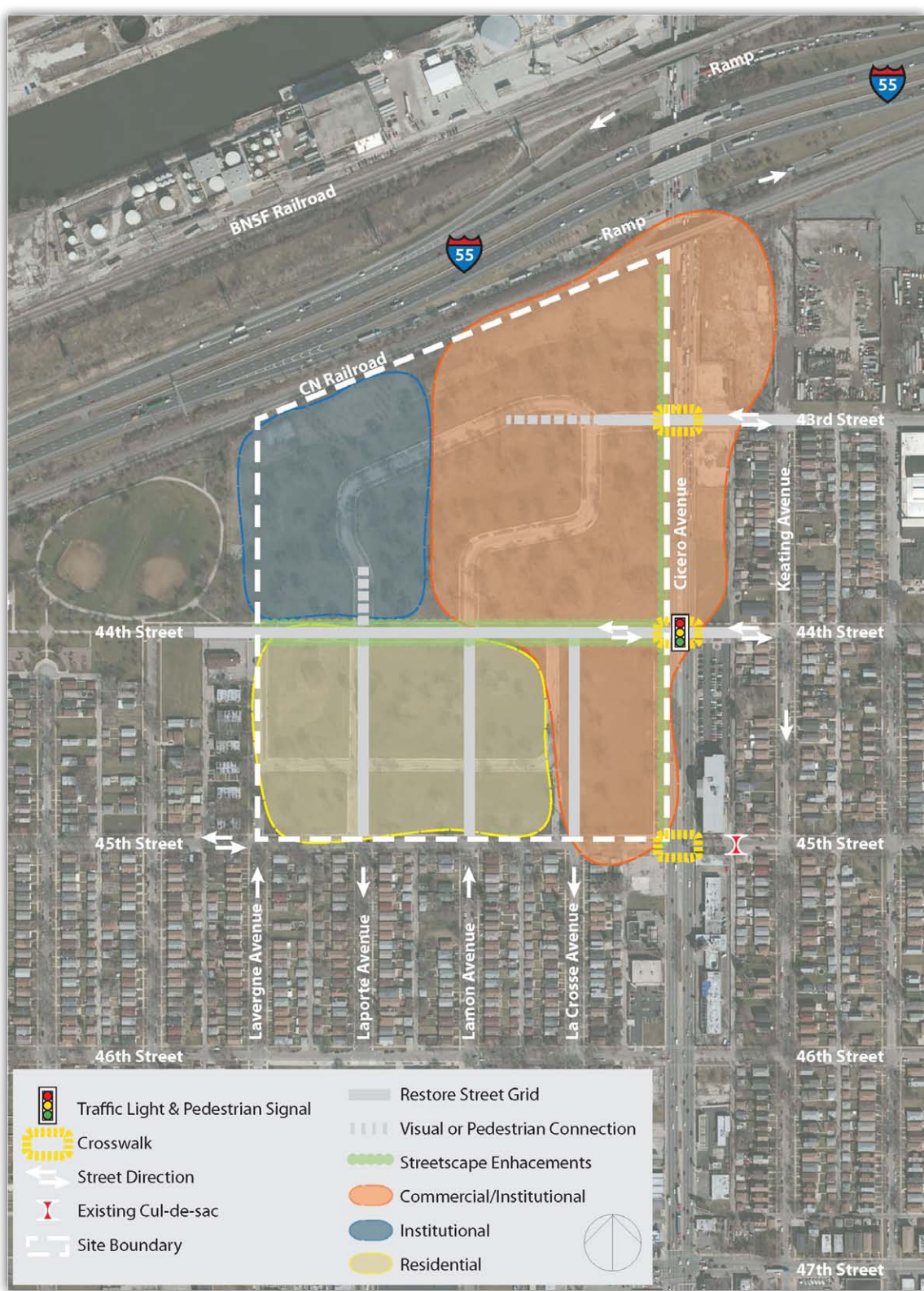


Figure 26. Land Use and Transportation Access Recommendations



Design Considerations

The following design considerations are recommended to maximize the attractiveness of the site for potential commercial uses:



Figure 27. Relocate West 43rd Street Traffic Signal

- **Relocate Traffic Signal:** The traffic signal currently at West 43rd Street and Cicero Avenue should be moved to West 44th Street and Cicero Avenue, at the center of the site (as shown in Figure 27), to enhance marketability. This would help southbound automobile drivers to better view and access the uses on the site after emerging from the I-55 underpass. A protected left turn at the relocated West 44th Street and Cicero Avenue signal would also allow northbound users to have easy access to the site. This would allow commercial uses on the site to have the ability to leverage both southbound and northbound traffic on Cicero Avenue.
- **Phased Development and Connectivity:** Commercial and/or institutional uses developed at the site are likely to be phased over time. To ensure a cohesive and pedestrian friendly environment each phase should consider connections to future components of the development, including the future residential uses.
- **Neighborhood Connections:** Currently both West 44th Street and West 45th Street end in cul-de-sacs before reaching Cicero Avenue, limiting access to the LeClaire Courts site from residential development to the east. As new commercial and/or institutional uses are planned for the LeClaire Courts site, it would be beneficial from a market perspective to eliminate these cul-de-sacs and restore east-west access to Cicero Avenue. This would serve to potentially increase patronage of commercial uses by residents of neighborhoods to the east.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSIT OPTIONS

This chapter explores a range of transportation improvements that have the potential to improve access to the proposed redevelopment at the former LeClaire Courts housing complex. It describes the current conditions, identifies improvements to the existing transportation network, and outlines considerations for development.

Current Conditions

Street Network

The 44-acre redevelopment site is situated just south of Interstate I-55 and west of Cicero Avenue, bounded on the south by West 45th Street and on the west by Lavergne Avenue. The traditional grid street network prevalent throughout the city is disconnected in the study area due to the presence of the combined expressway, railroad and Illinois-Michigan Canal corridor. East-west streets do connect with the regular grid east of Cicero Avenue, but access is constrained by industrial uses and the presence of the Belt Railway just east of Cicero Avenue. In addition, when the former LeClaire Courts complex was built in 1950, a non-traditional street plan was introduced which discourages through-traffic movements. Further discouraging through-traffic are two cul-de-sacs situated just east of Cicero Avenue on West 44th and 45th Streets, which are the only streets within LeClaire Courts that maintain the traditional grid network.

Traffic flow on Cicero Avenue is high, with average daily traffic measuring 40,800 to 61,600 between I-55 and West 47th Street. Much of this traffic is generated by the



access to the expressway and the proximity to Midway Airport. There is a signalized intersection at West 43rd Street which is one-way eastbound and therefore only provides egress from the site. The site can be accessed

at either West 44th or 45th Streets and both intersections have a protected left turn lane from northbound Cicero Avenue. West 44th Street is one-way in the westbound direction.

Bicycle Paths

Currently there are no designated bike paths within the study area. However, the *Chicago Streets for Cycling Plan 2020*¹ has identified proposed bike routes which will connect the proposed redevelopment site with a city-wide bike network. The plan classifies bike routes into three categories: Neighborhood, Crosstown and Spoke. Neighborhood bike routes are those on relatively quiet streets with low traffic volumes. Crosstown routes are long, continuous paths that lead to major destinations and are characterized by the

presence of bus routes and higher traffic volumes than Neighborhood routes. Spoke routes focus on bicycle commuting and are direct routes to and from downtown.



Figure 28. Neighborhood Access Analysis Map

1 Chicago Bike Program website: <http://www.chicagobikes.org/public/SFC.php>. Accessed 6/7/13.

The current plan includes a north-south Neighborhood bike route along Lavergne and Laporte Avenues, connecting LeClaire-Hearst Park with Vittum Park. This north-south Neighborhood route will intersect with a planned Crosstown bike route on West 47th Street, and eventually connect with a Spoke route along Archer Avenue.

Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)

The study area is served by four CTA bus routes: #54B South Cicero, #47 47th, #62 Archer, and #62H Archer/Harlem. Of these, route #54B is the only bus route that directly serves the proposed redevelopment site. The #54B travels the eastern boundary of the site in the north/south direction and is included in CTA's "Key" bus network. Key bus routes are the backbone of CTA bus services, providing basic geographic coverage and are generally the most productive bus routes.² The #54B operates between Cermak/Kenton on the north and Ford City Mall on the south. Of the 137 bus routes reporting ridership in September 2012, route #54B ranked 72nd in average weekday ridership.³ Route #54B provides connections to the CTA Pink Line and Metra BNSF rail line north of the site, and to the CTA Orange Line at the Midway Bus Terminal on the south. The Midway Bus Terminal is a major transportation hub, providing connections not only to the Orange Line but also to 11 CTA bus routes and seven Pace bus routes. A list of these bus routes and the destinations served is shown in Table 5. Major destinations served by the #54B include Hawthorne Works Shopping Center, Hawthorne Racecourse, Midway Airport, Bedford City Square, and Ford City Mall.

Route #47 is also a Key CTA bus route and ranks 34th

Table 5. Bus Routes Serving Midway Bus Terminal

<i>Route</i>	<i>Major Destinations</i>
CTA #47	None
CTA #54B	Hawthorne Works Shopping Center, Hawthorne Racecourse, Midway Airport, Bedford City Square, and Ford City Mall
CTA #55	University of Chicago, Museum of Science & Industry
CTA #55A	None
CTA #55N	None
CTA #59	University of Chicago
CTA #62	Chicago's downtown
CTA #62H	None
CTA #63	Kennedy King College
CTA #63W	None
CTA #165	Clearing Industrial District
Pace #379	Ford City Mall, Moraine Valley College
Pace #382	Bedford Park Clearing Industrial District, Ford City Mall
Pace #383	Oak Forest Hospital, Ford City Mall, Rivercrest Shopping Center
Pace #384	Ford City Mall, Scottsdale Shopping Center, Chicago Ridge Mall
Pace #385	Moraine Valley College, Ford City Mall
Pace #386	Toyota Park, Northwestern Business College, 5th Municipal District Courthouse, North Creek Business Center, DeVry University Tinley Park Campus
Pace #390	United Parcel Service – Hodgkins, IL

Source: RTA System Map September-December 2012

² Chicago Transit Authority Service Standards, July 2001.

³ Regional Transportation Authority RTAMS website, accessed November 26, 2012.



in average weekday ridership.⁴ This route, located just south of the LeClaire Courts site, operates in the east-west direction between Lake Park and Cicero/Archer Avenues. During the early morning and late evening hours route #47 is extended to serve the Midway Bus Terminal. Route #47 connects to the Metra Electric 47th/Kenwood station, and to CTA's Green, Red, and Orange Lines.

Bus route #62 operates diagonally through the study area with the southwest terminal at Archer/Harlem, and the northeast terminal at State/Kinzie in downtown Chicago. During the Owl time period, (1 am to 4 am), #62 serves the Midway Bus Terminal. Route #62 connects to the Orange Line at multiple stations and the major destination is Chicago's downtown. Of the four routes serving the study area, it has the highest weekday ridership and ranks 30th in average weekday ridership.

Bus route #62H is part of CTA's Support bus network, which complements the rail and key bus network by serving a variety of specialized functions to improve market share.⁵ The route operates between West 63rd/Archer Avenue and Midway Terminal via Harlem, Archer, and Cicero Avenues. The route has experienced relatively stable ridership and ranks 101st in average weekday ridership. The route does not operate on Sundays.

Table 6. Study Area Bus Service Hours and Ridership

Route	Day Type	Service Hours	Average Ridership
CTA #47	Weekday	4a - 12:30a	12,289
	Saturday	4a - 12:30a	9,308
	Sunday	4a - 12:30a	6,660
CTA #54B	Weekday	4a - 12:00a	4,326
	Saturday	4a - 11:00p	3,695
	Sunday	7a - 8:00p	2,431
CTA #62	Weekday	24 hour	12,791
	Saturday	24 hour	8,221
	Sunday	24 hour	6,422
CTA #62H	Weekday	5:30a - 8:30p	1,452
	Saturday	5:30a - 6:15p	666

Source: RTAMS September 2012 data

Table 6 shows the service hours and number of average riders by day type for each of the routes in the study area.

A change in route #54B ridership level attributable to the relocation of LeClaire Courts residents is difficult to ascertain. This is because ridership data is recorded at the route level and there are many developments along the course of a route that can influence route ridership. In addition, the closing of the LeClaire Courts complex occurred over several years starting in 2007. As residents

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Chicago Transit Authority Service Standards, July 2001.

relocated, their former homes were left vacant and the population of the neighborhood slowly decreased over time. This continued until the summer of 2009 when all remaining occupied units were closed within a few months. This slow reduction in population makes attributing any ridership change to the development closing difficult. Another complicating factor was the addition of a new CTA bus route along Cicero Avenue in 2006, the #X54 Cicero Express, and its subsequent elimination in 2010. LeClaire Courts residents had the option of riding either route #54B or #X54. CTA ridership records for both routes as well as ridership on bus route #54, which was also impacted by route #X54, are shown in Table 7. System level ridership is shown for comparison.

Table 7 illustrates that although ridership on routes #54 and #54B decreased by 10 and 35 percent respectively, ridership on route #X54 increased substantially. Ridership on the three routes combined increased by approximately 3 percent between 2006 and 2009.

Metra

The train tracks for Metra's Heritage Corridor border the northern edge of the proposed redevelopment site; however there is no train station in the vicinity. The Heritage Corridor provides weekday service between Joliet and Union Station in Chicago with three trains in the morning rush hour and three trains returning to Joliet in the afternoon rush hour.

The low service levels are due to capacity constraints resulting from conflicts with railroad freight movements. In order to substantially improve service levels, Metra recommends construction of four grade separation projects to eliminate grade crossing conflicts between commuter rail service and freight movements. These four grade crossings and the corresponding freight railroads

Table 7. Average Weekday Ridership Comparison

Route	September 2006	September 2009	Percent Change
CTA #54	14,337	9,361	-35%
CTA #54B	4,211	3,769	-10%
CTA #X54	497	6,423	1,192%
CTA #54, #54B + #X54	19,045	19,553	3%
System	1,032,730	1,076,429	4%

Source: RTAMS September 2012 data



are Brighton Park (CSX), Corwith (BNSF), LeMoyne (Belt Railway Company), and Canal (Indiana Harbor Belt). The LeMoyne grade crossing is located just east of Cicero Avenue at the Belt Railway. Raising the Metra tracks to bridge over the Belt Railway would require lengthy approaches that would extend west of Cicero Avenue, making it difficult, if not impossible, to add a station in the vicinity.

Metra's Cicero Station on the Burlington Northern is located approximately two miles to the north, which decreases the market shed for a new station. Additionally, although the Midway Airport complex is located just over two miles south of the Heritage Corridor and the former LeClaire Courts site, a bus transfer would be required to access the airport. Ridership on airport-serving transit that involves multiple transfers is typically very low.

Therefore, due to the physical limitations, the presence of another nearby Metra station, and the limited service levels on the Heritage corridor, Metra does not currently support planning for a station at this location.

Pace

There are four Pace bus routes in the vicinity of the redevelopment site. Two of these bus routes, #390 and #392, operate on limited schedules to serve the UPS sorting facility in Hodgkins, Illinois. Pace route #390 provides one southbound trip from West 47th Street and Cicero Avenue in the very early morning hours which returns northbound at approximately 4 am. Pace route #392 operates along Central Avenue north of the expressway and provides seven trips to UPS per day. These two routes are financially supported by UPS.

Pace express bus routes #755 and #855 travel along I-55 adjacent to the site, but these routes do not leave the

expressway. There are no current plans to alter these or any other Pace bus routes in order to provide additional access to/from the LeClaire Courts site. As noted above, several Pace bus routes terminate at the Midway Bus Terminal. CTA route #54B provides a connection between the proposed redevelopment site and these Pace routes, affording patrons access to many destinations.

Location Concerns and Opportunities

I-55, the railroad embankment, and the Illinois-Michigan Canal present formidable barriers to the existing street network and create a small enclave around the proposed redevelopment site. Interruption of the grid street network isolates the site from areas to the north and west. This isolation decreases the market shed of potential transit riders and the remaining market shed may be insufficient to support high capacity rail transit.

The non-traditional nature of the street pattern within the site hinders access to parks and schools in the immediate area. The lack of through streets to the west and north also hinders the design of fixed route bus service within the site. However, CTA bus route #54B South Cicero is a major north-south bus route with good service levels that could eventually be upgraded to express or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. The CTA #54B stops at the Midway Airport complex, less than two miles south, offering connections to the Orange Line, as well as other CTA and Pace bus routes.

Any potential transit enhancements to improve the accessibility of the redevelopment site should consider the following:

1. Transit service should be appropriate to the size of the development;

The non-traditional nature of the street pattern within the site hinders access to parks and schools in the immediate area. The lack of through streets to the west and north also hinders the design of fixed route bus service.



2. Pedestrian paths and bikeways should be provided for all development types; and
3. Space considerations for future transit facilities and features (bus shelters, cut-outs for bus stops, BRT stations, etc.), should be included in site plans.

Potential Transportation Improvements

Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes

Lavergne and Laporte Avenues are proposed as bicycle routes in the *Chicago Streets for Cycling Plan 2020*. This study proposes that West 44th Street is designated as a future bicycle and pedestrian route (or path/lane). As the street grid is restored through the site, West 44th Street would provide a main east-west connection for all traffic modes. The multimodal nature of the street would be reinforced by the proposed traffic signal at West 44th Street and Cicero Avenue (described below). Lavergne Avenue, bordering the west edge of the site, provides an opportunity to create a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly north-south connection as an alternative to the high traffic volumes on Cicero Avenue.

Relocating the traffic signal from West 43rd Street to West 44th Street would improve the visibility of the redevelopment site and therefore its marketability.

Relocate Traffic Signal

Relocating the traffic signal from West 43rd Street to West 44th Street would improve the visibility of the redevelopment site and therefore its marketability. Currently, traffic from the north does not have time to see the proposed development site and make a “turn” decision prior to the current signal location at West 43rd Street. Moving the signal to West 44th Street would center the primary access point on the site’s frontage and allow traffic emerging from the underpass to see the development. Centering the traffic signal will also create a gateway entrance for the development.



Operating Characteristics

In order to relocate the traffic signal, the cul-de-sac on West 44th Street just east of Cicero Avenue would need to be removed. This would require discussions with the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), procurement of a permit for the work, and a public vetting process with area residents. The first step in the process would be to contact the Alderman and begin discussions with area residents. The responsibility for moving the signal lies with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). A proposal to relocate the traffic signal should be directed to IDOT and should include a traffic signal warrant analysis (a written justification and analysis showing that the relocation is warranted), plans for removal of the cul-de-sac, and a traffic impact study documenting the amount of traffic generated by the proposed development.

Upon installation of the traffic signal at West 44th Street, both West 43rd and 44th Streets should become bidirectional. Currently, West 43rd Street is one-way eastbound and West 44th Street is one-way westbound. The new traffic signal should include protected left turn lanes for northbound and southbound Cicero Avenue, and a pedestrian signal to improve pedestrian safety.

Feasibility Evaluation

Preliminary discussions with IDOT staff indicate that if the traffic signal were relocated as proposed, traffic signal spacing on this stretch of Cicero Avenue would continue to be appropriate. Obtaining community approval to remove the cul-de-sac at West 44th Street may be the only challenge to implementing this proposal.



Improvements to Existing Bus Service - #54B South Cicero



Figure 29. Southbound #54B South Cicero bus at Cermak

Redevelopment of the currently vacant site is expected to generate increased traffic by both automobiles and transit. Improved service levels on CTA bus route #54B South Cicero may be warranted with a commercial and residential development of substantial size. Increasing the service frequency would provide a more convenient service and possibly encourage more travelers to use transit. Waiting times would be reduced, benefiting all riders on the route, including those making transfers.

Analysis of transfer data from September 2012 reveals that approximately 44 percent of route #54B weekday riders transfer to another route. Patrons of the LeClaire Courts redevelopment would likely make similar transfers.

The target market for improved #54B service consists of patrons traveling to and from the new development. Depending on the type of development constructed, these patrons may be making work trips, shopping trips or personal business trips.

Operating Characteristics

Bus route #54B currently operates approximately 20 hours per day on weekdays, 19 hours on Saturdays, and 13 hours on Sundays and holidays. These service hours should provide sufficient transit coverage for any type of development built on the site. An increase in the number of riders on the route may justify more frequent service than the current 15 minutes during the rush hours and 20 minutes during midday and evenings. Saturday and Sunday service frequency is generally every 15 minutes.

Ridership Level Needed to Support Improvement

Potential ridership is always an important consideration in assessing the feasibility of any transportation

improvement. Forecasted ridership must be great enough to warrant capital improvement investments and to help pay for the on-going operating costs of new service. Because the details of the new development are unknown, it is not possible to estimate the ridership levels that may be generated by the development. However, CTA's Service Standards⁶ provide guidance on the number of riders necessary to support various service frequencies. In order to improve the service interval, or time between buses, to 12 minutes during the rush hour, an additional 30 to 35 riders in the peak half hour would be needed on a daily basis. Because ridership does not increase in only one time period but is distributed across all service hours, the distribution of riders throughout the day must be analyzed in order to project the number of riders per day required to support an increase of approximately 30 riders in the peak half hour. This analysis translates to an annual ridership increase of over 700 riders per day or an increase in daily ridership of approximately 16 percent.

Feasibility Evaluation

Improving the frequency of service on bus route #54B may be feasible provided that the following two conditions are met:

- The LeClaire Counts redevelopment or other new developments in the corridor generate additional riders to justify the increased service levels; and
- The CTA operating budget can accommodate the change; costs are currently estimated at \$490,000 annually.⁷

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Based on CTA's estimated operating cost per hour of \$106, which includes the capital cost of a bus.



New Flexible Service

Flexible Services could be provided by the developer or building owner if a more tailored service were needed or desired. The type of development constructed, the associated density, and the needs of the tenants would determine the type of flexible service that could be implemented. Options include carsharing, shuttle service or vanpooling. One or more of these services could be implemented by the building developers as an amenity for the tenants, or could be implemented and managed by businesses or homeowners associations for their tenants' private use. The target market would include the residents and/or tenants of the new development. Flexible service arrangements could allow sponsors to deliver specialized transit service focused on the specific needs of the tenant and/or residents. Flexible services could be tailored for each portion of the development and offer an added value incentive to promote the development.

Operating Characteristics

Carsharing is an alternative to car ownership and car rentals. It is an attractive option for people who only occasionally need an automobile, or who occasionally need to use a type of vehicle different from their own. Members enrolled in a carsharing service may reserve a vehicle by the hour or by the day. Vehicles are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Reservation, pick-up and return are self-service and vehicle maintenance costs, including fuel, are included in the rates. In Chicago there are two well-established carsharing companies, I-Go and Zipcar.



Figure 30. Carsharing vehicles in parking garage

Anecdotal evidence shows that carsharing programs do well in relatively dense areas with good transit service. Few predictive studies to estimate carsharing

membership rates have been conducted for the North American market. One study examining carsharing programs in the San Francisco area cites a developer's statement that at least 300 housing units are necessary to sustain a resident-only carsharing program. Research has shown that after joining a carsharing program, household car ownership rates drop, allowing members to save on automobile operating costs and reducing the number of parking spaces required by the household.

Shuttle service may operate between two primary destinations, such as between an airport and a hotel, or it may provide a circulator function serving several destinations within a small service area. Shuttles may operate on-demand or as a scheduled service, and the vehicles used are often vans or small cutaway buses. Shuttle services are generally complementary to the riders, and are paid for by the developer or building owner as an added-value service. The shuttles may be contracted services or provided directly by the developer, building owner or association.

Shuttle service operating costs can vary widely depending on the type of shuttle and the hours of service provided. Operating and maintenance costs are likely to range from \$50 to \$70 per hour,⁸ depending on the type of vehicle used and labor rates. While many shuttles are provided as a perk for tenants' use, sponsors of the service should have some benchmark for knowing whether this perk is worth their support. There are few examples of acceptable productivity levels for sponsored shuttle service; however, statistics from public transit providers indicate that an average of five passengers per hour is an acceptable level of flexible service use.⁹



Figure 31. Shuttle vehicle example

8 2011 NTD Data Tables 12 & 19 for Demand Response Mode.

9 Potts, J. F., M. A. Marshall, E. C. Crockett, and J. Washington. *A Guide for Planning and Operating Flexible Public Transportation Services*. TCRP Report 140. Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, Washington, D. C., 2010.



Figure 32. A Pace Vanpool

Vanpooling is an organized ridesharing arrangement in which a number of people travel together, usually between fixed points on a regular basis. The van may be individually owned, company owned, leased, or owned by a third party. Expenses are shared, with the exception of the driver who does not pay any of the expenses but is responsible for arranging vehicle maintenance, cleaning the vehicle, filling the gas tank and driving. A vanpool program may be organized by the developer, employer, building owner or association.

Traditional vanpools are formed by people who work at the same location and who live in close proximity to each other or can collect at a meeting spot such as a train station or parking lot. Non-traditional vanpools such as shuttles sponsored by employers are focused on the employment site and rides are provided to connect with satellite office locations, public transportation, lunch trips and the like. Guidance on the cost of vanpools can be obtained through Pace's website.¹⁰ The fares for Pace's vanpool program vary depending on the number of riders in the van and the daily round trip miles. As an example, a van with four passengers and one driver travelling less than 20 daily round trip miles will cost each passenger \$112 per month. This fare covers all costs of the vanpool including fuel, maintenance, insurance, tolls, roadside assistance, and van washes. The driver rides for free and arranges for vehicle maintenance.

Feasibility Evaluation

Implementation of some type of flexible service program may be feasible if the development can afford the relatively small costs associated with implementation and maintenance. For large developments the costs of such programs are minimal compared with the overall costs associated with the development. Implementation

¹⁰ Pace website accessed January 30, 2013, www.pacebus.com/sub/vanpool/traditional_vanpool.asp.

of a carsharing program requires only the provision of one or two parking spaces in a visible, public location. Carsharing programs are generally self-sufficient but would benefit from a sponsor “kick-starting” the implementation with a one-time capital investment, marketing initiatives and/or short-term financial support. Implementation of a shuttle program sponsored by the developer or building owner requires an on-going commitment to administrative responsibilities, a capital investment in one or more vehicles, and on-going operating costs. Traditional vanpools work best when sponsored by the employer. If the proposed development attracts a tenant with a large employee base, then implementation of a vanpool program is very viable.

Long Range Transit Plans

As defined in this study, long range plans are those that are at least five to seven years from the beginning planning phase. Two long range projects in the vicinity of the LeClaire Courts site are BRT service on Cicero Avenue, and the Mid-City Transitway, both of which are described in detail below. In the case of the Mid-City Transitway, beginning plans for this project are likely more than ten years distant. The Mid-City Transitway was evaluated in the CMAP GO TO 2040 Plan. However, due to the realities of limited funding, not all projects evaluated in the planning process could be included as a funded priority in the 2040 plan. As a result, the Mid-City Transitway is not a funded priority project. Alternative funding arrangements or a future change in funding priorities would be necessary to move this project forward.

Cicero Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

BRT is a type of bus service that incorporates features of rail transit, such as special right-of-way treatments and



Figure 33. CTA's Jeffery Jump BRT Service



half-mile or greater station spacing, to achieve faster travel speeds. Typically BRT is branded as a separate mode from local bus by using different vehicles and paint schemes. CTA first implemented elements of BRT with

the Jeffery Jump, which began service in November 2012 along Jeffery Boulevard. CTA has also completed an Alternatives Analysis of BRT on Ashland and Western Avenues, and is currently moving forward with subsequent planning phases for Ashland Avenue.

The City of Chicago will soon be performing a study to analyze and recommend a BRT network plan for the City. The proposed BRT alignments recommended by this upcoming study will not be known until at least 2014; however Cicero Avenue is a possible candidate for BRT service given the width of the corridor (generally two or more travel lanes in each direction) and current ridership level. In addition, the Metropolitan Planning Council report, *Bus Rapid Transit: Chicago's New Route to Opportunity*, published in August 2011, proposed a network of ten BRT corridors within the City of Chicago.

Cicero Avenue from the Pink Line to West 95th Street was included as one of the ten BRT corridors.

Although this project is not yet in the planning phase, it is prudent to recognize the possible implementation of major improvements. Developers interested in the additional market attraction that Cicero Avenue BRT could generate should be aware of the facility improvements that may be required to accommodate travelers using these modes. BRT requirements include a minimum of 65 feet of curb space on Cicero Avenue to accommodate a 60-foot vehicle; bus stop areas sufficiently sized to contain large passenger shelters,



Figure 34. CTA's renderings of BRT along Ashland Avenue

kiosks and benches; and appropriate pedestrian paths between the development and the BRT stop.

Due to the novelty of BRT as a widely used transit mode in North America, there has been little research devoted to the impact of land use conditions on BRT station ridership. BRT stations are generally placed at least one-half mile apart and serve transfer points and/or major destinations. Typically, the rush hour minimum service frequency for BRT systems is ten minutes. In order to support ten minute service intervals in the corridor, ridership on the #54B must increase by 27 percent. Conditions must warrant construction of the BRT improvements along the entire corridor, not just at the development site. In addition, stop locations are planned within the context of the entire corridor; therefore, placement of a stop at the former LeClaire Courts site is not guaranteed.

Implementation of BRT service on Cicero Avenue is technically feasible given the width of the corridor. However, forecasted ridership levels must justify the capital cost associated with the improvement, as well as the on-going operating costs. Inclusion of Cicero Avenue in the City of Chicago's upcoming BRT network plan will be the first step in supporting the feasibility of this improvement.

Implementation of BRT service on Cicero Avenue is technically feasible. However, forecasted ridership levels must justify the capital cost as well as the on-going operating costs.

Mid-City Transitway

The Mid-City Transitway would create a new north-south transit service along the Belt Railway corridor. The Mid-City Transitway is proposed as either a rapid transit rail or BRT operation traveling north-south along the Belt Railway ROW from the Jefferson Park Blue Line Station to Ford City Shopping Center and then along an undetermined east-west alignment to connect to the Red Line. Stations are planned at transfer points with existing



transit services.¹¹ The Belt Railway is approximately one-quarter mile east of Cicero Avenue (and the LeClaire Courts site), and is bordered along its length by industrial uses or single-family residential development.

The Mid-City Transitway is not currently envisioned as a priority long range project. If plans for the Mid-City Transitway are advanced, the service could provide additional access to the proposed LeClaire Courts redevelopment. Note that as with BRT service, conditions must warrant construction of the improvement along the entire corridor, not just at the development site. In addition, station locations are planned with criteria encompassing the entire corridor and therefore placement of a station at this site is not guaranteed.

The original plans for a Mid-City Transitway assumed stations located at transfer points or at major destinations. This is important because the proposed Mid-City right-of-way is one-quarter mile distant from a major north-south arterial and there is no east-west transit line at the LeClaire Courts site to provide a transfer point. Therefore the size of the potential redevelopment (in terms of traffic generation, population, and employment), must be sufficient to warrant a station stop in the vicinity.

Advancement of the Mid-City Transitway project to a rigorous planning phase (such as for FTA New Start funding), will require a change in the regional priorities for future transportation improvements. Maintaining the current transit system in a state of good repair is the region's first priority and this requires a high level of financial support. The current funding outlook for new major capital improvements is discouraging and

11 CMAP GO TO 2040, "Major Capital Projects," originally drafted February 2010, updated October 2010. Website accessed January 31, 2013: www.cmap.illinois.gov/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=958b1824-fd2d-44fc-923e-82a2607e56ed&groupId=20583.

alternative funding arrangements are unlikely at the current time.

Recommendations

Appropriate improvements at the LeClaire Courts site will be dependent upon the type and scale of redevelopment. This chapter has explored various transit options, including major capital improvement projects. Rail improvements in the study area such as a new Metra station or a new north-south CTA rail line are unlikely even in the long term time horizon. In the case of a new Metra station, physical constraints associated with necessary grade crossing improvements and capacity constraints resulting from conflicts with railroad freight movements are likely to prohibit locating a new station in the vicinity. A shortage of capital funds for major new projects and competition among regional funding priorities will continue to dampen the prospects of the Mid-City Transitway.

It is feasible that improvements could be made to the existing bus service on Cicero Avenue including the possibility of BRT service. However, any bus improvement in the corridor will be dependent on significant increases in bus ridership. In the event that significant increases in bus ridership are not realized, the developer, building owner or tenants may be responsible for providing supplemental flexible services such as carsharing, shuttles or vanpools.

The market assessment (Chapter 3) examined several types of development for the LeClaire Courts site, including retail, medical uses, and institutions such as a high school, library, or youth center. All of these possibilities for the site would benefit from the relocation of the traffic signal from West 43rd to 44th Streets; this recommendation should be pursued.



In terms of transit service, each development type offers differing challenges for a bus stop location. In the case of retail stores that utilize shopping carts, the developer must be aware that bus passengers will push loaded carts to the bus stop and a shopping cart corral should be planned next to the bus stop in order to easily retrieve the carts. Medical facilities are likely to attract transit riders with special mobility needs and therefore the bus stop area should be planned with larger concrete pads to accommodate multiple wheelchairs, larger shelters, and more benches. To accommodate high schools with high transit use, CTA may schedule extra buses to load students on school property at the end of the school day. Space to stage these extra buses out of the traffic lanes as well as sufficient space to turn buses around will be needed if a large high school is built on the site, and CTA finds it necessary to provide extra service to the school.

The developer and future tenants should consider the following issues when planning the development design:

- An appropriate pedestrian environment throughout the site is critical to encourage transit use.
- Chicago continues to support and expand options for travelers on bicycles. A safe path for bicyclists from the proposed bike path on West 44th Street to destinations within the development should be identified in the development's design plans, as well as space for bike racks.
- Buses will remain on Cicero Avenue and will not deviate into the site, except possibly in the case of a large high school built on the site.
- Buildings within the development that anticipate a high rate of transit use should abut Cicero Avenue so that transit patrons may avoid unnecessarily long walks between the building and Cicero Avenue.

- Implementation of some type of flexible service may be desired. This is especially true for buildings on the west edge of the site which will need to rely on pedestrian and bike paths to access bus service on Cicero Avenue. If flexible service is a possibility, dedicated parking spaces must be designed into the site, and drop-off and pick-up areas near the building entrance(s) must be included.
- Bus stops have physical requirements in terms of the length of curb space required, the size of shelters, and the placement of concrete pads.¹² Given the relatively small public easements along Cicero Avenue, the redevelopment will need to include bus stop elements within its boundaries and incorporate the bus stop into the overall development plan. The area needed for a bus stop is related to the number of patrons expected at the stop, as well as the types of tenants included in the development. For example, retail stores utilizing shopping carts should anticipate the need for shopping cart corrals next to the bus stop. Incorporating sufficient space and sheltering amenities into the development design will provide a more pleasant waiting environment and encourage transit use.

Given the relatively small public easements along Cicero Avenue, the redevelopment will need to include bus stop elements within its boundaries and incorporate the bus stop into the overall development plan.

12 Texas Transportation Institute. *Guidelines for the Location and Design of Bus Stops*. TCRP Report 19. TRB, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., 1996. <http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/153827.aspx>.



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CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

Traditional “Development Guidelines” focus on the architecture form, materials and imagery of future buildings that may be constructed on a site. Zoning focuses on the uses of those buildings. “Transit-Oriented Development” is an increasingly used planning term that focuses on the potential for development to leverage nearby transit lines. “Transportation-Oriented Development” may be thought of as the broad potential for development to leverage nearby transportation infrastructure.

This study, however, focuses on the transportation and access-related enhancements that could support the eventual redevelopment of the former LeClaire Courts site. Traditional development guidelines focused on buildings are of little value in a study that focuses on an entire site. Therefore, the URS team has developed a set of “Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines” that identify transportation-related site elements that could enhance the transit-friendliness and walkability of the redeveloped site.

The redevelopment of the former LeClaire Courts property provides an opportunity to integrate the site into the surrounding neighborhood and to become a showcase for best development practices.

Connectivity is essential for creating successful neighborhoods within the city. LeClaire Courts was originally developed as a island: bounded to the north by I-55, the east by Cicero Avenue and the rail line, to the west by industrial development, and to the south

Though opinions differ on what makes a community appealing, livable communities tend to share some common traits. They are healthy, safe, and walkable. They offer choices for timely transportation to schools, jobs, services, and basic needs. They are more cost-effective for individuals and local governments. They make the region more economically competitive.

- CMAP's Livable Communities definition from GO TO 2040 Plan



by an established residential neighborhood. To further exacerbate the issue, the grid of streets connecting south to West 47th Street was not continued into the site. The Neighborhood Access Analysis Map (Figure 28, on page 42), identifies the existing barriers as well as future points of connectivity suggested to remedy the problem.

The Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines address connectivity with pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular routes and ensure that future development will promote the City of Chicago's, CMAP's and CHA's neighborhood and transportation goals.

The livable community goals identified in CMAP's GO TO 2040 Plan are the guiding force behind these Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines.

CHA's *Plan Forward* is another key policy document directing the redevelopment of this site. Through a careful balance of redevelopment options, the LeClaire Courts site will become a seamless part of and a valuable asset to the existing working class neighborhood.

The development quality indicated in CMAP's GO TO 2040 Plan and CHA's *Plan Forward* is also consistent with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND). LEED ND is focused on mixed-use development, pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets, public transportation friendly development, connection to existing community fabric, and access to parks as well as green buildings and infrastructure. LEED ND standards should be considered during the site design phase of the development process in support of potential certification for this site.

The Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines focus on five areas:

1. Setting a High Bar for Redevelopment
2. Enhancing the Site



3. Restoring the City Street Grid
4. Serving as a Neighborhood Catalyst
5. Accommodating Future Transportation Improvements

These guidelines represent best practices for urban design and transportation planning and are meant to ensure a quality redevelopment project on the former LeClaire Courts site.

Setting a High Bar for Redevelopment

The Redevelopment of this site is a unique opportunity to raise expectation for development along the Cicero Avenue corridor. This development should showcase best development practices, integrating the site into the surrounding neighborhood and elevating the existing assets of the site.

Aspire to Better Use

Through their *Plan Forward*, CHA has an opportunity to guide this redevelopment. There is a need to balance the site's "highest and best use" with the responsibility of creating value for the neighboring communities.

The redevelopment of the former LeClaire Courts site will be a catalyst for positive neighborhood change, as the *Plan Forward* has been elsewhere throughout Chicago.

Re-establish Connection to and through the Site

The redevelopment of this site will not exist in a vacuum. The site is large enough that strong connections to the neighborhoods to the east and west of Cicero Avenue will be enhanced by permeable new development. Pedestrian and bicycle movement to and through the site is essential for the redevelopment to be a success.



Vehicular movement must be efficient but the focus should remain on safe neighborhood circulation.

Capitalize on Existing Character

The established residential communities to the east and south and the existing large trees on site are unique physical assets that should be capitalized on during redevelopment.

- New residential development should be sensitive to the scale, character and density of the adjacent neighborhoods.
- The large, established trees on the site are over 40 years old and priority should be given to their preservation. The trees are mature and help diminish the presence of the adjacent elevated highway.
- Where possible, existing street trees along West 44th and 45th Streets should be incorporated into the site design.
- LeClaire-Hearst Park is an asset to the larger community. Future development must embrace the park and provide clear, safe and convenient access to it.

Enhancing the Site

Taking a few steps to redesign and modernize the site will increase its value for both commercial development and to the existing neighborhood. The following steps should be taken to maximize the development potential of the site: relocate the traffic light to West 44th Street, address awkward parcel configurations, and foster a new image along Cicero Avenue.

Move Traffic Light to Crest of Hill (West 44th Street)

Relocating the traffic light at Cicero Avenue and West 43rd Street south to the intersection of Cicero Avenue and West 44th Street has multiple benefits:

- This traffic light can be thought of as the front door to the site.
- The new main access point for the redevelopment will be easily accessible to north and southbound traffic.
- Southbound automobile traffic gains additional time to see and access the uses on the site after crossing the I-55 underpass.
- The additional travel block may lessen backup congestion from the I-55 interchange.

To facilitate the relocation of the traffic light:

- The cul-de-sac on West 44th Street east of Cicero Avenue will need to be removed.
- West 44th Street should become a two-way through street on both sides of Cicero Avenue.
- Pedestrian safety should be a priority when redesigning both the West 43rd Street and 44th Street intersections with Cicero Avenue.



Figure 35. Transportation Map



- Intersections should be properly illuminated in compliance with the lighting requirements in Chicago's *Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Guidelines and Policy*.

Maximize development parcel configurations

- The LeClaire Courts site will need to be re-parcelized to fit the redevelopment plan.
- Commercial, institutional, and public uses are appropriate for the approximately 1,800 feet of site frontage along Cicero Avenue. Those uses will leverage high traffic volumes on Cicero Avenue.
- Residential land use is not appropriate for the frontage along Cicero Avenue.

Create a new image on Cicero Avenue

- Buildings should have a strong visual and physical relationship to the street.
- Buildings should be attractive from both pedestrian and vehicular perspectives.
- Parking lots should be shared between uses to allow for a more efficient layout and to minimize access drives. Parking is ideally situated at the rear of buildings.
- Areas for bus stops and shelters should be incorporated into the new development along Cicero Avenue.

Restoring the City Street Grid

The redevelopment plan should strive to blend with or support existing development patterns by restoring the city street grid. Restoring the city grid will diminish the isolation of the site, reconnect neighborhood streets to the south, and extend east-west streets into the site's interior.

Diminish isolation of the site

- Neighborhood streets should extend from the existing residential street grid.
- If the street grid cannot be physically extended into the site, pedestrian connections and views should relate to the existing residential street grid.



Figure 36. Historic Street Grid - 1938-1941



Figure 37. Restored Street Grid



- Reconnecting neighborhood streets will improve the community's access to parks and schools.

Reconnect neighborhood streets to the south

Extending Laporte Avenue, Lamon Avenue, and La Crosse Avenue to the neighborhood street grid will improve connections between the community and the site.

Extend east-west streets into the site's interior

West 43rd and 44th Streets should be reconfigured to maximize the development potential of the site and better connect the site to the surrounding neighborhoods.

West 43rd Street

- Should be reconfigured to be two-directional on both sides of Cicero Avenue;
- Should have a two-way stop at Cicero Avenue after the traffic signal is relocated to West 44th Street; and
- Should include a pedestrian or visual connection along West 43rd Street between Cicero Avenue and LeClaire-Hearst Park.

West 44th Street

- Should be signalized at Cicero Avenue with the signal relocated from West 43rd Street;
- Should be reconfigured to be two directional on both sides of Cicero Avenue;
- Should be a through street with the removal of the existing cul-de-sac east of Cicero Avenue; and
- Should be configured with a pedestrian-leading signal to enhance pedestrian safety when crossing Cicero Avenue.



Serving as a Neighborhood Catalyst

The redevelopment of the site is a unique opportunity to send a message to the wider area about the City's commitment to livable communities. Through the use of traffic calming and pedestrian, bicycle and transit prioritization, the former LeClaire Courts site has the potential to be a showcase redevelopment. Once implemented on this site, successful tools can be replicated on adjacent blocks to reweave the area into a cohesive neighborhood.

Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines and the *Chicago Pedestrian Plan* are key documents that guide development in the public realm. Below is a discussion of tools presented in those documents and how they can be utilized in the redevelopment area.

Integrate a 'Complete Streets' Standard

Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines insure that streets are designed, operated and maintained so they are safe, comfortable, convenient, and accessible for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and motorists.

In this area Cicero Avenue is not currently compliant with the Complete Streets guidelines. While the scope of this project is not large enough to bring Cicero Avenue into compliance with Complete Streets guidelines, this development should not preclude a Complete Streets redesign of Cicero Avenue in the future.

Streets in the redevelopment area should have a pedestrian focus and neighborhood streets should be designed to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles.

To establish an appropriate cross section design per



the Complete Streets guidelines, roadways are given a combination of letters based on their hierarchy and typology. The hierarchy/typology for the streets in the redevelopment area are listed below.

- The new neighborhood streets are likely to be classified as P.R.NS (Pedestrian-Residential-Neighborhood Streets).
- Cicero Avenue is likely to be classified an A.R.TH/STR (Auto-Residential-Thoroughfare with State Route overlay).

Bus Shelters

Bus shelters, pedestrian scale lighting, curb-cut consolidation and pedestrian refuge islands are tools recommended in the *Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines* and should be included in the LeClaire Courts redevelopment plan.

In its current layout, there is no space to place enclosed bus shelters and benches within the Cicero Avenue right-of-way. Consideration should be given to locating enclosed bus shelters and benches inside the site's property line.

Bus stops and shelters are currently located before the traffic lights at each intersection. Relocating bus stops to the far side of signalize intersections may improve traffic flow. CTA should be consulted regarding bus stop and shelter locations along the redevelopment's Cicero Avenue frontage.

The City is currently developing Transit Guidelines that will include bus stop siting, connecting sidewalks to bus stops, providing the proper amount of sidewalk space at bus shelters, and coordinating transit improvements with other Complete Streets projects. The city's new guidelines will influence the location and design of bus stops for this site.



Figure 38. City of Chicago Bus Shelter

Lighting

Existing street lights along Cicero Avenue should be modified or replaced to include pedestrian scale lighting. The addition of pedestrian scale lighting will help to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic and improve safety.

Streets and sidewalks within the site should include pedestrian scale street lighting.

Curb-cuts

Auto access to commercial and institutional frontage along Cicero Avenue:

- Should be consolidated to reduce the number of sidewalk breaks and curb-cuts; and
- Where feasible, should be from West 43rd, 44th, and 45th Streets and not directly from Cicero Avenue.

Auto access from neighborhood streets:

- Should be from residential alleys; and
- Should have access drives and drop-offs that align with existing neighborhood street grid.



Figure 39. Pedestrian Scale Lighting



The fundamental principle in driveway design is that a driveway is subservient to the sidewalk. Drivers turning into and exiting a driveway must yield. The principal way to accomplish this is to ramp the driveway up to meet the sidewalk, and carry the sidewalk grade and surface material across the driveway. This will visually reinforce the continuity of the sidewalk.

The number of driveways should be minimized, as this will reduce conflict potential for all modes on the street or sidewalk. During project scoping, driveways should be surveyed and efforts made to consolidate or eliminate as many as possible. Utilizing an alley instead of a driveway for access is a recommended practice. Locating the buildings along the street and parking along the alley accomplishes this.

– Curb-cut recommendations from *Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines*, 2013

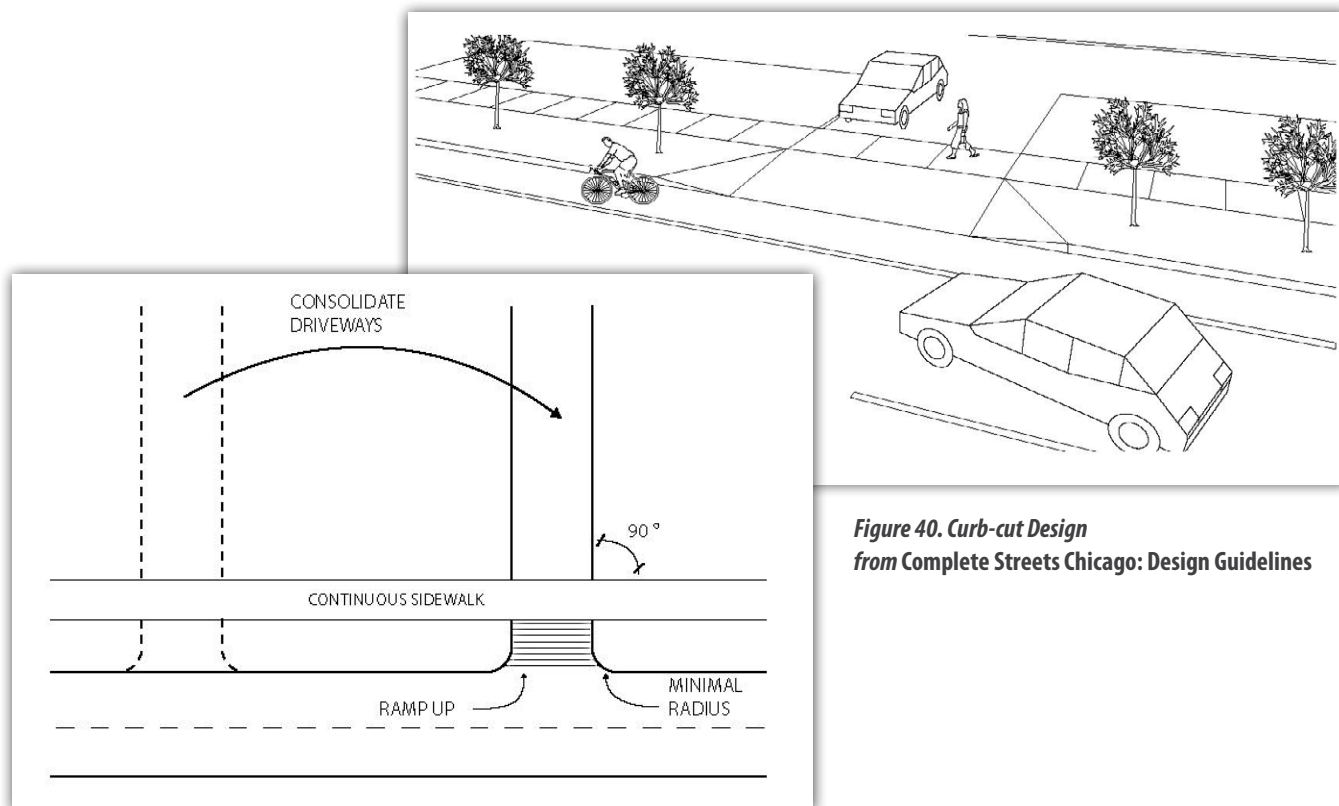
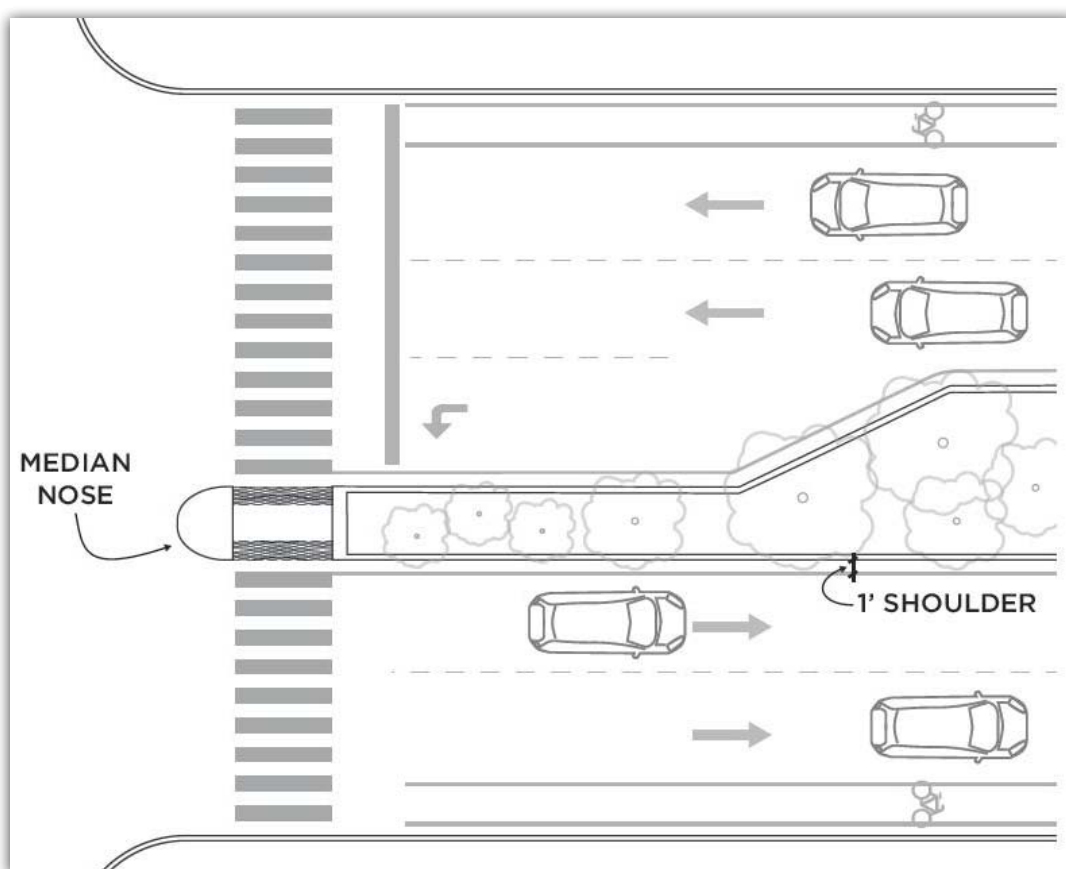


Figure 40. Curb-cut Design
from *Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines*

Pedestrian Refuge Islands

Pedestrian refuge islands, or medians, allow pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time. This significantly reduces the complexity of the crossing. Pedestrian refuge islands are essential to make crossing Cicero Avenue manageable at unsignalized intersections. If the medians along Cicero Avenue are modified in the future they need to be wide enough to support a turn lane and a pedestrian refuge island.



*Figure 41. Pedestrian Refuge Island Design
from Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines*



Embrace 'Walkable Community' principles

The *Chicago Pedestrian Plan* was released in September 2012 and provides a toolkit, policies and programs that prioritize pedestrians and promote pedestrian safety and comfort. A number of the elements from the *Chicago Pedestrian Plan* are recommended for the redevelopment of the former LeClaire Courts site. These improvements may also be extended into the adjacent neighborhood to further weave the site into the community.

Bump-outs

Bump-outs are used to calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety. They are appropriate on all neighborhood streets in the redevelopment area.



Figure 42. Bump-out Image
from the Chicago Pedestrian Plan

Bump-outs (also known as curb extensions or bulb-outs) extend the sidewalk into a parking or non-moving lane. Bump-outs can reduce the turning speed for vehicles, reduce the distance that pedestrians must cross, improve visibility between motorists and pedestrians, create more space for riders waiting for the bus, and eliminate illegal parking in the corner clearance zone. They also reduce turning radii which reduces vehicle turning speeds.

Bump-outs are appropriate on wide streets and areas with large populations of children and seniors. Bump-outs should also be considered in areas with large volumes of pedestrians or in areas with narrow sidewalks.

– Bump-out Recommendations from *Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines*, 2013

Raised Intersection/Crosswalk

Raised crosswalks are appropriate on all neighborhood streets in combination with bump-outs. A raised crosswalk may be appropriate for use across Cicero Avenue at the signalized intersection.

A speed table and a raised intersection are essentially longer speed humps used to raise the crosswalk or intersection and reduce vehicle speeds.

Speed tables or raised intersections can be used on low volume streets or at crossings with high volumes of pedestrians.

Speed tables or raised intersections can be used to create a raised pedestrian crossing. Signage should be considered at all locations with speed tables and raised intersections.

- Raised Intersection Recommendations from Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines, 2013



Figure 43. Raised Crosswalk

Skinny Streets

In combination with bump-outs, skinny streets are appropriate for West 43rd and 45th Streets as well as the north-south streets to be extended into the site (Laporte Avenue, Lamon Avenue, and La Crosse Avenues). Because of the relocated traffic light and potential user needs, West 44th Street is not an ideal candidate for skinny streets. Ideally, skinny streets would be implemented on long portions of the neighborhood streets, not just on the site.



After the severe winters of 1978 and 1979, many of Chicago's streets were converted from two-way to one-way to improve mobility during the winter and to allow plows to go through. However, two-way streets have many advantages over one-way streets. These "skinny streets" reduce vehicle speeds and can also increase connectivity for all users by providing more ways to traverse the city's grid.

Skinny streets should be considered on all one-way streets that are wider than 30 feet.

Converting a one-way street to a two-way street requires changes to striping and signage and possibly changes to traffic signals.

- Skinny streets recommendations from Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines, 2013

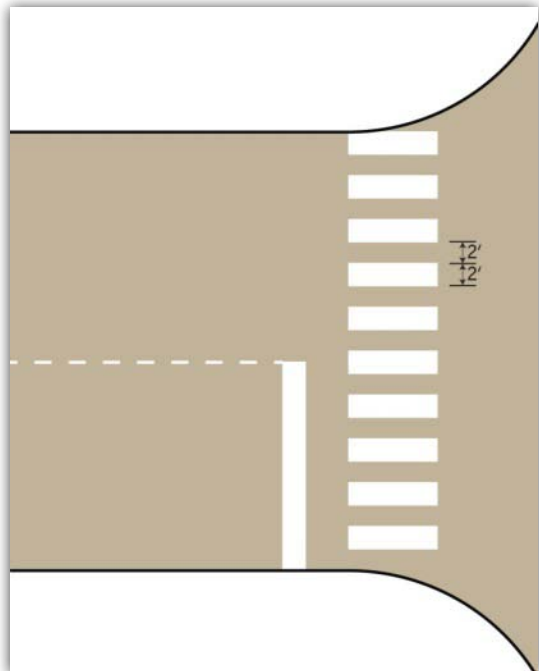


Figure 44. Standard Continental Crosswalk from the Chicago Pedestrian Plan

Marked Crosswalks

Marked crosswalks are appropriate for all intersections in the redevelopment area.

Marked crosswalks indicate where pedestrians may cross the street and where drivers should expect them to cross.

Marked crosswalks should be installed at all legs of signalized and stop-controlled intersections.

At uncontrolled or midblock locations, consideration should be given to installing crosswalks with additional pedestrian safety tools, such as signage, refuge islands and bump-outs.

To ensure high visibility among all roadway users, the default style for marked crosswalks will be the continental style, as shown in the example to the right. Other crosswalks, such as brick or other decorative treatments, can be installed at appropriate locations.

- Marked crosswalks recommendations from Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines, 2013

In-road State Law Stop for Pedestrians signs

In-road State Law Stop for Pedestrians signs may be appropriate for unsignalized intersections along Cicero Avenue, including at West 43rd and 45th Streets.

In-road “State Law Stop for Pedestrians” signs can be considered at crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections where it is difficult for pedestrians to cross.

In-road “State Law Stop for Pedestrians” should be installed at the crosswalk location in the centerline, median, refuge island, or lane line.

- Marked crosswalks recommendations from *Complete Streets Chicago: Design Guidelines*, 2013



Figure 45. In-road State Law Stop for Pedestrians Sign from the Chicago Pedestrian Plan

Accommodating Future Transportation Improvements

Bus Rapid Transit

The City of Chicago is developing a city-wide BRT system plan, and Cicero Avenue is one of the streets that will be considered. If Cicero Avenue is identified for BRT implementation, design elements within the right-of-way will likely need to be modified to support BRT.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-quality bus based transit system that delivers fast, comfortable and cost-effective mobility through the provision of segregated right-of-way infrastructure, rapid and frequent operations, and excellence in marketing and customer service. BRT essentially emulates the performance and amenity characteristics of a modern rail-based transit system but at a fraction of the cost.

-BRT definition from the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy's *Bus Rapid Transit Planning Guide*, 2007



Model Redevelopment

The LeClaire Courts site is an important redevelopment project for the southwest side and the ramifications from its evolution will be felt throughout the entire community. The Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines act as a best practices manual that will help ensure quality development and greatly enhance the surrounding neighborhoods.

These Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines set a high bar for redevelopment, enhance the site, restore the city street grid, serve as a neighborhood catalyst, and accommodate future transportation improvements.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION / NEXT STEPS

This study focuses on the potential transportation and access-related enhancements that could support the eventual redevelopment of the former LeClaire Courts site. It means to inspire and inform the future, more tactical, implementation steps that will be led or performed by other stakeholders. CHA, as the owner of the site, will play the lead role in implementation. CMAP's role will largely be one of a Livable Communities mentor and resource. As identified in Table 8, a number of jurisdictional and approval agencies, transit service providers, private site developers, and consultants will also play specific roles in certain implementation tasks.

Table 8. Tasks and Responsibilities

Implementation Task	Primary Party	Other Involved Parties
Site Planning & Redevelopment		
Select Master Developer through RFQ/RFP Process	CHA	City, Consultants
Develop Master Redevelopment Site Plan	CHA	Alderman, City, Community, CMAP, Consultants
Incorporate high level of site development standards	CHA	Alderman, City, Community, CMAP, Consultants
Develop specific site plans	CHA	Developer(s), Consultants
Re-parcelize sites as needed	CHA	City, County, Developer(s), Consultants
Transit/Transportation		
Relocate traffic signal from West 43rd to 44th Street and remove cul-de-sac on West 44th Street	CHA	City, IDOT, Alderman, Community
Restore city street grid	CHA	City, Alderman, Community
Extend walkability improvements to neighborhood	CHA	City, Alderman, Community
Improve existing bus service & infrastructure	CHA	City, CTA, Alderman, Community
Provide enhanced transit services	CHA	City, service providers, Alderman, Community



Site Planning and Redevelopment

The site planning and redevelopment tasks will seek to mitigate the site's history and isolation by promoting the implementation of the preferred site redevelopment program and land uses: commercial and institutional along Cicero Avenue, institutional within the site, and housing at the site's southwest corner. A Master Redevelopment Site Plan for a phased mixed-use complex will govern redevelopment of the site. The Master Redevelopment Site Plan will adhere to the Development-Oriented Transportation Guidelines (outlined in Chapter 5) meant to enhance the site's livability and transit-friendliness. Maintaining high site development standards will facilitate already-programmed transit enhancements and the potential use of flexible transportation services.

The Master Redevelopment Site Plan would likely be developed in collaboration with a master development partner selected by CHA through an RFQ/RFP process, and incorporating input from the City of Chicago, the Alderman, the community and CMAP. The master developer may implement the entire plan, or may engage specific site developers for phases of the project. Either way, the developer(s) will prepare more detailed site plans and re-parcelize the property, as needed. Ultimately, the site planning and redevelopment tasks will seek to balance the twin goals of maximizing the commercial potential of the Cicero Avenue frontage while also developing a cohesive, livable community on the larger site.



Transit/Transportation

The transit/transportation tasks will require extensive coordination between CHA, the City, IDOT, the Alderman, CTA, service providers, and the community.

Relocation of Traffic Signal from 43th Street to 44th Street and Removal of Cul-de-Sac on 44th Street

CHA will arrange a meeting with CDOT to officially request relocation of the traffic signal and removal of the cul-de-sac. This meeting will confirm CDOT's willingness to assist CHA in effecting this change, and discuss the process required, which may involve securement of permits, a Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis, and a Traffic Impact Study. CHA will also convene an initial meeting with the Alderman to discuss the commercial benefits of relocating the traffic signal.

When CHA has determined the type and size of the proposed development, follow-on action steps will be required. CHA will arrange a meeting with the Alderman to review the proposed traffic changes and consider the possible reaction of area residents to the proposal. CHA will request assistance from the alderman's office to present the proposal to the community.

CHA will meet with CDOT and IDOT to discuss the roles and responsibilities of each agency, and the specific processes for relocation of the traffic signal and removal of the cul-de-sac. CHA, with CDOT guidance, will secure a City permit. CHA and CDOT will conduct a Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis. CHA and CDOT will conduct a Traffic Impact Study.



Finally, CHA will contact the Alderman and arrange public meeting(s) to present the proposed relocation of the traffic signal and removal of the cul-de-sac. If a public meeting on the development proposal is anticipated, then discussion of the traffic signal and cul-de-sac could be presented at that time.

Improve Existing Bus Service and Infrastructure

CHA will monitor the CDOT study of the proposed City BRT Network Plan. In the event that Cicero Avenue is recommended as a BRT corridor, CHA will include requirements for BRT station facilities in the Master Redevelopment Site Plan. CHA will contact the CTA Planning Department to obtain recommendations on station location and BRT infrastructure requirements. In the event Cicero Avenue is not recommended as a BRT corridor, CHA will include requirements for CTA bus stop facilities in the Master Redevelopment Site Plan. CHA will contact the CTA Planning Department to obtain recommendations on bus stop location(s) and bus stop facility requirements.

Provide Enhanced Transit Services

CHA will include flexible service options (car sharing, vanpools, shuttle service) as suggested amenities in the Master Redevelopment Site Plan, along with the infrastructure associated with each option. Infrastructure examples are outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. CHA will also provide CTA with the results of the Traffic Impact Study and require the developer to include CTA in the early planning for the development.

