

The Rise and Decline of North Lawndale: how industrial history shaped a neighborhood

Recent events have drawn attention to ongoing struggles in American Rust Belt cities. The Rust Belt refers to the economic region in the American Midwest and Northeast. Scholars have debated the Rust Belt's geographical limits, but agree the region includes places that previously depended economically on manufacturing and recently experienced population decline (Trubek). The region served as America's industrial heartland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and boasted numerous factory neighborhoods that offered good-paying blue-collar jobs. Post-World War II technological advancements and globalization led to drastic restructuring of the region's economy (Austin). Companies closed factories, eliminated thousands of jobs and reinvested in modern enterprises. Racial tensions grew as corporate restructuring and suburbanization excluded Black Americans. Rust Belt cities today face economic hardship and racial unrest. Unemployment has soared since the Coronavirus pandemic infiltrated cities. Protests following recent police violence show that complicated racial dynamics still plague American cities (Waldmeier).

The purpose of this paper is to summarize how twentieth century industrial history led to economic hardship and racial tension in the Rust Belt neighborhood of North Lawndale. North Lawndale is a Chicago westside community (Figure 1) that once flourished as an industrial neighborhood. I divide the paper into four eras: prologue, rise, decline, epilogue. The prologue describes how industrialization of Midwest and Northeast cities before the 1871 Chicago Fire paved the way for twentieth century industrial corporations. The rise section details how industrial corporations decentralized to North Lawndale and built massive operations that attracted thousands to the neighborhood and supported housing developments between 1871-1960. The decline section details why corporations abandoned North Lawndale and how corporate departure, racial discrimination and riots devastated the neighborhood between 1961-1987. The epilogue highlights North Lawndale's revitalization efforts that span from 1987-today and leave hope that Rust Belt cities can recover from recent events. Figure 2 presents the paper's timeline.

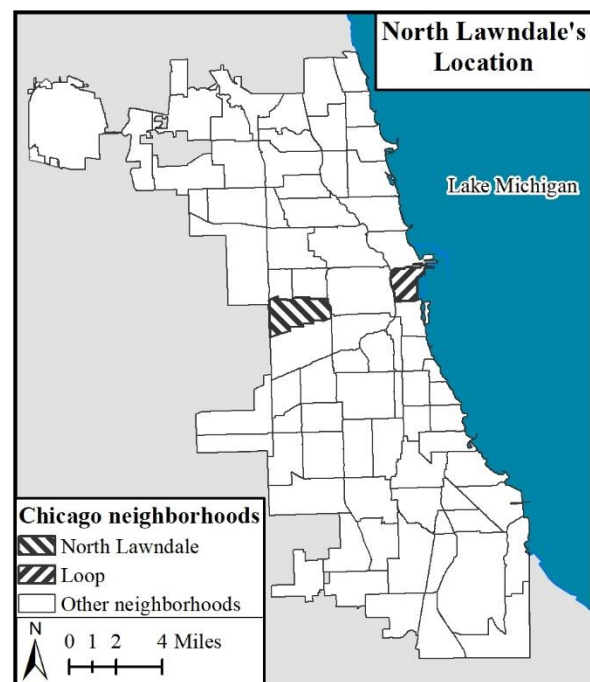


Figure 1. North Lawndale's Location (City of Chicago, *Boundaries*)

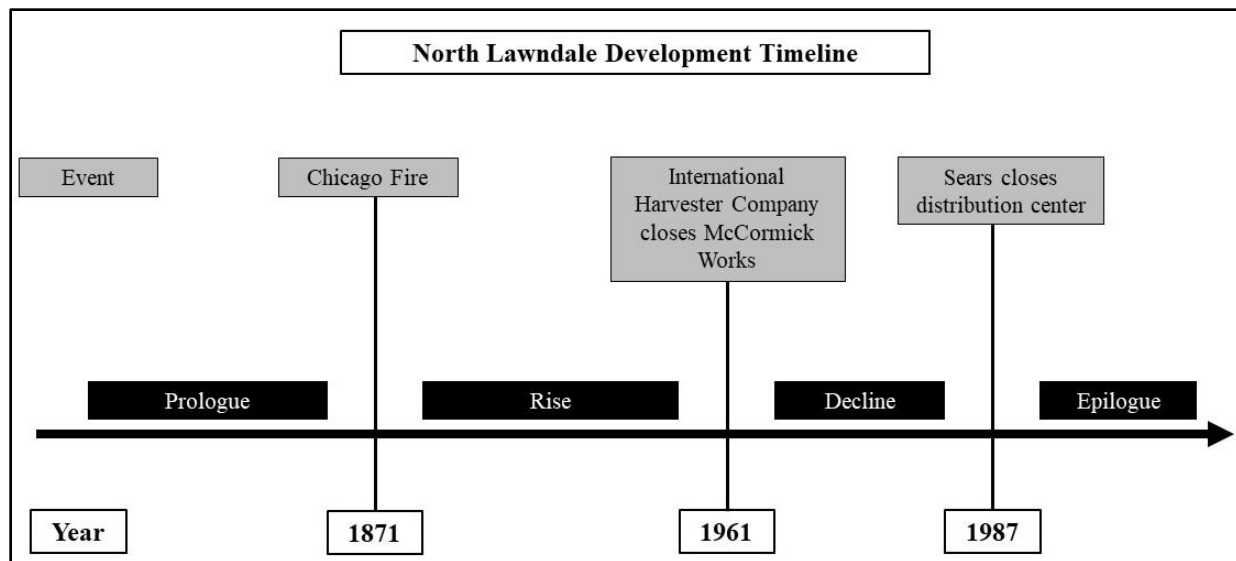


Figure 2. North Lawndale's Development Timeline

Prologue: Pre-1871

Nineteenth century industrialization of Northeast and Midwest cities laid the foundation for twentieth century American industrial corporations. Industrialists used transportation networks to form operations in Chicago and other cities. McCormick Harvesting Machine Company illustrated how companies used the American system of manufacturing and commissioned sales agents to increase production. Primitive urban infrastructure centralized businesses. Industrial success and rail transportation permitted residential expansion from Chicago's central business district or Loop neighborhood to North Lawndale before 1871.

Nineteenth century industrialists used transportation networks to form manufacturing operations in Chicago and other American cities. Mid-nineteenth century canal construction allowed goods to travel between Chicago, East Coast merchants and unsettled locations. Subsequent railroad construction permitted more frequent and reliable transportation between cities and resources (Young 6-12). Inbound ships and trains brought cities lumber, iron and other resources (Cronon 310). Outbound trains exported finished products (87-91). Constant material flow through American transportation networks fueled manufacturing industries in Chicago (311-312), Buffalo, Cleveland (34), Detroit (Binelli 47), and Milwaukee (Carriere). Chicago's central location favored Chicago-based manufacturing companies, like McCormick Harvesting Machine Company (Cronon 312).

McCormick Harvesting Machine Company exemplified how manufacturing companies used the American System of Manufacturing and sales agents to forge operations. Cyrus McCormick began selling mechanical reapers in 1840 on his Virginia farm (Hounshell 154-55). McCormick relocated to Chicago in 1847 (Weber 21-2) and increased production with the American system of manufacturing. The American system required machinists to create interchangeable parts for factory workers to assemble into finished products (Hounshell 28-31). Companies employed more workers to increase production (Chandler, *Scope* 21). McCormick singlehandedly produced 200 mechanical reapers in Virginia. Twenty-three workers assembled 700 machines at McCormick's Chicago factory in 1848. McCormick's 300 workers fashioned 5,000 machines in 1859 (Hounshell 157-161). Unregulated work environments allowed manufacturing companies to exploit employees to increase production and encouraged workers

to unionize (Ranney 35). Increased production did not guarantee sales. Wholesalers' inadequate storage and customers' limited funds and product knowledge restricted sales. McCormick therefore commissioned sales agents to educate farmers, maintain machines and sell reapers directly to farmers on credit (Cronon 313-318). McCormick's sales strategy foreshadowed how twentieth century industrial corporations standardized production and employed droves of workers.

Primitive infrastructure centralized manufacturing in cities. Railroads and telegraphic lines moved goods and information efficiently between cities (256) but inefficiently within cities. Nineteenth-century energy systems required industrialists either to share coal-powered steam plants (Massey & Denton 44) or receive electrical energy through centralized direct current (DC) distribution systems (Platt 33). Industrial businesses centralized before 1871 to access transportation, telegraphy and electrical energy.

Industrial success and increased railroad reliability permitted residential expansion to present-day North Lawndale. Industrial companies employed managers and other white-collar workers that could afford to leave urban centers once daily passenger service became quick and reliable (Young 77-78). The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad (CB&Q) began servicing Chicago's westside in 1863

("Chicago"). Real estate firm Millard & Decker

built a residential suburb named "Lawndale" at the CB&Q terminal in 1869 (Seligman). Figure 3 shows North Lawndale's relation to Chicago's Loop before 1871. Industrial decentralization after 1871 transformed Lawndale from a simple residential settlement to an industrial powerhouse (Seligman).

Rise: 1871—1960

North Lawndale rose as a vibrant industrial community between 1871-1960. The Chicago Fire of 1871 encouraged and subsequent infrastructure advancements permitted industrial decentralization to North Lawndale. Prominent industrial companies ran massive operations along North Lawndale's bordering trainlines. Expansive facilities helped industrial companies implement mass production technology and integrate supply chains. Corporations paid workers livable wages, established managerial hierarchies and invested in neighborhoods. North Lawndale's abundant employment opportunities supported three migration waves and housing

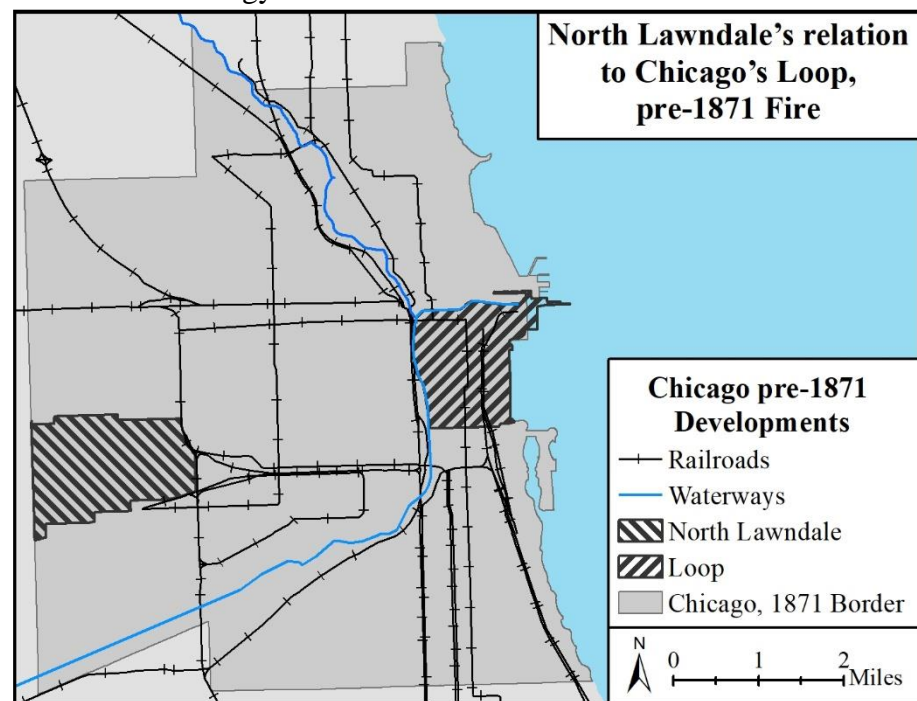


Figure 3. North Lawndale's relation to Chicago's Loop, pre-1871 Fire (Atack; City of Chicago, *Boundaries*; Cook County, *Historical*

developments. Other present-day rustbelt neighborhoods shared North Lawndale's development story. American corporations could finance massive operations while their markets expanded.

The 1871 Fire catalyzed Chicago industrial decentralization. The three-day Fire leveled Chicago's Loop (Lindstrom 7) and McCormick's factory. McCormick hastened construction of new and enlarged facilities on Chicago's westside (Hounshell 173; Weber 31) just south of North Lawndale. Increasing labor union demands (Adams & Butler 81-84; Winder 105-111) and Loop congestion (Lewis 43) prompted other manufacturing companies to follow McCormick and escape problems created by neglected factories (66). Decentralizing companies gravitated to North Lawndale's infrastructure.

Infrastructure advancements permitted industrial companies to relocate to North Lawndale after 1871. Railroad stakeholders built two beltlines to circumvent Chicago's congested Loop and interconnect terminal railroads in the late 1800s. The inner beltline stood two miles from the Loop along North Lawndale's eastern border. The Belt Railway of Chicago formed an outer loop around Chicago, intersected many terminal lines and marked the North Lawndale, Cicero border. Many industrial companies decentralized after the Fire to where belt and terminal railways intersected (Mayer 61-78).

Mayer's comments (71-73) suggested that North Lawndale housed some of Chicago's busiest railroad lines. Figure 4 shows North Lawndale's location among Chicago's trainlines. Cities received intraurban telephone networks in the late nineteenth century (Adams & Butler 37). Chicago's telephone network had expanded to Chicago's borders by 1915 (John 325) and helped companies coordinate intraurban operations and receive off-site services (Moss 535). Alternating current electrical distribution spanned beyond central business districts (Billington & Billington 26-30). The ability to place motors in individual machines allowed companies to adopt new construction technologies free from shared steam power (Nelson 22-23). Infrastructure improvements helped industrial companies decentralize to North Lawndale.

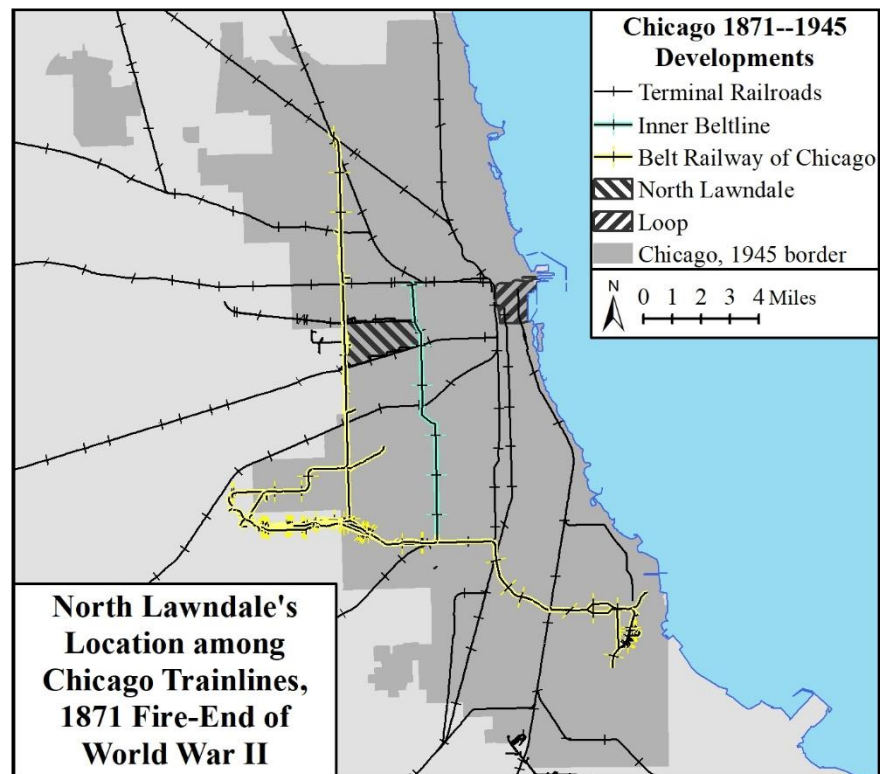


Figure 4. North Lawndale's Location among Chicago Trainlines, 1871 Fire-World War II ("Belt AR;" City of Chicago, *Boundaries, Railroads, Waterways*; Cook County, *Historical Municipal, Historical Railroad*; Mayer 88)

Prominent twentieth century industrial companies operated expansive facilities and employed thousands along North Lawndale's bordering trainlines. McCormick Harvesting Machine Company merged with four other agricultural machinery businesses in 1902 to create International Harvester Company (Winder 130-131). International Harvester renamed McCormick's westside operations McCormick Works. McCormick Works manufactured seeders and harvesters ("Harvester to") and filled 53 buildings on 103 acres (Ellis). International Harvester built an adjacent Tractor Works ("Harvester Co."). McCormick and Tractor Works together employed 14,000 workers (*American* 169). Western Electric Company operated the 200-acre Hawthorne Works with 40,000 workers along the Belt Railway (Adams & Butler 83-84). Western Electric produced most of America's telephone equipment in the early twentieth century as American Telephone & Telegraph's (AT&T) exclusive manufacturer (44). America's most notable mail-order catalog company (Chandler, *Structure* 229-282), Sears, Roebuck & Company, operated its world headquarters and main distribution center in a three million square foot facility (Worthy 28) with 10,000 workers (Longworth 1) along the Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad ("To Build"). Joseph T Ryerson & Son steel company operated the world's largest steel service facility ("Ryerson") near the inner beltline and CB&Q ("Deals"). Figure 5 shows companies' locations.

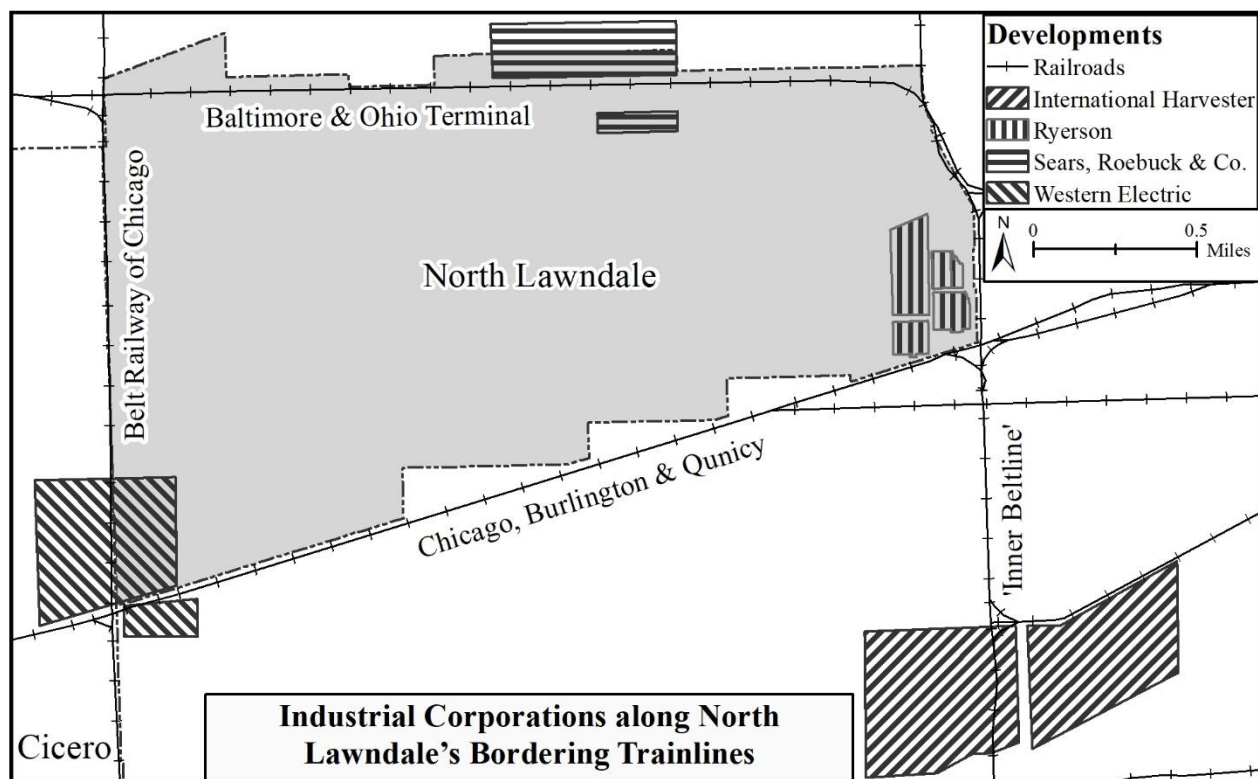


Figure 5. Industrial Corporations along North Lawndale's Bordering Trainlines (Atack; Chase, 1919, 1927; City of Chicago, *Boundaries*; Cook County Municipality, *Streams*; "Deals;" "In Real;" Longworth 8; "New")

Expansive facilities allowed companies to embrace Fordist mass production technologies (Chandler, *Scope* 22-26). Fordism began with Henry Ford's 1913 moving assembly line in Highland Park, MI. Ford's commercial success encouraged other industrial companies to expand his production model and mechanize large-scale processes. Managerial hierarchies scientifically

managed workers' pace and motions to maximize efficiency (Rupert 23-28). Assembly lines, mechanization, and scientific management helped twentieth century corporations increase production levels (Vidal 291) in large decentralized facilities and achieve greater economies of scale, that is unit costs decreased more quickly with increased production volumes (Chandler, *Scope* 26-28). Supply chain integration and well compensated workers helped increase production volume.

Industrial companies integrated supply chains to maintain optimal production levels (28-31). The "supply chain refers to the flow of goods from the raw material stage through manufacturer to the marketing and distribution of the finished goods to the final customer" (Lewis 14). Twentieth century industrial corporations expanded operations by integrating backward into supply and forward into marketing and distribution (Chandler, *Scope* 28). Industrial firms integrated with supply companies to guarantee steady production input. McCormick purchased sawmills and timber tract (Winder 108-9). Sears invested in supply companies when manufacturers could not quote suitable prices (Chandler, *Structure* 226-228). Marketing and sales personnel advertised and sold products respectively. Inland Steel, Chicago's top homegrown steel company, purchased Ryerson Steel to operate its processing and distribution department in 1935 (Keyes; Reiff). McCormick replaced commissioned agents with full-time sales employees to assure steady outflow of machines to customers (Chandler, *Scope* 66; Winder 120-121). Integrated supply chains helped keep materials flowing through production.

Increasing workers' wages, establishing managerial hierarchies and investing in neighborhoods allowed corporations to produce and workers to consume goods. Industrial corporations needed multitudes of workers to maintain optimal production levels. Dissatisfied workers could strike and disrupt production (Ranney 35-37). Capitalists therefore shared profits in exchange for peaceful labor conditions. A forty-hour work week permitted factory workers to buy cars, homes, appliances, and other mass-produced items (Binelli 92-93; Vidal 290-291). North Lawndale wages supported the Roosevelt Road commercial strip (*American* 182). Management hierarchies oversaw workers' production. Diligent or college educated workers could climb management ranks (Adams & Butler 98-104) and work in prominent executive towers at Western Electric (figure 6) and Sears (figure 7). Corporations built neighborhood houses, schools, stores, and infrastructure to attract superb workers (Nelson 89-92). Western Electric offered workers a restaurant, hospital, library, and recreational facilities (Adams & Butler 84). Sears invested in the local YMCA (\$100,000). Fordist wages and investments benefitted corporations and workers.

Migrants settled North Lawndale in three waves. Western Europeans first settled the area until World War I slowed European immigration. The first wave brought North Lawndale's population to 46,225 by 1910 (Seligman). Jewish people migrating between World Wars increased North Lawndale's population to 102,470 by 1940 (Manson, et al.). Jewish people built synagogues, houses, schools, and most notably Mt Sinai Hospital. Mt Sinai served North Lawndale through the neighborhood's decline. World War II production spawned the third immigration wave. Southern blacks, sometimes actively recruited by corporations, filled manufacturing jobs vacated by soldiers and Jewish people moving to the suburbs (Helgeson 64-66). Many blacks received lower pay than their established white counterparts and remained absent from post-World War II suburban flight (Ranney 2). North Lawndale's black population skyrocketed from 422 persons in 1940 to 13,146 persons in 1950 and 113,827 persons in 1960. The neighborhood's white population simultaneously plummeted from 102,048 persons in 1940



Figure 6. Remaining Western Electric executive tower (Photo by author)



Figure 7. The original Sears Tower (Photo by author)

to 87,096 in 1950 and 10,792 in 1960 (Manson, et al.). Table 1 and figure 8 show North Lawndale's population from 1930, when the United States census introduced census tracts that aligned with Chicago's neighborhood boundaries (University of Chicago Library), to 2010.

North Lawndale's Historical Population by Race							
Year	White	Percentage White	Black	Percentage Black	Other	Percent Other	Population total
1930	111,821	99.6%	374	0.3%	66	0.1%	112,261
1940	102,048	99.6%	422	0.4%	0	0.0%	102,470
1950	87,096	86.7%	13,146	13.1%	247	0.2%	100,489
1960	10,792	8.6%	113,827	91.1%	318	0.3%	124,937
1970	2,962	3.2%	88,078	96.3%	452	0.5%	91,492
1980	1,038	1.7%	59,370	96.5%	1,126	1.8%	61,534
1990	745	1.6%	45,574	96.4%	977	2.1%	47,296
2000	1,060	2.5%	39,363	94.2%	1,345	3.2%	41,768
2010	1,251	3.5%	33,072	92.1%	1,589	4.4%	35,912

Table 1. North Lawndale's Historical Population by Race Table (Manson, et al.)

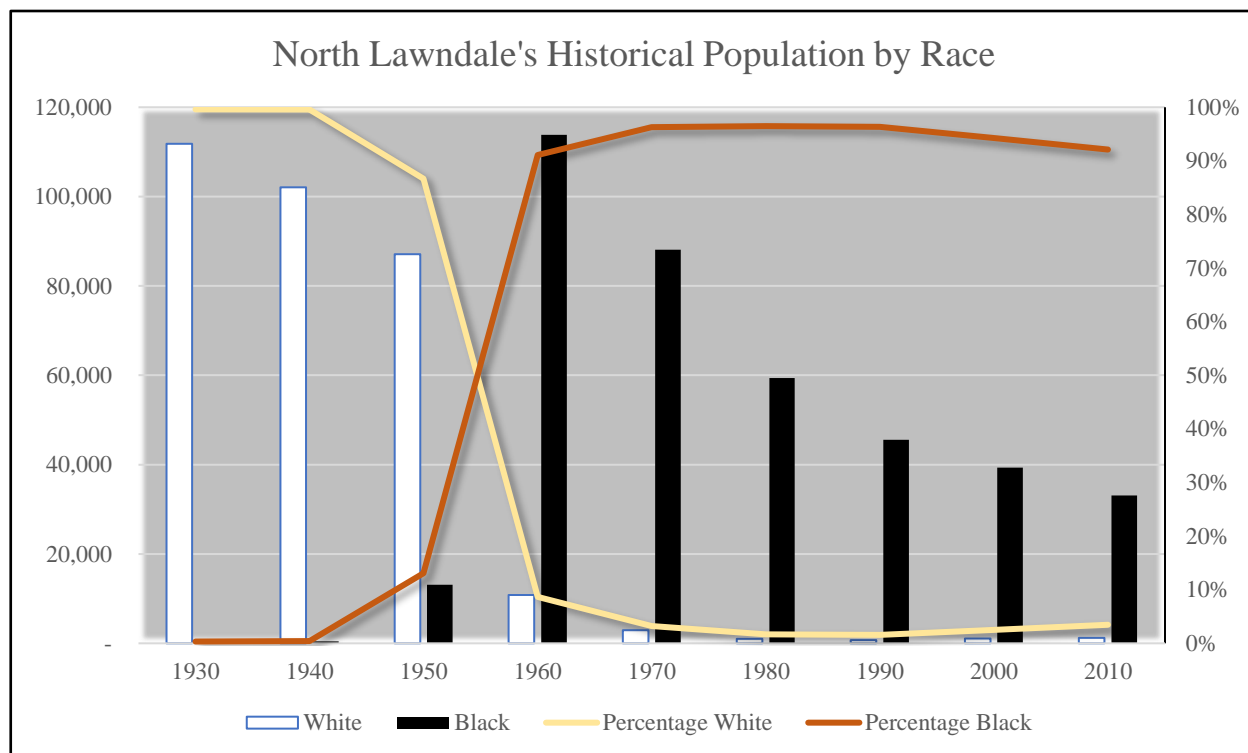


Figure 8. North Lawndale's Historical Population by Race Graph (Manson, et al.)

Housing developments accommodated North Lawndale migrants. Housing developers lined streets with "Greystones." More than 1,500 of the 3,500 Greystones erected in Chicago between 1890-1930 stood in North Lawndale (Podmolik). Greystones stood two or three stories with limestone facades. Contractors built large Greystones along residential boulevards for middleclass homebuyers and smaller Greystones near industrial corporations. Some Greystones remain today, despite corporate disappearance (Ryan 89-91). Figure 9 shows typical Greystone architecture.

North Lawndale's history exemplified twentieth century industrial growth throughout the present-day Rust Belt. Numerous corporations employed massive operations. Examples included Ford's Highland Park and Rogue River plants with 42,000 and 68,000 workers respectively, Pullman's Chicago and General Electric's Schenectady factories each with 15,000 workers (Nelson 7). Corporations invested in workers, facilities and neighborhoods (Ranney 21-26). Migrants flocked to northern cities between 1880-1920 (Massey & Denton 18). Post-War industrial expansion brought waves of southern Blacks to northern Cities. Blacks received less pay and stood vulnerable when Fordism collapsed (Ranney 2, 37).



Figure 9. Chicago Greystones (Photo by author)

American Fordist corporations could operate integrated supply chains, afford massive payrolls and upkeep facilities while their markets expanded. World War II production and subsequent rebuilding of European and Japanese economies increased global demand for American products. The 1944 Bretton Woods Conference fixed the American dollar's value relative to other nation's currencies and favored American corporations over international competitors. Wartime domestic production shortages gave way to post-war housing and automobile boom. High foreign and domestic demand for American goods following World War II helped American corporations exchange wages for labor peace (Bluestone & Harrison 112-139). The peaceful exchange ended when economic crises forced corporations to change business strategies.

Decline: 1961—1987

North Lawndale's corporations and neighborhood dismantled between 1961-1987. Economic crises reversed American industrial expansion. Infrastructure advancements permitted corporations to decentralize production and centralize management. Corporations closed colossal facilities to redirect investments in more modern enterprises. Corporate shutdowns sent shockwaves throughout modern-day Rust Belt neighborhoods. North Lawndale and other increasingly black neighborhoods stood defenseless against the negative impacts of corporate shutdowns. Riots following Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's assassination cemented the neighborhood's decline. Despair remained in the community for years.

Economic crises caused by global economic restructuring halted American industrial expansion throughout the 1960s-1970s. American corporations' share of international markets declined as modern European and Japanese multinational corporations emerged after the War. The United States' economy likewise suffered major bouts of stagflation- simultaneous high

levels of inflation and unemployment. President Nixon, pressured from other capitalist leaders, announced in 1971 that the dollar could float based on market demand. Nixon's announcement nullified the Bretton Woods agreement and signaled the end of American corporations' Fordist era global rule. American corporations earned increasingly lower profit margins. Corporate managers responded by cutting production costs and investing capital in more profitable enterprises (140-149). Both strategies required capital mobility afforded by modern infrastructure.

Post-World War II infrastructure advancements allowed corporations to further decentralize production and centralize management. Interstate highways, deregulated trucking industries, and air travel allowed industrial production to relocate to less expensive locations in the urban periphery and beyond (Rast 6). Industries decentralized northwest and southwest of Chicago (35). Figure 10 shows North Lawndale's relation to Chicago's interstates and airports. High-speed communication networks combined with financial services enabled corporations to move capital from outmoded facilities to new technologies (Ranney 25-38) and centrally control scattered operations (95-98). Unified city and suburban electrical grids powered sprawling

suburban and concentrated central business district developments (Hogan 275-282). Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley used infrastructure improvements and business subsidies to lure corporate headquarters to the Loop (Ranney 95-98). Inland Steel, Sears, Prudential Insurance and other businesses built skyscraping corporate towers that transformed Chicago's skyline (Figure 11). Similar transformations occurred in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other cities (Rast 4). Permissive infrastructure technology freed corporations from Fordist era investments.

Corporations shifted capital from colossal facilities in North

Lawndale and other Rust Belt locations to modern enterprises throughout the 1960s-1980s. International Harvester closed their westside Works in the early 1960s and moved production to more efficient one-floor facilities ("McCormick"). Harvester closed or sold thirty-five plants through the 1980s (Borucki & Barnett 37-38). Telecommunications' increased reliance on fiber

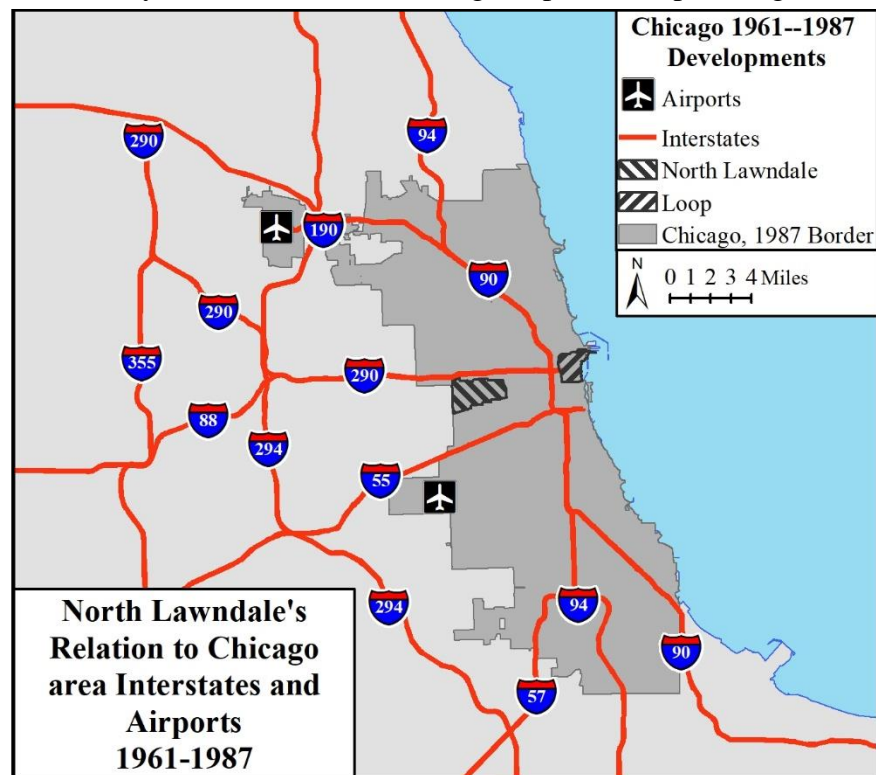


Figure 10. North Lawndale's Relation to Chicago's Expressways and Airports, World War II-1987 (City of Chicago, *Boundaries*; Cook County, *Historical Municipal*; ESRI, USA Airports, USA Major Highways)

optic cables and silicon chips displaced Hawthorne Works' copper wire and electro-mechanical switchboard production. Western Electric announced the closure of Hawthorne, New Jersey, Baltimore, and Philadelphia Works in 1983. Plant closures allowed Western Electric to invest in clean rooms for semiconductor manufacturing (Adams & Butler 202-13). Sears closed North Lawndale and five other distribution centers as part of new streamlined ordering systems (Key). Sears' retail sales had declined since 1970s inflation encouraged customers to patronize low-price retailers like Target and Walmart (Howard). Slowdowns and closures at North Lawndale plants erased most local jobs. A University of Illinois study estimated that North Lawndale lost 75% of businesses and 25% of jobs between 1960-1970. The neighborhood lost 80% of remaining manufacturing jobs between 1970-1980 (qtd. in Longworth 8).



Figure 11. Sears (presently Willis) Tower (Rogers)

Cities rusted throughout America's Northeast and Midwest as corporate shutdowns sent shockwaves through communities. Corporations shuttered factories in Detroit, Newark, Youngstown, and other cities throughout the 1960s-1980s (Bluestone & Harrison 67-76). Thousands of well-paid factory workers lost jobs overnight. Individuals that could relocate to find work did. Studies tracking those that stayed determined many remained unemployed or underemployed for years. The economic impact of corporate shutdowns extended beyond workers directly impacted. Supply companies lost contracts. Retail lost sales. Local governments faced simultaneous decreased tax revenue from industrial and residential flight and increased demand for public services from neglected infrastructure and displaced workers (Bluestone & Harrison 51-67; Ranney 83-94). Corporate shutdowns impacted neighborhoods inequitably.

North Lawndale and other increasingly black neighborhoods stood particularly vulnerable to negative impacts of corporate shutdowns. The promise of Fordist wages attracted many blacks to northern cities during and after World War II (Massey & Denton 43). Migrating blacks however often earned less pay and benefits than established whites (Ranney 2). Blacks'

lower status limited their economic and geographic mobility when jobs and housing deteriorated. Blacks arrived to cities with housing limited from the Great Depression and World Wars. The federal government aided white families' post-war flight to the suburbs with guaranteed mortgage lending and subsidized highway construction (Massey & Denton 43-44). Blacks that remained in cities did not receive equivalent resources to upkeep neighborhoods.

North Lawndale's housing stock deteriorated as discriminatory lending and real estate practices restricted blacks' buying power. North Lawndale lost almost half its housing units between 1960 (30,243) and 1985 (16,287) (*American* 257). Many Greystones fell to the wrecking ball. Other properties deteriorated beyond repair as joblessness and discriminatory financial practices prevented blacks from buying and upkeeping homes. Lending institutions used redlining to deny specific geographic areas loans and insurance coverage (257-260). A 1975 Metropolitan Area Housing Alliance study found that North Lawndale was one of Chicago's "most severely redlined" neighborhoods (qtd. in *American* 260). Sellers used contract agreements to discourage blacks from buying North Lawndale properties. Contract agreements forced blacks to pay lots of cash to 'buy' homes without mortgage equity. The Chicago Housing Authority responded to North Lawndale's increasing homeless population by opening Ogden Courts, a 136-unit public housing complex on the community's eastside. Legislation against discriminatory housing practices passed after years of growing racial tension (Helgeson 65-70).

Riots following Dr. King's assassination accelerated North Lawndale's decline. News of Dr. King's slaying hung heavy in North Lawndale. Two years prior King and his family moved into a crowded North Lawndale flat as part of King's campaign for equality. King's actions spotlighted the horrible living conditions blacks endured in Chicago and other American cities (Briscoe & Olumhense). King's assassination on April 4, 1968 spurred riots in North Lawndale and other black neighborhoods in 36 states and the District of Columbia (Levy 5). The Chicago unrest began as a peaceful march in the Loop on April 5. The protests turned violent and spread to Chicago's near north, south and west sides by nightfall. Rioters looted and set fires. The unrest caused nine deaths in Chicago and \$9-10 million in westside damages, mostly uninsured. Roosevelt Road alone lost 72 buildings (Briscoe & Olumhense). Fifty-four cities reported at least \$100,000 in property damage (Boissoneault). Some Americans blamed outside anarchists for America's 1960s riots. The federally appointed Kerner Commission listed many characteristics of post-industrial American cities as reasons for the unrest, including high unemployment, racial inequality, unscrupulous consumer lending practices, and inadequate housing (George). Riots ultimately caused North Lawndale decades of disinvestment (*American* 34, 173). Remaining businesses and better-off residents fled, further reducing the neighborhood's population. Financial institutions and insurance companies issued fewer mortgages and repair loans (260). Decades later the neighborhood's vibrancy had not returned.

Chicago Tribune staff published a series of essays on the despair in North Lawndale fifteen years after the riots (*American*). Well-paid industrial jobs that lured thousands to the neighborhood had not returned. Remaining income possibilities included menial service jobs, welfare, family and underground activities (174-77). Many natives grew up without hope or positive role models and turned to drugs. Police estimated residents spent about \$1.5 million on narcotics yearly. Much of the money came from welfare payments or crime. Street gangs controlled urban drug trade. Gang leaders profited handsomely from illicit drug sales and became role models for young boys. Many kids joined gangs convinced they could earn easy money delivering drugs for big-time dealers (72). Reporters argued that those that remained in urban neighborhoods generations after industries left became trapped in an underclass that the rest of

society could not afford to ignore (6, 50, 301). North Lawndale needed jobs, financial aid and community organization to revitalize the neighborhood (293-301).

Epilogue: 1987—Today

The epilogue focuses on revitalization efforts that occurred after corporations left North Lawndale. I describe reasons for initial slow progress and later pivotal successes. I spotlight key figures, institutions and programs involved in housing, employment, commercial and community developments.

Community organizations have helped rebuild North Lawndale's housing. Homan Square grew from former Sears CEO Edward J. Chase and real estate firm Charles Shaw and Company's 1980 plan to redevelop the vacant Sears Complex into affordable housing. Shaw received subsidies from the City of Chicago's "New Homes for Chicago" to build low and middle-income single-family homes and rental units throughout the 1990s. Homan Square housed 350 families in 2020. The Foundation for Homan Square has overseen community development since 1995. The foundation today serves as an "umbrella" organization for neighborhood entities, including housing, community center, health clinic, YMCA childcare and educational facilities (Foundation). Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of Chicago began the Historic Chicago Greystone Initiative in North Lawndale in 2006. Local NHSs operate in American cities, receive funding from the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation and provide education and resources to help urban residents buy and maintain homes (Thigpen). The NHS of Chicago, founded in 1975, operates an office in North Lawndale's Sears Tower. The Greystone initiative helped more than 200 homeowners obtain financial assistance to improve their homes. The initiative offered free rehabilitation workshops, technical assistance and personalized on-site consultations. Neighborhood Housing Services expanded the initiative to other Chicago westside and southside neighborhoods (Podmolik) before ending the initiative in 2018 (Neighborhood). The Lawndale Community Church founded the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC) in 1987 to implement housing, economic development and education programs (Giloith 78-79). The LCDC redeveloped the burned-out area surrounding where Dr. King and his family resided into the Dr. King Legacy Apartments from 2006-2011. The four-acre site now houses affordable apartments.

Critics have blamed North Lawndale's slow reindustrialization on narrow plans. Pyramidwest, a for-profit community-led economic development corporation, led the neighborhood's industrial redevelopment from the 1970s-1980s. Authors stated Pyramidwest's narrow list of acceptable employers stifled North Lawndale's reindustrialization. Pyramidwest spent millions in federal aid to revamp the former International Harvester site into Cal-West Industrial Park (*American* 182). Pyramidwest's president Cecil Butler blocked low-pay or non-labor-intensive warehouses from the industrial park. Cal-West stood vacant when the city seized the land in 1986 for delinquent taxes (Goozner 7). Critics now argue that North Lawndale needs more than the city's current zoning efforts to spawn industrial development. Chicago zoned parts of North Lawndale and adjacent neighborhoods as the Western/Ogden Planned Manufacturing District (PMD) (Figure 12) in 2005 (Jordahl 16) to protect land against encroaching higher-value commercial and residential uses (Zamudio & Moore). Zamudio and Moore reported that PMD zoning alone has not fueled reindustrialization nor job growth in Chicago. A development plan or incubator may help fuel reindustrialization. Hannah Jones, economic development director at Industrial Council of Nearwest Chicago (ICNC) stated ICNC helped neighboring Kinzie PMD create 6,250 jobs since 1980 (qtd. in Zamudio & Moore). The City of Chicago had plans for Kinzie but not for North Lawndale. The city misdirected Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds

aimed to promote industrial development in the Western/Ogden PMD. Chicago designated Western/Ogden and Roosevelt/Cicero TIF zones in North Lawndale and adjacent neighborhoods (Figure 12) in 2005 to revitalize industrial activity (*Roosevelt/Cicero*; *Western/Ogden*) and “foster a wide range of job-generating business developments and investment projects” (*Western/Ogden*). The city assesses property values within a TIF district upon creation. Any property value increase within a 23-year period goes into the district’s TIF fund and should finance specific geographic development projects (Schutz). Schutz highlighted that Chicago’s mayor historically has reallocated TIF funds for school projects. The city allocated \$9 million Western/Ogden TIF funds for Chicago Christian Industrial League shelter and job training facility and spent over \$7 million for Chicago Public School and Park District projects (*Tax*).

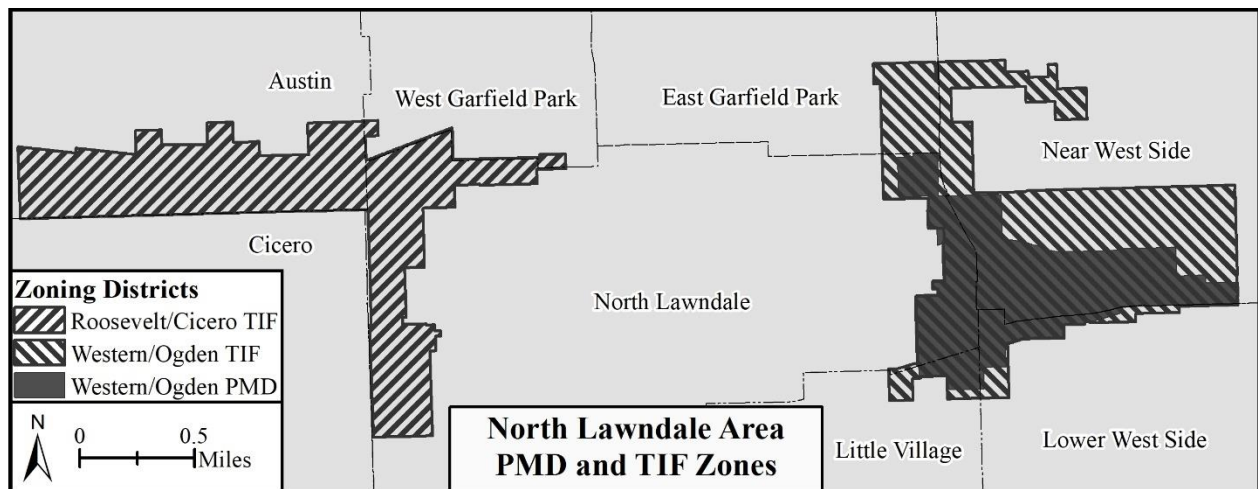


Figure 12. North Lawndale area PMD and TIF Zones (Atack; City of Chicago, *Boundaries, Tax, Zoning*)

Cinespace Chicago Film Studios and Lagunitas Brewing Company employ film and factory workers in North Lawndale’s Western/Ogden PMD. Cinespace (Figures 13, 15) expanded operations from Canada to North Lawndale in 2011. Low-price real estate and family connections attracted Cinespace’s founder Nick Mirkopoulos to North Lawndale. The film studio has grown to America’s largest independent movie studio outside of Hollywood in the former Ryerson plant (Caminiti). Cinespace Chicago has produced multiple successful television shows, including *Chicago Med*, *Chicago PD*, and *Empire* (Cinespace). Alex Pissios, member of Cinespace’s founding family, claims Cinespace has helped create 7,500 film-related jobs in Chicago. Cinespace houses other businesses, including camera, casting and post-production companies (Caminiti). Reel Chicago reported in July 2020 that Cinespace plans to resume Chicago production in September 2020 following Coronavirus precautions. Lagunitas’ (Figures 14, 15) history has progressed like former industrial giants. Lagunitas expanded operations from California to North Lawndale to improve East Coast distribution in 2013. The brewery since has grown to Chicago’s largest brewery (Yue) on land leased from Cinespace (Noel). Heineken International, the world’s second largest brewery, has fully owned Lagunitas since 2017. Heineken has conducted two separate layoffs amid slowing growth in the United States craft beer sector (Kendall; Swindell). Lagunitas’ combined California/Chicago employment was 900 in October 2018 (Channick) and 650 in February 2020 (Swindell). Lagunitas employed 150 at its North Lawndale location in August 2020 (Lagunitas).



Figure 13. Cinespace Chicago entry gate (Photo by author)

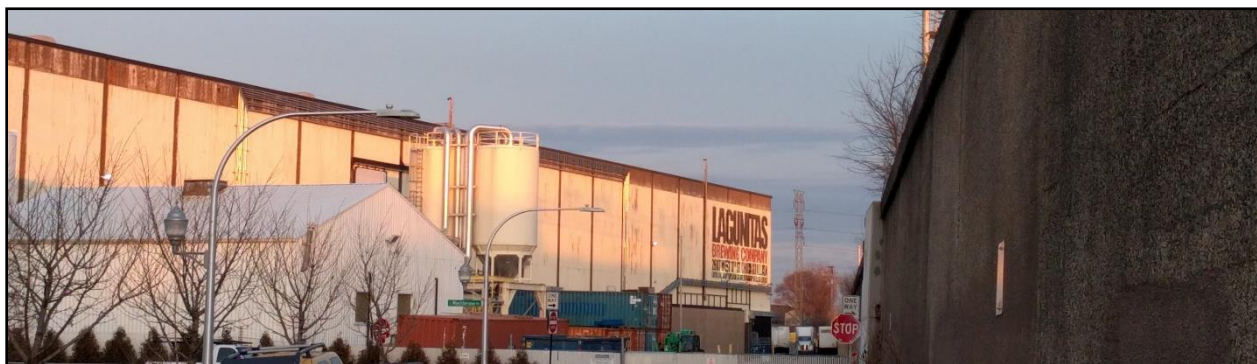


Figure 14. Lagunitas Brewing Company, Chicago (Photo by author)

The resurrection of Roosevelt Road's once vibrant commercial strip developed slowly decades after 1968 riots and stagnated after the 2008 financial crisis. Pyramidwest had secured land for the planned Lawndale Plaza Shopping Center on Roosevelt Road by the late 1970s (Giloth 71). Lawndale Plaza opened twenty years later filled with retail establishments. The plaza lost several tenants in the early 2000s. New tenants that arrived after the 2008 recession paid lower rents. Lower rent income prevented the plaza's 2012 owner, a venture led by a California investor Bernard Rosenson, from maintaining \$15.2 million mortgage payments despite the plaza's 94% occupancy rate (Maidenberg). The recent recession amid the Coronavirus pandemic and riots against police violence again may impact Lawndale Plaza's future.

The Coronavirus has not stalled Ogden Commons development. Chicago-based The Habitat Company partnered with Sinai Health System, Cinespace, Chicago Housing Authority and the City of Chicago to plan the mixed-use Ogden Commons on the former Ogden Courts site (Figure 15). The ultimate site plan includes 120,000 square feet of commercial space and over 350 mixed-income housing units (Koziarz). The Federal CARES Act (Sabino), PNC Bank and

Opportunity Zone Equity helped fund the development's \$22 million first phase. Project executive at McHugh Construction, Matt Fiascone, announced in May 2020 that first phase construction continued as scheduled for January 2021 completion despite the Coronavirus pandemic. A Steak n' Shake, Ja' Grill and Wintrust Bank will open under the first phase. Sinai Health System and Cinespace Chicago will lease the remaining building space. The Habitat Company plans to begin multiphase residential construction in 2021 ("First"). Ogden Commons will operate as the "gateway" to central Chicago (*Mayor*).

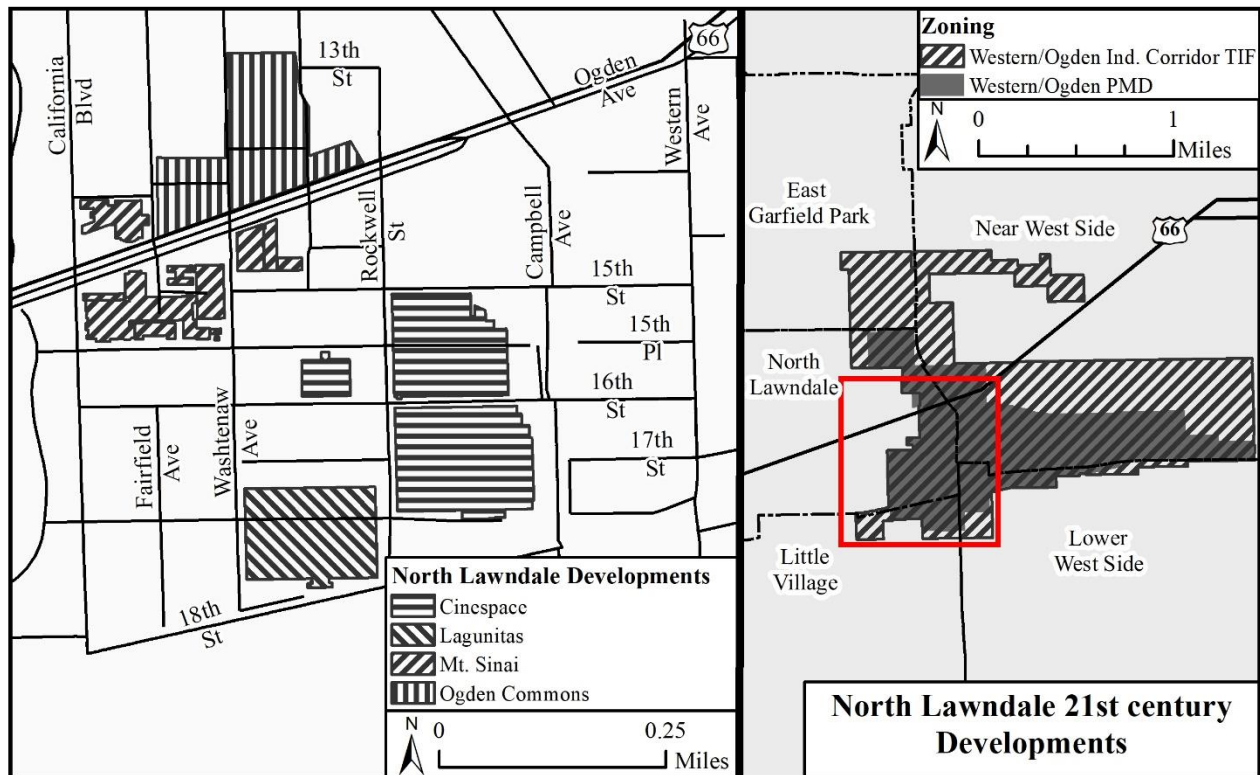


Figure 15. North Lawndale 21st century developments, City of Chicago, 2019, *Boundaries, Building Footprints, Major Streets, Tax, Zoning*; National Park Service)

Neighborhood agencies continue to strengthen the North Lawndale community through the Coronavirus pandemic. The LCDC has provided rent relief for qualified Lawndale residents (Lawndale). Turning the Page has offered neighborhood parents online resources and support meetings to help them fulfill their increased role in youth education. Turning the Page has helped link public schools, families and community members in North Lawndale since 2015 to help students receive valuable educational resources (Turning). Options for Youth has had continued success through the pandemic. Options for Youth organized in 1986 to help adolescent welfare mothers remain in school after their second pregnancy. The organization has broadened its mission to expand opportunities for adolescents in underserved communities through programs that maximize each young person's potential and help break the cycle of poverty in their lives and communities. One hundred percent of high school seniors that participated in Options for Youth's violence prevention program graduated in August 2020 despite challenges created by Coronavirus isolation and remote learning (Options). North Lawndale's unwavering community progress show revitalization can continue

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to summarize how twentieth century industrial history led to economic hardship and racial tension in the Rust Belt neighborhood of North Lawndale. I wrote North Lawndale's history in four parts (figure 2). The prologue described how urban industrialization before 1871 laid the groundwork for twentieth century industrial corporations. The rise, 1871-1960, and decline, 1961-1987, sections detail how the growth and closure of industrial corporations impacted North Lawndale. The epilogue highlighted key figures, institutions and programs involved in North Lawndale's revitalization efforts since 1987.

North Lawndale's continued recovery leaves hope that Rust Belt neighborhoods can recover from the shockwaves of recent events like the Coronavirus pandemic and violent protests. North Lawndale's recent history shows that financial stimulation, economic development, and community organization can help neighborhoods regenerate. Rust Belt neighborhoods that recovered from corporate abandonment may stand resilient to future hardship.

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