



Neighborhood Planning Committee Evanston Plan Commission

Chicago Avenue Corridor Recommendations Report

PART A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. PROCESS/DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The southeast neighborhoods of Evanston—from Lake Michigan to Ridge Avenue, from Howard Street to Lake Street—are home to about one-fifth of Evanston's population (approximately 14,000), a highly diverse mixture of age groups, economic levels, cultures, careers, etc., living in a broad blend of housing types. The primary commercial area for these quiet, stable neighborhoods is Chicago Avenue and its two branch shopping districts along Main Street and Dempster Street. These retail areas comprise a wide variety of basic goods and services as well as some of Evanston's oldest and most unique businesses, drawing customers from far beyond Evanston's borders. Chicago Avenue itself is a major transit and automobile thoroughfare, connecting the city of Chicago to Evanston and neighboring suburbs, and is both a destination and throughway for Evanston residents and visitors.

In the last decade, the Chicago Avenue corridor has seen accelerated changes, including the closing of long-term businesses, transit deterioration (both service and infrastructure), new commercial development, and emergence as a location for new multi-family residential buildings. These changes, along with an increasing number of Chicago Avenue development proposals and zoning cases over the last few years, prompted the Plan Commission to direct (during its 1997 retreat) its Neighborhood Planning Committee (NPC) to assess conditions and trends along the corridor from South Boulevard to Lake Street. With the support of City staff, the NPC generated a range of information for this major north-south avenue as a base for planning analysis, including zoning, economic, and physical conditions information. Reviews and analysis were conducted during monthly public meetings, with invitation to and participation of several neighborhood stakeholder groups from the area.

The process uncovered substantial enthusiasm for revitalization and redevelopment. Community residents and merchants agreed that development could enhance the area, simultaneously increasing revenues for the City. At the same time, reservations were expressed reflecting the national interest in more thoughtful, long-term, integrated urban design. Discussion during the 18-month study period, therefore, involved the active search for vision and guiding principles balanced by the identification of constraints and practical considerations for future development along Chicago Avenue. In short, the study explores: How much and what kind of development can occur which will enhance but not negatively impact the neighborhoods and the City? Specific guidelines and constraints are:

- Recognizing that Chicago Avenue is surrounded by Evanston's two historic districts, what kind of development can be encouraged that would complement and integrate the charm of these neighborhoods? This vital area, so close to downtown Evanston and Lake Michigan, served so well by mass transportation and major thoroughfares, has great neighborhood appeal; how can new development improve and not negate the existing aesthetics and sense of community?
- Recognizing that Chicago Avenue and Dempster Street are major entry points to the City, giving many visitors their first impressions of Evanston, how can new development improve this impression? Conflicting factors such as traffic on busy streets, narrow sidewalks, parking needs, pedestrian/bicyclist needs, as well as

aesthetics and restrictive zoning must be balanced. Tools used to guide this balancing process, thereby assuring achievement of quality and value objectives, include a comprehensive development plan and appearance guidelines. There is strong community support for binding appearance review, a matter currently under consideration by the Plan Commission's own Binding Appearance Review Committee.

- Chicago Avenue and its two commercial offshoots (Dempster and Main) comprise a variety of zoning designations. Some of these have the potential to alter the neighborhood character by allowing tall, high-density business/residential development. This is especially true south of Greenleaf, one of the most densely populated areas of Evanston. How can such dense development be avoided?
- Recognizing that the value of the Chicago Avenue corridor and the surrounding community depends on the success of future development and its ultimate attractiveness.
- Clarity on zoning and appearance guidelines will make the corridor more desirable as a potential development site by reducing time and design costs to developers. In addition, local neighborhood and merchant groups, historically vocal on community issues, have the potential to accelerate or slow-down new projects. The development of a comprehensive development plan, combined with revised zoning and appearance guidelines, can be instrumental in driving consensus support and attracting developers.

The challenge to the NPC was to develop a win-win assessment and revitalization plan, identifying and balancing the issues/needs of all people involved—residents, property owners, merchants, developers, and the City. The challenge was (and continues to be) not only to enhance the tax base of the community (and City), but to preserve the neighborhood's character, and, in fact, to see them as inextricably joined.

As a result of the NPC's meetings and information gathering, several critical issues were identified relating to redevelopment, including: urban design, strategies for land-use and development, zoning (height, density, bulk), parking, economic/fiscal impacts, traffic, and public transit service and infrastructure.

Based on a series of key findings for each issue area, the NPC developed objectives and recommended actions for each issue.

II. PRIORITIES

Overall, eight inter-related priorities have emerged that the Neighborhood Planning Committee recommends for consideration by the Plan Commission:

1. Encourage attractive new development that harmonizes Chicago Avenue with the surrounding neighborhoods and complements the adjacent historic districts.

New development along Chicago Avenue has the potential to transition this disconnected corridor into an inviting entryway that welcomes residents and visitors into Evanston's significant historic neighborhoods (to the east and west), and shopping districts. The recent real estate development interest in Chicago Avenue combined with the success of both the Main and Dempster shopping districts demonstrates the overall desirability of the area, and provides a glimpse of the potential for development that encourages a pedestrian, neighborhood feeling. Mixed-use development that combines residential and retail is desired.

All new development should meet quality site plan and design guidelines that enhance the corridor streetscape and encourage additional high quality development as determined through a comprehensive development plan. A comprehensive development plan should establish a vision in order to create enthusiasm among investors for redevelopment of parcels facing change. Components of the development plan would include zoning specifications and appearance guidelines that support the vision for successful development projects that have the potential to reinvigorate portions of the Chicago Avenue real estate base (both physically and fiscally). Promoting and marketing the established development plan to investors and developers is a companion strategy to affecting quality redevelopment.

2. Increase the supply of parking to meet future and existing needs as part of new development as well as through public/private partnerships.

Satisfying the parking needs from increased residential and commercial development is an essential component of the overall design of Chicago Avenue. New development should include enough parking to avoid any negative impact on existing parking problems. Current studies (see appendix) make clear that the current minimum-parking requirement of 1.0 space per residential unit is not adequate. The parking requirements for multi-unit residential development should be increased with careful consideration for the following: 1) benefits to the commercial and residential parking supply of the surrounding neighborhood, 2) benefits to the marketability of individual developments, 3) potential degradation of the existing tax base if the parking problems become too severe, 4) the potential lost opportunities if development becomes less financially feasible due to increased requirement, and 5) potential use of a zoning district overlay to employ a parking requirement change in this unique district. Further, while the overall corridor plan and the design of new development should take advantage of mass transit, it is unrealistic to expect that the commuter-oriented system will substantially reduce the car ownership of residents in this area.

Existing parking demand should be met through public initiatives as well as public/private partnerships. Additional parking should be created on such sites as the CTA/Metra right-of-way south of Washington Street and the parcels north of the existing Great Bank Evanston facility (northwest corner of Main and Chicago) to accommodate existing parking demand. Requests for development proposals for multi-level structure parking on sites of City parking lots #32 (on Hinman Ave.) and #1 (on South Blvd.), combining additional public parking with apartments should be advertised. Additional parking is most needed near the shopping areas at Main Street and Dempster Street, respectively, and every opportunity to obtain it should be pursued aggressively. City off-street surface parking lots should be enhanced through additional landscaping, distinctive signage, and enhanced lighting as part of the overall appearance/design of Chicago Avenue.

3. Promote development that enhances Chicago Avenue and the tax base of Evanston.

Chicago Avenue historically has been a major commercial corridor that is also a gateway to residential neighborhoods to the east and west. Any new development that occurs on Chicago Avenue should be an asset to the appearance and economic vitality of the area and the City as a whole. Historically, Chicago Avenue has contributed significantly to the tax base of the three local taxing districts (District 65, District 202 and the City of Evanston) primarily through property tax revenue. Retail activity in this corridor, especially from auto dealerships, has been a substantial, but declining contributor to the City's total sales tax revenue base as a percentage of total sales tax revenue. The number of auto dealerships has been diminishing although recent consolidation of existing dealerships has been positive. Auto dealers along Chicago Avenue render significant neighborhood services as well as a strong sales tax base and are desirable to support in the corridor.

Future development provides an opportunity to increase property tax revenue generated from underutilized properties, since the development market indicates that potential for new residential development is strong along Chicago Avenue. The primary economic development benefit will come from attracting new households and visitors who will contribute to the existing neighborhood retail and service economies. Sales tax revenues and small business opportunities will be enhanced accordingly.

4. Maintain and improve the overall streetscape to foster a greener, more pedestrian-friendly environment.

The appearance of Chicago Avenue has been a subject of concern throughout the Committee's extended deliberations, due in part to the built environment, but also to the given physical features of the rail systems (embankments, viaducts, stations, etc.) Numerous features of the corridor impede pedestrian flow and make the area generally uninviting to pedestrians. Relatively narrow sidewalks with a proliferation of curb cuts cause pedestrians to compete for comfortable space with numerous sidewalk and street furnishings (signage, news boxes, storefront planters, lights, tree pits, seating, trash receptacles, etc.). Fragmentation of areas of interest by large surface parking lots, car storage areas, and bulky retail street frontage also detract from pedestrian access and orientation. Overall, these features diminish the potential of the area as a shopping district serving walk-in customers from the surrounding area and from new residential developments.

The over-arching urban design principle should be the development of a human-scale and pedestrian-friendly environment with substantial upgrades to the streetscape, particularly through greening and maintenance. Street level architecture should make the pedestrian feel welcome, and minimize physical barriers. This should include the preservation and enhancement of a mixture of small shops, cafes, and restaurants that provide attractive destinations. There is a need for general beautification measures, including an aggressive landscape maintenance plan for both public and private areas, upgrades to sidewalk material and space, and judicious additions of greening, entryway features, public art and other streetscape elements. Strategies for minimizing the number of existing curb cuts, widening sidewalk areas, and managing sidewalk furnishings must be sought. Finally, additional amenities for bicyclists, including bicycle storage areas and bike routes on side streets entering the corridor, have the potential to reduce automobile trips into the area—complementing both shopping and the public transit functions of the corridor.

5. Improve traffic management and signalization to improve vehicular, on-street transit, and pedestrian safety and movement.

Chicago Avenue serves large volumes of north-south traffic, some but not all of which is destined to Chicago Avenue sites. There is substantial cross-traffic and subsequent pedestrian movement at multiple locations, especially near the intersections at South Boulevard, Main St. and Dempster St. Effective development of Chicago Avenue requires increasing the quality of traffic and pedestrian flow and minimization of conflicts between competing uses.

Traffic volumes along various portions of Chicago Avenue are in the range of 15,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day. This is comparable to that along Dodge Avenue (which is wider) and Sheridan Road (which has less cross traffic). There are substantial delays for some vehicle and pedestrian movements at the Chicago/Dempster and Chicago/Main intersections and substantial conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian movements at these intersections and at other locations along Chicago Ave.

Specific signalization improvements for critical approaches of South Boulevard, Main Street and Dempster Street have been identified to improve overall traffic management. Computerized, state-of-the-art improvements for signal timing and infrastructure should be implemented along Chicago Avenue through City application to the federally funded, state-administered Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program. A "Plan B" strategy would be to fund signal improvements through the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Another traffic management issue of concern is the function of the alleys serving the commercial and residential uses along the Chicago Avenue corridor and its adjacent neighborhoods. Any changes and choices affecting street traffic circulation and site access must include an analysis of likely alley impacts. As development proposals are reviewed, loading zones, circulation, site access, and general safety impacts must be considered from both street and alley--recognizing that pedestrian orientation of Chicago Avenue is a balancing priority.

6. Mass Transit: Improvements to Infrastructure and Ridership.

A significant asset of the Chicago Avenue corridor is the access it provides to residents, employees, commuters, shoppers and visitors through convenient public transit--three CTA stations, one Metra station, and two CTA bus routes, as well as close proximity to 11 other bus routes at two CTA hubs (Howard and Davis Streets). Enhancing access to transit and preserving service levels are priorities for the corridor to be accomplished through several possible strategies, including: expanding commuter parking supply; instituting shared parking arrangements for commuter parking areas with evening commercial and residential parking needs; promoting new construction that meets transit-oriented development design and site plan goals; and physical rehabilitation of train infrastructure. Improving the physical conditions of the embankments and viaducts have been raised as top issues because of their significant negative contribution to the aesthetic of the street (poor landscaping, litter control, etc.); the limitations/opportunities they pose for redevelopment; and overall public safety challenges. Enhancing access and service and improving physical infrastructure should be combined with efforts to promote and market transit ridership in this "transit-rich" area of the City. Ridership may also be indirectly affected by general principles of creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.

7. Revise zoning to ensure an appropriate density of mixed-use residential development where allowed along Chicago Avenue.

Zoning categories along Chicago Avenue include C1, C2, C1A, B1, B2, B3 and R5 with different approved uses and height, floor-area ratio (F.A.R.) and setback requirements. The business zones are clustered near the intersections at Dempster and Main Streets. These business zones should be retained and considered as anchor retail nodes of the overall Chicago Avenue commercial corridor.

The C1A district, which requires ground floor commercial and permits residential above, has its only two designations in Evanston along Chicago Avenue at Lee Street and along Chicago Avenue approximately between Washington Street and South Boulevard. Unique to Chicago Avenue, then, the C1A district can be evaluated in the specific instance and with relationship to adjacent zoning districts and neighborhoods of Chicago Avenue. There are several regulations of the C1A zoning district that appear to be in need of review. First, the district currently allows a residential building height and density generally exceeding that of existing development in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The potential for this disparity is amplified by the fact that C1A allows up to four floors of parking to be exempted from the maximum height calculation of new development. Second, as a non-residential zoning designation, the C1A district requires only one parking space per residential unit--

independent of size; current studies (see appendix) make clear that the current minimum parking requirement of 1.0 space per residential unit is not adequate. Third, C1A requires ground floor retail with a zero front-setback. Since it is expected that most future development along this part of Chicago Avenue will be residential, it may no longer be appropriate to require commercial on the ground floor-- especially if the concept of retail nodes are to be reinforced at intersections with Main Street and Dempster Street, respectively. Finally, the required zero front-setback may be too inflexible for the practicalities of developing new residential buildings that allow for creative streetfront facades and spaces.

We recommend that the C1A zoning district be reviewed and revised by the Zoning Committee, taking as a starting point the following recommendations: 1) maximum allowable height should be within the range 55'-67'; 2) elimination of the parking floor exemption rule; 3) parking space requirement should be in the range of 1.25-1.5 spaces per unit, taking into account unit size (e.g. in residential zoning districts, 1.25 parking spaces per residential unit is required for each unit greater than 700 square feet) and the need for on-site guest parking; and 4) review lot coverage and F.A.R. regulations to be compatible with overall goal of reducing height and bulk of new development.

8. Identify funding sources for implementation of priorities.

Throughout the process of identifying, discussing, and prioritizing issues and actions for Chicago Avenue, opportunities for funding partnerships have surfaced. City sources may include the Capital Improvement Program. Private sources may include the adoption of a Special Service Area throughout the length of Chicago Avenue that applies to affected private properties to partially fund desired improvements such as parking, streetscape and greenery programs and related consulting services. Other public sources may include federal and state programs for transportation corridor enhancements such as Illinois First (some funding already has been identified for viaduct improvements) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which includes both the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program and the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP). Other public or quasi-public grants may also be available to meet issue-specific priorities such as public art or historic preservation. Identifying and matching an immediate public funding source for implementation of a "quick win" action should be a short-term goal. Proactive initiatives on the part of the City to undertake problem-solving or implementation of actions independent of private development would also serve as a positive indicator of partnership to the development community.

III. IMPLEMENTATION/POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

The eight priorities listed above suggest that the first steps for implementation require a combination of strategies. First, upon review and approval of the development plan by the full Plan Commission, the NPC recommends that the Plan Commission identify and refer priorities that are relevant to issue-specific boards, commissions, or committees that are already in place to deal specifically and strategically with a recommended action (e.g. refer *existing* parking shortage issues to Parking Committee; refer *future* development parking issues to Parking Committee and Economic Development Committee). Second, several priorities or actions have been recommended that are ready for immediate action by City staff (e.g. the traffic management improvements).

The NPC recommends that an interdepartmental team be formed to identify, shape, and shepherd these actions to implementation. Also, the interdepartmental team may identify any specialized consultant needs required for implementation (e.g. engineering study for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program application). In order to continue fostering the spirit of community involvement with the plan, the interdepartmental team should liaison with citizen groups and the NPC to expedite implementation. An external neighborhood-based implementation group should be established towards this goal. This group should be composed of Chicago Avenue area residents, businesses, institutions, and commercial property owners.

Third, the NPC recommends that this report, including its findings, objectives, and recommended actions, serve as an ongoing reference to the Plan Commission as future proposals with relevance to the Chicago Avenue corridor are considered. In addition, the report, along with implementing documents and guidelines, should serve as a proactive marketing tool that serves to inform, promote, and stimulate development that complies with and realizes the priorities and objectives identified herein. Finally, the NPC recommends that the Plan Commission conduct progress and evaluation reviews of this report on a quarterly basis.

I. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE, WORK, AND PROCESS

During its retreat in 1997, the Plan Commission directed its Neighborhood Planning Committee (NPC), which had been principally focusing on Howard Street revitalization issues, to begin a process of assessing conditions and trends on Chicago Avenue. The Commission hoped that this work would lead to findings and recommendations about Chicago Avenue that would assist members in considering singular aldermanic references or zoning relief petitions with time constraints for recommendations. The Commission was concerned that by addressing singular projects or parcels under a time deadline for action, the broader context of Chicago Avenue would not be considered sufficiently.

The genesis of the Plan Commission's direction also includes a concern expressed often to the City during the early 1990's about the lack of new development or rehabilitation on Chicago Avenue. Community leaders expressed concern about the loss of car dealerships, commercial vacancies (such as 811 Chicago Avenue and the former Horizon Federal Savings) and the emergence of marginal retail uses, especially from 1990-1995. Since 1995, Chicago Avenue has benefited from the upturn in the regional economy and the demand for new residential condominium units. During this boom time for much of the region, especially in the residential marketplace, Chicago Avenue south of Lake Street has experienced two new significant residential developments (The Edmundton and Northlight Condominium projects), but only a total of 82 new dwelling units. A third development consisting of 63 units has been proposed by Great Bank Evanston for the northeast corner of the Chicago Avenue/Main Street intersection. Commercial projects such as the new Peoples Market have also been initiated that will help revitalize Chicago Avenue. The limited number of other commercial development accomplishments and possibilities are described below.

The NPC has undertaken the study of Chicago Avenue in the context of expanded redevelopment issues and opportunities for this major commercial corridor of the City. With the support of City staff, the NPC has generated a range of information as a base for planning analysis, including: zoning and height analysis; business rosters and land use inventories; property taxpayer and tax base information; base map of zoning and land use; a consultant-assisted assessment of parking and traffic issues; a car ownership and parking demand survey; fiscal impact analysis of possible redevelopment sites; a block-by-block photographic inventory; a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis; residential developer interviews and residential market analysis; and the construction of a three-dimensional model of the corridor to facilitate discussions particularly with regard to height and zoning.

The NPC has conducted information reviews and analysis during monthly public meetings with invitation to and participation of several neighborhood stakeholder groups, including: Southeast Evanston Association's Chicago Avenue Initiative Committee, Main Street Merchants, Dempster Area Neighbors East, the Preservation League of Evanston, Nichols Neighbors, Chicago/Dempster Merchants Association, local developers and commercial property owners. As part of this process, the NPC also has sponsored oral and written reports of several of these groups so that basic positions for desired parameters of redevelopment along the Chicago Avenue Corridor could be publicly presented. As a result, positions of agreement as well as those of disagreement surfaced among community groups.

What follows is a summary of the Committee's key findings and proposed options for recommended actions to be presented to the full Plan Commission, the City Council, and the community.

II. OPPORTUNITY AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The southeast quadrant of Evanston—from Lake Michigan west to Ridge, from Lake Street to Howard Street—is the home of a highly diverse population of approximately 14,000 people. The stable, quiet neighborhoods in this area are both urban and suburban—home to long-term families and singles-on-the-move, to young married couples and empty-nesters, to university students and business people, to artists and activists. This one-fifth of Evanston's population live in single-family homes (some architecturally significant) and in large apartment/condominium buildings (some vintage); in Evanston's two historic districts and in two mental health facilities; in lake-front mansions and in subsidized housing. Some blocks are all single-family, some all multi-family; many blocks contain a mixture.

Throughout these residential areas are tree- and car-lined streets, dotted with various sized parks. Numerous religious institutions, four public schools, three major private schools, and a hospital are integrated into the communities. At least half a dozen community groups are active in this corner of Evanston. Three annual citywide events are part of the culture in this area—Custer Street Fair, the Garden Fair and Young Evanston Artists (YEA).

Down the center of this group of neighborhoods runs the extended home of southeast Evanston residents—Chicago Avenue. Up and down this busy street, branching into the neighborhoods at the Dempster Street and Main Street retail areas, there are the community's gathering and trading places. Within this corridor are the basic (and not-so-basic) businesses supporting (and supported by) the residents—grocers, laundries, bakeries and cafes, post office, library, auto service, florists, personal services, thrift shops, clothing shops, fine restaurants, antiques, and more.

These commercial areas are also home to some of Evanston's most unique and oldest retail establishments—Vogue Fabrics, Evanston Lumber, Music Unlimited, Minasian Rug Company, Goods Art Supplies, Blind Faith Cafe, several car dealerships and an array of specialty clothing, gift, and antique shops. Over the years, these businesses have attracted customers from far beyond the immediate neighborhoods.

Chicago Avenue, running parallel to and along the CTA and Metra rail tracks, is a major automobile and mass transit thoroughfare, serving both residents and non-residents traveling between the city of Chicago, Evanston, and surrounding suburbs. Three CTA stations, 1 Metra station, and 2 CTA bus routes serve the area directly; an additional 11 bus routes are in close proximity at two major CTA hubs (Howard and Davis Streets). As Chicago Avenue is a gateway from the south, Dempster Street serves as a western gateway, being the area's primary exit from Chicago's major highways and a major access to the recreation areas of Lake Michigan.

Chicago Avenue as a commercial center has been the scene of various changes over the last decade. A “landmark” feature of the retail district—the Main Newsstand—closed; two full-service hardware stores have closed; the Coronet Movie Theater space has been out of use for several years. Several auto dealerships, once making Chicago Avenue “automobile row” and serving as substantial contributors to City sales tax revenues, have consolidated or moved. Decreased funding for mass transit has led to service cuts and serious deterioration of transit infrastructure. New residential development has occurred on two sites—bringing approximately 80 new households to the community. A new grocery store, competing in produce, health and organic products, recently redeveloped a former car dealer site and is open for business. Several other Chicago Avenue parcels have been identified for potential redevelopment.

Such potential for change creates an opportunity to assess the Chicago Avenue corridor in order to enhance it. A cohesive pedestrian-friendly character is most evident at the Dempster and Main Street retail nodes; Chicago Avenue proper, however, is an unattractive, disconnected mix of buildings with little greenery and narrow sidewalks and only the occasional example of architecturally/historically significant buildings. Transit embankments, viaducts, and stations are significant features of this corridor, presenting on-going challenges for the community in terms of access, maintenance, and service, as well as challenges for aesthetic integration into the corridor. Therefore, when development opportunities are evaluated along Chicago Avenue, transit and urban

design issues must be considered in conjunction with the financial benefits to the City which have been historically strong in this corridor.

Some basic assumptions used to identify possible redevelopment sites for the purposes of this study are: the long-term futures of local car dealership markets are uncertain in light of recent regional and national trends in automobile retailing (although recent consolidation and retention of auto dealers on Chicago Avenue is promising); existing vacant properties are potential redevelopment sites based on the local and regional trends in the multi-family residential building market; and possible land use changes for grocery store sites due to the recent and planned development of new grocery stores in the area (although the existing grocery store sites may also remain viable for an extended period). Redevelopment of these sites could include a change from commercial to residential or mixed-use for some sites. Table 1 and Map 1 of Part C show redevelopment sites that were considered as part of this study.

It should be noted, however, that over the course of the Committee's research, the circumstances of different sites have varied. Most significantly, as of July 1999:

- The Northlight Condominiums (811 Chicago Avenue) were completed and are now at full residential occupancy.
- Autobarn constructed a new showroom at Greenleaf/Chicago Avenue (southwest corner).
- The former Point One Chrysler dealership at Greenleaf/Chicago (northeast corner) has been leased to a natural/organic food grocery store, which has redeveloped the site and is open for business.
- Dominick's grocery has indicated that they intend to keep their Chicago Avenue location open despite pending construction of a new store at Howard/Clark and Dempster/Dodge.
- Great Bank Evanston is proposing a multi-story mixed-use building at Main/Chicago (northeast corner).
- Proposal to open a live music club at the vacant Coronet Theater has been withdrawn.
- The Nissan car dealership has been consolidated with the Subaru/Isuzu site and 733 Chicago Avenue is now vacant (17,000 square feet).

III. IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

Several critical issues have been identified that relate to redevelopment, including:

- A. Urban Design
- B. Land Use
- C. Zoning
- D. Parking
- E. Fiscal Impacts
- F. Traffic
- G. Train Infrastructure and Service

Changes or recommended actions to any of these issue areas should be considered with regard to the impacts on the adjacent neighborhoods as well as Evanston as a whole.

IV. ISSUES, KEY FINDINGS, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. Urban Design, Pedestrian Orientation, and Neighborhood Character

Urban Design—Key Findings

- Corridor has a disconnected mix of building styles, with an emphasis on modern “strip center” developments, buildings with national chain identity/design, large “box” grocery stores, and buildings that accommodate automobiles services, with only the occasional example of architecturally/historically significant buildings (including a landmark at the southwest corner of Dempster/Chicago).
- The transit right-of-ways physically limit development options on west side, particularly south of Main.
- West side retaining wall/viaducts present aesthetic challenges.
- Lack of cohesive landscaping or streetscape elements along corridor.
- Zoning requirement to build to the lot line in business districts limits landscaping opportunities at new developments, but is generally necessary to contribute to pedestrian orientation.
- Narrowness of sidewalks, proliferation of curb-cuts, and numerous sidewalk and street furnishings (signage, news boxes, storefront planters, lights, tree pits, seating, trash receptacles, etc.) inhibit pedestrian orientation and limits opportunities for parkway greenery.
- To the east, the corridor is directly adjacent to the neighborhoods of the Evanston Lakeshore Historic District. Neighborhoods west of the corridor include part of the Evanston Ridge Historic District (see Map 3 in Part C).
- Adjacent neighborhoods are a broad side-by-side mixture of single-family and multi-family housing (2-4 stories), many blocks including both. East of Chicago, south of Main Street is a high concentration of larger apartment/condominium buildings of 3 to 4 stories, with the exception of three larger buildings up to 8 stories tall; similar sized buildings are concentrated on Chicago Avenue, north of Dempster. Many retail businesses along Chicago, Main and Dempster have 1-2 floors of residential above.
- The narrow St. Paul Park South that stretches from Main to Kedzie (west side) is the only dedicated green space along the Chicago Avenue corridor.
- Notably, only minimal landscaping is found at South Point Plaza, the perimeters of Dominick’s and Jewel parking lots, the Hemenway Church, Northlight condos, the Edmundton Condominiums, the public parking lot south of Dempster, and at corners with local residential streets.
- Individual storefronts along the corridor have added greenery through window box and sidewalk planters, particularly near the business districts of Main and Dempster.
- The “legal non-conforming” status of some commercial signage along the corridor will expire in the year 2003 (i.e. will become illegal under the current Evanston Sign Ordinance).
- Lot sizes along Chicago Avenue limit the opportunities for trade-off between building height and setback. Given current as-of-right zoning designations, they leave little scope for offering incentives to developers within limits that would be acceptable to the surrounding neighborhood.

Urban Design—Objectives

- Soften the overall streetscape, promoting pedestrian friendliness through the “greening” of Chicago Avenue.
- Create a more pedestrian-friendly environment along Chicago Avenue (more greenery, judicious use of curb cuts, wide sidewalks, etc.). Encourage architectural features that give the street level of multi-story buildings a human scale and minimize the sense of crowding, but yet preserve some sense of continuity with the surrounding retail facade. Avoid uninviting blocks of blank walls, private lobbies and garage entrance curb cuts at the base of multi-story residential developments.
- Establish cohesive streetscape and Evanston “entryway” design elements.
- As-of-right zoning designations that promote new development that is compatible with consensus priorities of the community.
- Create more green spaces either independent of or as components of redevelopment projects.
- Preserve architecturally significant properties

Urban Design—Recommended Actions

- Proceed with design and implementation of “green” on public property, including roads, sidewalks, and parking lots.
- Design “entryway” streetscape, landscaping, and public art elements at Howard Street and South Boulevard.
- Upgrade plant materials and maintenance for City-owned public spaces.
- Identify opportunities/solutions for upgraded materials and maintenance for the embankments and large land user parcels.
- Support amendments to the Site Plan and Appearance Review ordinance that strengthen appearance review guidelines.
- Identify and review historically/architecturally significant buildings along corridor (refer to Preservation Commission).
- Establish ongoing process for productive community input and consensus building.
- Develop overall design guidelines for the corridor in the form of a Development Plan, prepared either by a outside consultant or by a committee composed of citizens, property owners, business owners and city staff.
- Encourage City administration to enforce newspaper box ordinance, which would limit the obstruction to pedestrian right-of-way.
- Meet with business associations to encourage businesses to keep their sidewalks free of litter and snow.
- Encourage the Sign Review and Appeals Board to enforce sign ordinance strictly and resist requests for variances for signs that become non-conforming in 2003.

B. Land Use and Development Strategies

Land Use—Key Findings

- A zoning map is included in Part C as map 2.
- Chicago Avenue is generally zoned as a commercial and business corridor, but permits residential use in some zoning areas. The commercial and business districts provide space for both large and smaller scale retail and mixed retail-office-residential at different densities in different locations.
- Chicago Avenue is a commercial corridor with large land uses like automobile dealerships and services, large grocery stores, and smaller retailers that include regional and local and some national retailers. The corridor intersects two smaller-scale, or specialty shopping corridors at Dempster Street and at Main Street, respectively.
- Minimal evening or entertainment uses are present along corridor (due in part to features of City liquor ordinance).
- Multi-family residential development is a permitted use in R5 districts. It is also a permitted use in C1A and all B districts if above a ground floor of commercial. Residential buildings without commercial space may also be built in the C1A, B1, B2, and B3 districts—but only as an approved special use. Residential is neither a permitted nor a special use in C1 and C2 districts.
- Local residential real estate developers, interviewed in 1998, asserted that . . .
 - a. Residential development potential of Chicago Avenue is regarded as stronger than in the past, particularly for “middle market” condominiums (\$150,000-\$225,000) with 1200 to 1800 square feet of space.
 - b. Townhouse developments are considered doubtful due to an imbalance between land economics of this corridor and demand by typical buyers for locations like Chicago Avenue (i.e. relatively high land costs increase construction costs and the ultimate sale price of townhouses, which would likely “price-out” of the middle income market).
 - c. Mixed-use development also makes sense along the Chicago Avenue corridor--service-oriented office space and convenience good/services are good complements to multi-unit housing developments.
 - d. Residential development potential is likely to be strongest for first-time homebuyers--both singles and young couples. Two other target market groups are empty nesters, and seniors (including older band of empty nester spectrum).

Land Use—Objectives

- Redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels of Chicago Avenue compatible with neighboring development and community values.
- Encourage residential and mixed-use developments and support commercial development compatible with neighboring development and community values.

Land Use—Recommended Actions

- Establish links in development process between developers, staff, Committee, and community to facilitate communication and compatibility with priorities, objectives and guidelines of comprehensive development plan for the Chicago Avenue corridor.
- Provide vision of corridor and advertise plan in development market.
- Reach agreement on architecturally significant sites, providing developers with a “clear picture” of opportunities.
- Preserve and foster retail nodes clustered near intersections with Main and Dempster Streets, respectively, that include a diversity of destinations attractive to the pedestrian, including cafes, restaurants, bookstores and small shops.
- Investigate the market for high-priced housing, considering the feasibility of Chicago Avenue for such developments.

C. Zoning: Height, Density, and Bulk

Zoning—Key Findings

- Maximum permitted heights and floor area ratios (F.A.R.)¹ in the corridor according to zoning district are as follows:

District	Maximum Height	Maximum Height with parking exemption ²	Maximum Floor Area Ratio	Existing Building Height Range	Approximate Geographic Areas
R5	50'		45% lot coverage	12'-50' 31'-40'	East Chicago Avenue, Greenwood- Dempster East Chicago Avenue, at Hamilton
B1	40'		2.0	11'-36'	East Chicago Avenue, Dempster to Hamilton
B2	45'		2.0	12'-24'	West Chicago Avenue at Dempster
B3	85'	125'	3.0	17'-42' 13'-38'	West Chicago Avenue, Greenwood to Dempster E/W Chicago Avenue at Main
C1	45'		1.0	12'-22'	West Chicago Avenue, Greenleaf to Dempster
C1A	67'	107'	4.0	12'-79' 12'-35'	E/W Chicago Avenue, Main to South Blvd. E/W Chicago Avenue at Lee Street
C2	45'		1.0	10'-40'	E/W Chicago Avenue Greenleaf to Lee

- On the west side of Chicago Avenue the average building height is 31'; heights range from 10' -79' and the tallest buildings are at 1422-30 (79') and at 1406 (74').
- On the east side of Chicago Avenue, the average building height is 23'; heights range from 11' - 79'; the tallest buildings are at 811 (79') and at 1319-23 (50').
- On the west side of Hinman Avenue from Lake to South, the overwhelming majority of buildings are 31'-40' in height. Only six buildings have a height exceeding this range--four are within the 41'-50' range, and the tallest buildings are 77' (Kedzie/Hinman) and 78' (Main/Hinman). Only 1 building has a height (24') below the average range.

¹ Floor Area Ratio (FAR) refers to the ratio of floor area permitted on a zoning lot to the size of the lot. A simple example of a 10,000 sq. ft. lot in a district with a 1.0 FAR means that if the building covers the entire lot, it can be one story of 10,000 sq. ft.; if it covers half the lot, it can be two stories of 5,000 sq. ft. each; if it covers a quarter of the lot, it can be four stories of 2,500 sq. ft. each; etc. Given the same 10,000 sq. ft. lot, but an FAR of 4.0 for the zoning district, a 40,000 sq. ft. building can be built on the lot in a number of configurations: if the entire lot is used, the building can be four stories of 10,000 sq. ft. each; if half the lot is used, the building can be eight stories of 5,000 sq. ft. each; etc. FAR is used in combination with other zoning tools such as height and setback requirements to regulate the bulk of the development on a site.

² See City of Evanston Zoning Ordinance, sec. 6-18-3, "Building, Height of." The definition exempts up to four floors or 40' (whichever is less) from the overall height calculation of a building in B3, C1A, D2, D3 and D4 Zoning Districts if 75% or more of the gross floor area of each proposed exempt floor is dedicated to providing required parking for the building.

- Based on findings of each issue section, it is apparent that the current C1A district designation and regulations are primarily incompatible with residential development goals for Chicago Avenue.

Zoning—Objectives

- Revise zoning district designations and/or regulations to be more compatible with plan's urban design and land use goals.
- Promote comprehensive development plan priorities, objectives, and guidelines to developers.

Zoning—Recommended Actions

- Review and revise C1A zoning district (Zoning Committee of Plan Commission), taking as a starting point the following recommendations: 1) maximum allowable height should be within the range 55'-67'; 2) elimination of the parking floor exemption rule; 3) parking space requirement should be in the range of 1.25-1.5 spaces per unit, taking into account unit size (e.g. in residential zoning districts, 1.25 parking spaces per residential unit is required for each unit greater than 700 square feet) and the need for on-site guest parking; and 4) review lot coverage and F.A.R. regulations to be compatible with overall goal of reducing height and bulk of new development.
- Confirm legal opportunities and challenges to creating an overlay³ zoning district or making other zoning changes.
- Conduct quarterly review of development patterns on Chicago Avenue with regular updates to Plan Commission

³ An overlay zone is a set of zoning requirements that typically applies to a geographic area and is superimposed over other zones of the area to add further requirements or replace certain requirements of the underlying zone(s).

D. Parking

Parking—Key Findings

- The City operates and/or owns 13 parking lots in the Chicago Avenue corridor area, with a combination of permit and metered spaces totaling 548 spaces.
- Current zoning parking requirement for new multi-family residential in non-residential district is one space per unit compared to 1.25 spaces for units in excess of 700 s.f. in residentially zoned areas.
- Traffic/parking consultant study⁴ indicates that during peak demand periods (Friday afternoon and Saturday) a large portion of Chicago Avenue is nearly fully parked and in some cases are “over” parked (the number of such blocks increased with the opening of the People’s Market), while large private lots (Jewel/Dominick’s) show excess capacity and other blocks along Chicago Avenue have excess capacity. Existing conditions for the occupancy survey of on-street parking spaces for peak periods along Chicago Avenue is 74% for the corridor north of Main Street and 93% for the areas of the corridor south of Main.
- Citywide car ownership survey shows an average of 1.29 cars per unit (1.26 cars for apartments, and 1.33 cars for condos)⁵. A map and summary of the survey is included as an appendix.
- Multi-unit residential car ownership survey averages for block groups near Chicago Avenue range from 1.33 to 1.48. The car ownership average at Northlight Condominiums at 811 Chicago Avenue is 1.11. (A subsequent finding of fact has indicated a slightly higher average of 1.23.)
- Visitor parking lot for commercial district (privately owned) at the northeast corner of Main and Chicago will be lost due to new development (loss of approximately 40 spaces).
- Metra completed a 59-space commuter parking lot at Main north along embankment in 1997. Other opportunities for development of similar commuter parking lots are located along the embankment south of Main.
- One Metra station and three CTA stations in the corridor serve approximately 3,450 riders daily (750 Metra commuters, and 2,700 CTA trips are initiated at these four stations).
- Parking problems currently exist for residential buildings and streets east and west of Chicago Avenue; due in part, to overflow from Chicago Avenue.
- On-street parking is important to the viability of restaurants and small retailers.

Parking--Objectives

- Provide for the impacts of redevelopment on parking and traffic flow.
- Alleviation of existing parking demand/supply mismatches in the business areas of both Main and Dempster, and south of Main.
- New development with neutral or positive impact on parking supply shortage.
- New development consistent with components of transit-oriented and transit-supportive development principles⁶ to promote public transit use for commuting and pedestrian-friendly access to goods, services, and neighborhood amenities.

⁴ Kenig, Lindgren, O’Hara, and Aboona, Inc. conducted a traffic and parking conditions analysis of the Chicago Avenue corridor during spring, 1998. See Appendix 2.

⁵ City staff surveyed residents of multi-unit residential buildings (over 4 units) through a postcard survey to elicit information on car ownership and typical overnight parking demands. Surveys were mailed to 11 geographic areas across the City (3800 delivered) and the overall response rate was 44%.

Parking—Recommended Actions

- Feasibility and cost analysis for new parking solutions on west side of corridor (e.g. at lot north of Great Bank Evanston), and especially for additional commuter lots (possibly at grade) along CTA/METRA right-of-ways south of Main.
- Improve as necessary the METRA right-of-way south of Madison St. that is controlled by ERDCO Engineering Corporation for employee and commuter parking. ERDCO has indicated an interest in the cooperative use of the property.
- Institute shared parking arrangement for daytime commuters/users of Metra lot and evening/overnight parking needs of business district/residential area.
- Promote and expand “shared” parking arrangements for some City lots that provide daytime permits for employees of business districts or school district and overnight parking for neighborhood residents.
- Invite development proposals for multi-level structure on site of lots #32 and #1, compatibly and creatively combining additional public parking with apartments.
- Require contributions from condominium conversions for dedicated parking fund to establish additional public parking for existing residential units.
- Pursue a Special Service Area designation for developing public parking structures or lots.
- Implement wayfinding/aesthetic signage and lighting program (program already designed) at existing City-owned parking lots.
- Discuss funding options for commuter parking with CTA and Metra.
- Identify possible City funding sources for new surface/structure parking areas.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of increasing the parking requirement of new multi-unit development on or near Chicago Avenue to 1.25 to 1.5 spaces per unit.
- Confirm legal opportunities for shared parking options of new residential development with non-residential users.
- Add amenities for bicyclists, including storage areas and routes on side streets feeding into the corridor.

⁶ Transit-supportive or transit-oriented development (TOD) refers to approaches to development that create, preserve, or enhance typical urban development patterns. Chicago neighborhoods and many inner-ring suburbs like Evanston mix housing types in neighborhoods along a grid of neighborhood streets with nearby/walkable access to transit and retail—exemplifying principles of TOD. Some specific strategies of transit-supportive or transit-oriented development include promoting a safe, accessible, interesting, and active pedestrian environment leading to/from transit stations to/from homes, shopping, work, or recreation; encourage mixed-use developments and convenience retail near transit stations; typically orients residential and storefront entrances to the street with minimal setbacks and gaps to maintain an active and “intact” street-wall; revitalizing existing transit infrastructure; and comprehensive parking strategies that include shared parking policies, incentives for transit ridership (to employees, patrons, residents, etc.), parking lots/structures that do not inhibit pedestrian scale or friendliness of street, etc.

E. The Fiscal Impact of Economic Development

Fiscal Impact/Economic Development—Key Findings

Note: This section is not intended to serve as a complete market analysis of all fiscal impacts—whether positive or negative; however, different trends and findings identified below sketch several of the most pressing considerations.

- In tax year 1995, the Chicago Avenue business corridor from Howard to Lake represented nearly \$29.5 million in Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV), yielding roughly \$3.4 million in property taxes in 1995. This includes property fronting Chicago Avenue. A significant amount of this value is concentrated in the residential block of Chicago Avenue from Greenwood to Lake—\$5.4 million in EAV and \$604,262 in property taxes. The remaining portion of the “business” corridor constituted approximately 2.4% of the total City of Evanston real property tax base in 1995.
- In Tax Year 1997, the Equalized Assessed Valuation of Chicago Avenue was \$29,233,623 with total real estate property tax generation of \$3,308,234 to Local Taxing Districts [City of Evanston (18.29%), District 65 (38.5%), District 202 (27.46%)], Cook County, Ridgeville Park District and numerous other smaller districts). This represents a \$266,377 decline in EAV since 1995 and a \$91,000 decline in real estate taxes. Evanston’s overall EAV, not including tax-increment financing (TIF) districts, has been relatively stagnant over the past three years, growing by less than 1%.
- Two new projects, Northlight Condominiums and the Edmundton, were not reflected in Tax Year 1997 EAV because they were under construction. The redevelopment of the site of 811 Chicago Avenue from a vacant commercial building to Northlight Condominiums is projected to increase real estate tax revenue for that site from \$11,387 to \$246,450 annually. The increase in real estate taxes for the site of Edmundton condos is projected to be from a base of \$14,780 (previously two single-family homes) to \$110,000. Neither of these sites previously generated sales tax revenue. These results may not necessarily be replicated on other sites along Chicago Avenue--the potential for positive fiscal impacts, must be considered on a site-specific basis.
- Based on Committee request, staff assessed the potential cost impact of these two new developments. Discussions with representatives of the Northlight and Edmundton Projects indicated that the developers are not aware of any school age children in either development. School District 65 has reported that the cost per child to serve students is \$9,083 annually. The average cost for educating a student in District 202 (ETHS) is \$14,365. A request was made of Lincoln School (District 65) in Southeast Evanston to provide data concerning the housing of its students, distinguished by rental or owner occupied characteristics. The School indicated that they did not maintain data of this type.
- Utility cost impacts of these developments (sewer and water connections) have been borne by the developers. There was not a need to upgrade the City’s infrastructure. The City’s Sewer and Water Department has indicated that it has sufficient infrastructure to address future anticipated needs on Chicago Avenue based on the maximum build out scenario developed by the Committee. Electric and gas connections are not the City’s responsibility. They are addressed by the service providers, Com Ed, and Nicor respectively.
- Neither development has caused transportation related cost impacts that have required new infrastructure or service. Existing roadways are sufficient to address the addition of autos from these developments and the rapid transit system actually benefits from new development and consequent ridership.
- The City receives sales tax revenue in two forms from the state of Illinois: a 1% local sales tax and a 0.25% home rule sales tax, which was raised to 0.75% on January 1, 1999. All of the following data only include the 1% local sales tax received by the City. A distinct analysis of Home Rule Sales Tax Data can be provided by the State if desired. The 1% sales tax revenue is used in this analysis because its rate has been constant over time (1%) and it has been the more substantial of the local sales tax revenue sources. The sales tax data

presented in this section includes retailers in the Main and Dempster Business Districts as well as Chicago Avenue.

- Chicago Avenue has historically generated significant sales tax revenue, especially from car dealers and grocery stores, for state and City government. Chicago Avenue, however, is generating a lower percentage of Citywide local sales tax revenue due to the substantial new sales tax revenue generated by large big box retail uses in the southwest portion of the City and a reduction in auto sales on Chicago Avenue compared to 1989.
- A 1989 study by the City, using Dun and Bradstreet data, determined that the six car dealerships on Chicago Avenue had approximately \$96 million in sales, contributing \$960,000 in local sales tax revenue to the City at that time. This figure for 1989 is 78% higher than the sales tax revenue attributed to car dealers in Fiscal Year 1996-97 reported below. In 1988-89, the City received \$4,427,335 in local sales tax revenue from all retailers Citywide. According to the 1989 study, car dealers alone on Chicago Avenue generated 21.6% of the Citywide local sales tax. If the food service and other business categories located in the Chicago Avenue Corridor were included, especially the grocery stores, the percentage of the Chicago Avenue generated local sales taxes of the City total for 1989 would be considerably higher.
- In Fiscal Year 1996-97, the Chicago Avenue corridor generated \$1,219,956 in local sales tax. The sources of the sales tax revenue by business category were: car dealers: \$557,107; Food Service: \$29,453; and Other Businesses: \$633,404. The dominant generators in the *other businesses* category is grocery stores and drug stores. The City wide total local sales tax for 1996-97 was \$5,878,127. Chicago Avenue generated 20% of this total tax. This does not include Home Rule sales tax.
- The City received \$4.4 million in citywide local sales tax revenue in FY1988-89, \$6.4 million in FY1997-98, projected to \$7.0 million in FY 1999-2000 representing growth of 58% since FY 1988-89 (4.2% per annum).

Note: *Issue of car dealerships and planning for possible future role along corridor remains an open issue for discussion/consideration. Given the historical role of this segment of the Evanston economy with a strong presence on Chicago Avenue, one priority to consider would be the opportunities for preserving existing car dealerships where feasible and supporting their consolidation between Lee Street and Greenleaf Street, while continuing to allow and encourage the operation of existing dealerships elsewhere on Chicago Avenue.*

Fiscal Impact/Economic Development—Objectives

- Enhance the tax base of the Chicago Avenue corridor as well as the City overall by recognizing and assessing the impact of individual projects.
- Develop underutilized property in a manner consistent with the strategic development needs of Evanston while addressing the desired character of the Chicago Avenue district.

Fiscal Impact/Economic Development—Recommended Actions

- Encourage residential, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use projects that will offset historic sales tax loss to City.
- Encourage redevelopment of properties providing higher tax base where building height and density are compatible with revised zoning.
- Construct a realistic vision for corridor recognizing that new developments will depend on market conditions.

- Support transit-oriented development site plan and design principles (see footnote 4) for new development, including those that promote transit ridership and pedestrian-friendly access to goods, services, and neighborhood amenities.
- Encourage new development that meets quality design goals and contributes in a positive way to the overall streetscape and ambience of the corridor.

F. TRAFFIC

Traffic—Key Findings

- McCormick Blvd., Howard Street, Ridge/Green Bay, and Golf/Simpson Street carry the largest traffic volumes of the City with averages of 20,000+ vehicles per day. Chicago Avenue is classified as a major north-south arterial with average daily traffic volumes of 15,000-20,000 vehicles (19,500 at Dempster and Main Streets, 18,500 at Lake Street, 16,000 at South Boulevard). Citywide, this volume is comparable to that of Dodge Avenue and Sheridan Road as north/south arteries, and Oakton, Main, and Dempster Streets as east/west arteries.
- Under existing conditions and at peak periods (Friday afternoons, Saturday midday), signalized intersections of Chicago Avenue with Dempster Street, Main Street, and South Boulevard are operating at marginally satisfactory levels of service. Some approaches at each intersection, however, are operating at unacceptable levels of service that could be improved.
- A net decrease in traffic is projected for a redevelopment scenario that includes some changes in use from commercial to residential and supposes realistic, less than “full build-out” projects under current zoning. However, the area north of Main Street will experience a net decrease in traffic while the area south of Main will experience a minimal increase. Remedies are unchanged from those of existing conditions.
- For a more extensive redevelopment scenario,⁷ including significant land use changes and a net increase in commercial space and residential units, a net increase in traffic is projected for the overall corridor as well as the sub-areas identified as north of Main and south of Main. Existing conditions remedies would need to be supplemented to maintain satisfactory levels of service at primary signalized intersections.
- Costs for recommendations of traffic consultant for signalization improvements at the intersections of Chicago with South, Main, and Dempster range from \$25,000 to \$80,000 per intersection.
- Impediments to pedestrian movement and vehicular-pedestrian movement conflicts occur at major intersections and other locations. In some cases, these conflicts result from vehicular encroachment at particularly at the intersections with Main, Dempster, and Hamilton respectively.

Traffic—Objectives

- Improve levels of service and reduce delays at the primary signalized intersections of the corridor.
- Minimize impacts of new development on traffic flow and circulation of corridor and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Provide improved pedestrian protection at major intersection and other points of heavy pedestrian crossings to prevent encroachment of vehicles on the pedestrian way particularly at Dempster and Main Streets.

Traffic—Recommended Actions

- Recommend to Plan Commission the support of a more comprehensive, long-term traffic management program by pursuing federal funding through the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) program for state-of-the art rebuild of system and installation of computer signalization timing for the corridor from Howard Street to Sheridan Road in 2000.

⁷See Table 1 in Part C that indicates current size, use and zoning for each site and the maximum build out that can take place on each site accordingly.

- Recommend to Plan Commission an application to the City of Evanston Capital Improvement Program for funding of traffic signalization improvements at South Boulevard, Main Street, and Dempster Street intersections, to include:
 - a. Recommend to Plan Commission under existing conditions at Chicago/Dempster: provide a northbound left-turn lead phase and allocate more green time for Dempster Street traffic.
 - b. Recommend to Plan Commission under existing conditions at Chicago/Main, allocate more green time for Main Street traffic.
 - c. Recommend to Plan Commission under existing conditions, at Chicago/South, provide a right-turn lane on the east approach of South Blvd. No modifications to the signal timing or phasing will be necessary.
- Refer to traffic impacts/recommendations of redevelopment scenarios and Obtain developer contributions to offset the impacts of additional traffic when considering when considering new development proposals.
- Paint/maintain zebra crosswalks at busy intersections.

G. MASS TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE ISSUES

Transit—Key Findings

- Chicago Avenue is a major commercial corridor that runs parallel to and along the CTA and Metra rail tracks. One Metra station and three CTA stations serve approximately 3,450 riders daily (750 Metra commuters, and 2,700 CTA trips are initiated at these four stations).
- Chicago Avenue is also served by two CTA bus routes—201 and 202—with close proximity to 2 major CTA hubs (Howard and Davis) serving an additional 11 CTA/PACE bus lines.
- Maintenance of embankments and stations is insufficient and viaducts are in serious disrepair--presenting public safety and health hazards.
- CTA has made recent service cuts to night-owl service on rapid transit and 201 bus schedule and periodically threatens to close Evanston el stations, specifically Dempster.
- Evanston has been awarded Illinois First funds for viaduct improvements. Main Street and Dempster Street viaducts are among those to be targeted for refurbishment.

Transit—Objectives

- Promote principles of transit-oriented or transit-supportive development (see footnote 4) to take advantage of key rail access, including pedestrian orientation and mixed-use development.
- Accommodate, if realistic, development of west side of street currently owned by CTA or Union Pacific (Metra).
- Encourage transit ridership by providing for commuter parking.

Transit—Recommended Actions

- Increase commuter parking.
- Create parking on west side of corridor on Metra/CTA property.
- Identify opportunities for shared parking arrangements for day commuters and evening commercial uses and residential
- In conjunction with state and federal representatives, identify funding (Illinois First and more) for train infrastructure (viaducts, embankments, stations) upgrades and maintenance, (e.g., the South Boulevard embankment).
- Establish strong and regular partnership between City/CTA/Metra regarding transit maintenance, access, and service issues.
- Promote and market transit ridership by having schedules and maps more widely available. Install permanent bulletin boards at all station with schedules and maps.
- Install bus shelters at busy stops.

PART C: TABLES AND MAPS

Maps:

1. Potential Redevelopment Sites
2. Chicago Avenue Corridor Zoning Districts
3. City of Evanston Historic Districts

Table:

1. Redevelopment Sites (Lot Size, Use, Zoning, Redevelopment Opportunities)

APPENDICES

1. “Summary of Parking Responses to Parking Survey,” 6/19/98
2. *Chicago Avenue Parking and Traffic Study*, Kenig, Lindgren, O’Hara, Aboona, Inc.
3. 8/14/88 memo, “*City Operated Parking Lots of Chicago Corridor Area*”
4. Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Exercise, 3/10/98
5. Dempster Area Neighbors East (D.A.N.E.) *Summary Recommendations for Chicago Avenue Redevelopment*.
6. Southeast Evanston Association, *Chicago Avenue Initiative Report to the City of Evanston Neighborhood Planning Committee*
7. Main Street Merchants, *Chicago Avenue Development*
8. The Preservation League of Evanston, memo and list of Chicago Avenue Buildings (corresponding photographs on file in the Planning Division office).

(NOTE: FOR INFORMATION ON THE APPENDICIES, PLEASE CONTACT THE EVANSTON PLANNING DEPARTMENT: (847) 866-2928)