Final Plan (“Recast Western/Ogden”) Excerpt

What

Exemplary section of the final plan produced in a Plan-making Studio course at UIC. I was a member of the design team and assisted in the layout and graphics of the final plan. The final plan (“Recast Western/Ogden”) was a hypothetical master plan for a Chicago industrial corridor with a twenty-year timeframe.

Work Performed

- Laid out this section.
- Helped craft the color scheme & design guidelines for the plan.
- Created the street cross-section graphic on Page 4.

Why

- Adobe Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign)
- Design aptitude
- Group collaboration & teamwork

Access

Western/Ogden's unparalleled access was top of mind throughout Ground Up Associates' development of comprehensive strategies for the future. Location, connectivity, opportunity—Ground Up envisions an access-driven future that is brighter, greener, and more vibrant for all stakeholders, especially the businesses that the success of the industrial corridor depends on. In crafting our recommendations for the Western/Ogden Industrial Corridor, access means streets are in working condition that take us to work or deliver essential products to factories and hospitals. It means streamlined traffic management that draws in visitors and residents, with the confidence that they will avoid congestion and truck traffic headaches. It means a greenscape that invites pedestrians and provides access to nature in an urban industrial environment, or safe viaducts. Access across our city means alleviating poverty so that residents can thrive and in the industrial corridor, it means access to the broader market beyond Chicago, from addressing operational needs, to policy support, to ensuring continued contributions to our city's future.

Access

Action Items

A1: Modernize Transit Infrastructure

- **A1.1:** Improve Western Metra Station
- **A1.2:** Repair Street Grid
- **A1.3:** Implement Equitable Trans Oriented Development

A2: Encourage Active Transit

- **A2.1:** Develop Complete Streets Strategy
- **A2.2:** Reconfigure Intersections

A3: Improve Access to the Intermodal

- **A3.1:** Redesign Western Avenue to Accomodate Freight Traffic
- **A3.2:** Revamp Viaducts

A1: Modernize Transit Infrastructure

A1.1: Western Avenue Metra Station Improvements

Transportation is a major aspect of Western/Ogden's sustainable future. The Western Avenue Metra station can be a great asset and opportunity for the corridor. Transit-oriented development is incredibly important within Western/Ogden to create access to the downtown as well as the western suburbs. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, having transit in a community can help the community to become resilient economically and environmentally long term. Therefore, we have identified key improvements to help encourage commuters and residents to increase their use of the station, and to consider it as an access point to potential job opportunities in nearby suburbs. These improvements include new paint, lighting, structural repairs, and more shelter. These improvements would be funded through Federal Formula/State of Good Repair Funds, which has allotted $173.6 million through Metra's 2019 Capital Program to cover such repairs to Metra stations.

A1.2: Repair Street Grid

While Chicago is organized on a grid system, conceptualized in Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago, in the Western/Ogden plan area, the network of streets is disconnected, bifurcated by rail lines and industrial land uses that have resulted in dead-end streets and irregular parcel sizes. The culmination of this is a lack of basic infrastructure necessary for the efficient and safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The Welcome to Western/Ogden plan proposes that the public way be reconstructed in the image of the traditional grid system in portions of the plan area that we recommend removing from the industrial corridor boundaries, including streets to be reconstructed following the Chicago Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Street and Site Plan Design Standards for residential streets and alleys. These specifications address sidewalk, parkway, and street design (Heramb, 2007). Additionally, this plan proposes the addition of street lights in areas being removed from the industrial corridor boundaries. These capital improvement projects can be funded through aldermanic menu funds and TIF funding (Pettigrew, 1997). A reconstructed grid will enable development of new uses in areas of the corridor that are plagued by persistent vacancy and an improved quality of life for area residents.

A1.3: Implement Equitable Transit Oriented Development

For Ground Up, efforts to increase the quality of life for city residents are key to allowing surrounding communities to access all that Western/Ogden can offer. Nearby communities such as Lawndale lack a strong public transit system, which can cause strain for individuals and families without cars and limit access to jobs, grocery stores, and doctors. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology, having broader transit networks in a community boosts the local economy, creates safer streets, and encourages a healthier and happier neighborhood. Developing a more equitable public transit system in the area surrounding the corridor would help spur the local economy by granting more access to local businesses, allowing revenue to stay within the community. Additionally, it grants residents from the surrounding area—who normally would not work in the corridor because of difficulties in transportation access—the opportunity to find a job in the Western/Ogden plan area. With the increased job opportunities, we expect in the budding film and entertainment industry, the benefits of equitable transit and improved infrastructure will reach beyond the corridor into surrounding neighborhoods. Together, the City of Chicago, local developers, and the Department of Transportation can fund the development of additional transit.

A2: Encourage Active Transit

A2.1: Develop Complete Streets Strategy

Railroads and the Global 1 intermodal ensure a degree of separation between neighborhoods in proximity to the industrial corridor, but this can be partially ameliorated by implementing complete streets along major arteries, specifically, Harrison, Roosevelt, Ogden, Damen, and Ashland. (For more on Western Avenue, see strategy A3.1.) These are also the main thoroughfares in the industrial corridor that are not friendly to cyclists or pedestrians. This is particularly true under viaducts, where narrow, poorly lit sidewalks make active modes of transportation difficult. There is demand for more walkable urban environments. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) found that 63% of millennials and 42% of baby boomers prefer to live in cities that do not require them to have a car (Shrikant, 2018).

The street network in the Western/Ogden plan area network should be redesigned as complete streets per CDOT's Complete Streets Chicago design guidelines. Per these guidelines, this would result in streets with wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and street lights to better promote all modes of transportation (Department of Transportation, 2013). Streets can be redesigned during upgrades made as part of regularly scheduled capital improvements.

Another strategy toward our goal of providing unparalleled access is to collaborate with the IMD to incentivize transit use in the district through improved infrastructure. This will involve assisting the IMD in executing a complete streets policy for major perimeter streets, including Ogden Avenue, Ashland Avenue, Roosevelt Road, and 18th Street. It will be necessary to work with the IMD to identify areas for metered parking as well as convert free lots into paid parking. There is currently only limited street parking in the area, and in preparation for increased development and current visitors and employees of the IMD, this will be necessary and can also generate funds.

A2.2: Reconfigure Intersections

In combination with reconfiguring streets, the Welcome to Western/Ogden plan proposes that several intersections be redesigned. Intersections around the plan area have high fatality rates, particularly along Western Avenue, and current signaling does not facilitate efficient movement of vehicles. We recommend adding signals to 14th Street to improve truck flows in and out of the intermodal facility, and reconfiguring the intersection of Western and Ogden avenues to allow for adequate sidewalks and bike paths. We also recommend adding turn-signal lanes to improve traffic flows. Redesigned intersections can be implemented with funds generated by the Western Ogden TIF district or with capital improvement funds (Pettigrew, 1997).

A3: Improve Access to the Intermodal

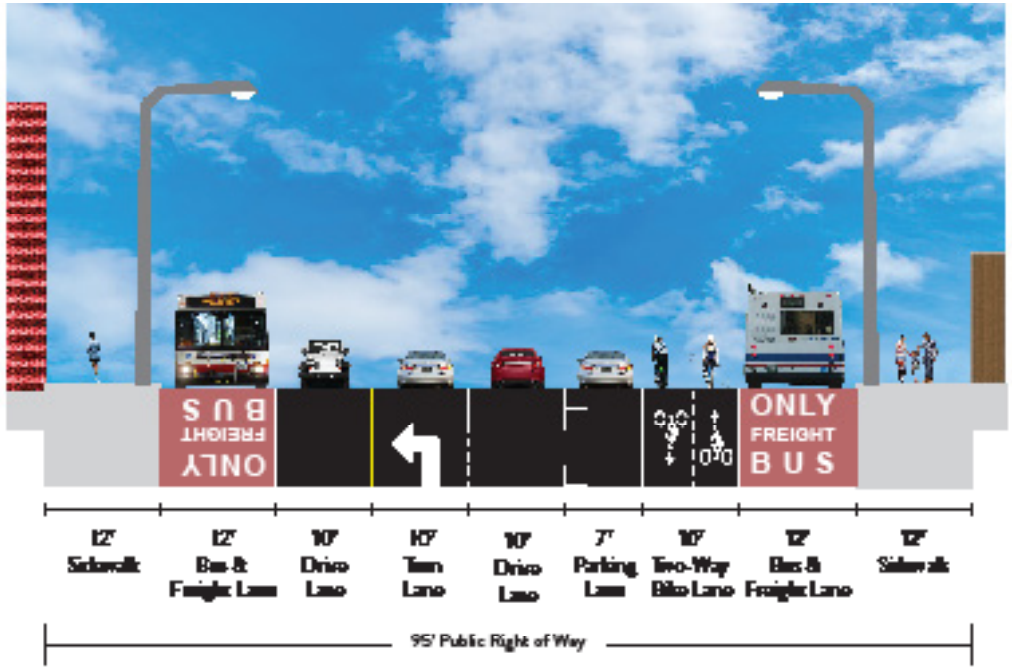
A3.1: Redesign Western Avenue to Accommodate Freight Traffic

Western is not included in the corridors recommended for complete streets redesign. Western Avenue plays a particularly important role in the local transportation network, serving as the only route for freight entering and exiting the Global 1 Intermodal and connecting the Eisenhower and Stevenson expressways. Additionally, CDOT classifies it as a Class 2 truck route, which is a preferred truck route in the city with a large volume of trucks (Cambridge Systematics & Witzke, 2013). To reconcile this status with surrounding neighborhoods, this plan proposes converting Western to a multimodal street with dedicated freight and transit lanes. Reorganizing Western Avenue street space in a way that promotes bus usage would increase the accessibility of the industrial corridor for employees without access to personal vehicles. Reconfigured lanes will span from the Stevenson in the south to the Eisenhower in the north, providing a more efficient design and mitigating negative externalities associated with trucking, including traffic fatalities and congestion. Redesigned streets can be implemented when streets are upgraded as part of regularly scheduled capital improvements.

A3.2: Revamp Viaducts

In 2006, Chicago completed Phase 1 of the Viaduct Improvement Program, designed to address serious structural and safety issues in 69 different viaducts. Repairs included restoring and rehabilitating roads and sidewalks under viaducts, utility and drainage improvements, and addressing the eroding abutment walls that were being impacted by water runoff. Phases 2 and 3 were completed in 2012 and 2015, respectively, but there still major issues with viaducts in the Western/Ogden Industrial Corridor. From a lack of lighting to potholes and litter, the viaducts are in desperate need of some tender loving care. Necessary repairs include mending potholes to allow for smoother vehicle access and to eliminate traffic congestion under the viaduct. Better lighting, garbage cans, and repainting will create a safer environment for pedestrians. Using an impermeable surface under the viaduct will help reduce runoff issues during storms and the likelihood of heavy flooding.

CDOT is responsible for maintenance and repairs to viaducts. Through its Capital Bridge and Bridge Maintenance Programs they service the viaducts when needed. Ground Up recommends working with CDOT around funding essential repairs.



Pictured Above: A proposed Western Avenue redesign. Note a combined Freight-Bus Only lane, which will divert freight traffic into more predictable patterns.