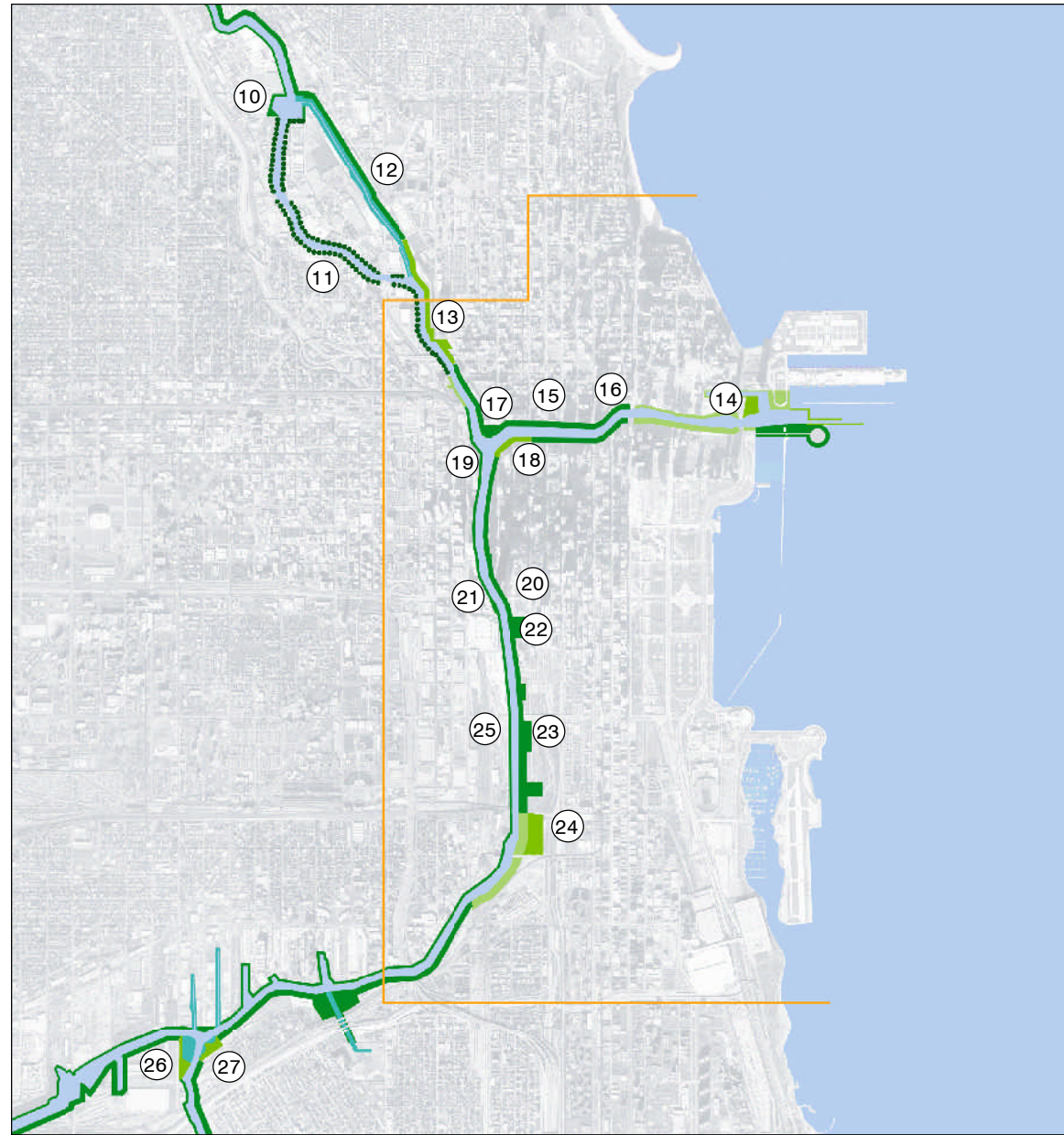


**Figure 4.3.23**  
The riverfront will become a major new public amenity on a par with the lakefront. A continuous riverwalk will extend from outlying neighborhoods through the Central Area to Lake Michigan



## The Riverfront Open Space System

*Planned, proposed and envisioned riverfront recommendations.*

### KEY CHICAGO RIVER RECOMMENDATIONS

#### NEAR NORTH

- 10. Add a new boat house, pedestrian bridge and river edge landscape at the North Avenue turning basin
- 11. Enhance landscaping along the west side of Goose Island
- 12. Create a natural habitat and recreation opportunities along the east side of Goose Island
- 13. Ensure continuous river access through the Montgomery Ward site to connect with parks at Hobbie and Erie Streets.
- 14. Create Du Sable Park at the mouth of the Chicago River
- 15. Create an active riverwalk with commercial uses along the north side of the Main Branch from the lake to Wolf Point.
- 16. Create new public space at the Sun Times-Trump Tower Chicago site.
- 17. Create a new public park at Wolf Point.

#### THE EXPANDED LOOP

- 18. Create a continuous pedestrian riverwalk along Wacker Drive on the Main Branch from Lake Street to the lakefront as part of the Wacker Drive improvements.
- 19. Develop a riverfront plaza on the west bank of the South Branch between Randolph and Lake Streets.
- 20. Develop a public riverfront plaza at 310 South Wacker Drive.
- 21. Create new riverfront open space at the Old Main Post Office along with its redevelopment.

#### SOUTH LOOP AND NEAR SOUTH

- 22. Create a new riverfront park at Franklin Point.
- 23. Create a continuous public river park on the east side of the Chicago River to provide public access from Harrison Street to Ping Tom Park.
- 24. Expand Ping Tom Park.
- 25. Achieve a continuous open space corridor along the west side of the Chicago River.
- 26. Implement Origins Park plan at the South Turning Basin.
- 27. Expand Origins Park to serve the Bridgeport neighborhood.

# The Chicago Riverfront

Develop the Chicago River as a premier public place and continuous open space system

## Key Riverfront Recommendations

- Create a connected greenway along the river, with continuous multi-use paths along at least one side of the river
- Increase public access to the river through the creation of overlooks and public parks
- Restore and protect native landscaping and natural habitats along the river, particularly fish and bird habitat, where appropriate
- Develop the river as a recreational amenity, attracting tourists and enhancing Chicago's image as a desirable place to live, work and visit
- Encourage economic development compatible with the river as an environmental and recreational amenity
- Good stormwater management in the Central Area will help to clean river and lake water

The riverfront will become a major new public amenity comparable to the lakefront. A continuous riverwalk will extend from outlying neighborhoods through the Central Area to Lake Michigan. Restoration of the banks will enhance habitat and water quality.

The Chicago River presents the single largest opportunity to enhance open space throughout the Central Area. The river is within a five-minute walk of most of the Loop and surrounding districts, and should provide a unique experience of nature in the city.

Completing the riverwalk will require coordination of public and private interests, overcoming physical constraints and significant capital investment. All river edge improvements will be designed with a view to integration into a connected, publicly accessible system.

City of Chicago ordinance currently requires a 30-foot setback from the water's edge for all new riverfront development. This should be seen as a minimum dimension with greater depth encouraged. New Riverfront projects should be reviewed as Planned Developments by the Department of Planning and Development. The City has published guidelines for river design and works closely with developers to ensure that riverside improvements meet certain standards for landscaping, lighting and accessibility.



**Figure 4.3.24** The Main Branch of the Chicago River will be enhanced by a continuous riverwalk and underbridge connections



Figure 4.3.25 Water taxis on the Chicago River



Figure 4.3.26 Erie Terrace Park in River North



Figure 4.3.27 Natural habitat along the Chicago River



Figure 4.3.28 The Riverwalk Gateway under Lake Shore Drive

### MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE DOWNTOWN RIVERWALK WILL BE COMPLETED IN THE NEAR FUTURE

A continuous river path will be located on at least one side of the river throughout the Central Area. This path is envisioned as a multi-use trail suitable for cycling, walking, and other uses. The path will offer underbridge connections such as those at Lake Shore Drive and Columbus Drive on the Main Branch. These connections make a continuous landscaped path possible, extending from Michigan Avenue to Lake Michigan, with a link to the lakefront bike path at Lake Shore Drive.

On the north bank of the Main Branch, this path will extend west to a multi-level river promenade at the redeveloped Sun-Times site, which will also include access to a transit stop at the new Carroll Avenue busway. A continuous street level path at Marina City, IBM and Reid Murdoch will provide pedestrian access. The path will continue west and provide access to the Merchandise Mart and Wolf Point. Wolf Point affords striking views of the river corridor and provides an opportunity for a significant riverside improvement.

On the south bank, the walkway will continue west along Wacker Drive to Lake Street. The portion between Michigan Avenue and Lake Street is envisioned as a grand promenade featuring landscaping, seating, cafes, performance areas and concessions.

The river walkways are a key element in proposed downtown pedestrian improvements, designed to facilitate movement of commuters between the West Loop rail stations and their workplaces. Eventually, a continuous street-level riverside walkway will extend along the west side of the South Branch between Van Buren and Lake streets, with connections to Union Station and the Ogilvie Transportation Center. This walkway will make it possible for pedestrians to walk along the river from the train stations to the lakefront by crossing to the Wacker Drive walkway at Lake Street. The walkways will also provide stops for the enhanced water taxi system proposed for the Central Area.

### THE NORTH AND SOUTH BRANCHES OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAJOR RIVER ENHANCEMENTS

Several large vacant sites remain along the north and south branches of the river. These sites offer opportunities for regional parks, natural areas and walkways. The redevelopment of the Montgomery Ward headquarters site will provide a continuous riverwalk from a park near Erie Street to a park near Hobbie Street. The eventual development of two vacant parcels will extend the riverwalk north to Halsted Street.

Another opportunity for enhanced trails and parks is provided on the east side of the South Branch between Roosevelt Road and Ping Tom Park at 18th Street as part of the South River Development Corridor.

At the eastern edge of Goose Island, the North Branch Canal can be designed to accommodate natural vegetation along its edges with an open channel for vessels. This would provide habitat for migratory waterfowl and a new recreational and environmental resource for residents.

## Riverfront Projects

### NEAR NORTH

- A new boat house, pedestrian bridge, and river edge landscape improvements at the North Avenue turning basin
- A new recreational and environmental resource along the east side of Goose Island on the North Branch Canal
- Continuous river access through the Montgomery Ward site from Hobbie to Erie streets, with parks at Hobbie and Erie
- Creation of Du Sable Park at the mouth of the Chicago River
- An active riverwalk with commercial uses along the north side of the Main Branch from the lake to the Sun-Times / Trump Tower Chicago site and points west
- A new public space at the Sun-Times-Trump Tower Chicago site
- Potentially a new public park at Wolf Point

### THE EXPANDED LOOP

- A continuous pedestrian riverwalk along Wacker Drive on the Main Branch from Lake Street to the lakefront
- A public riverfront plaza on the west bank from Randolph to Lake
- Public riverside open space at the old main post office

### SOUTH LOOP AND NEAR SOUTH

- A new riverside park at Franklin Point
- A continuous public river park on the east side of the Chicago River offering continuous public access from Harrison Street to Ping Tom Park
- Expansion of Ping Tom Park
- Possible continuous open space corridor along the west side of the Chicago River
- Creation of a neighborhood riverfront park in Pilsen
- Extension of the river park system to the southwest into the heart of the City

### River Parks and the Riverwalk

The River should be seen as a valuable open space resource as well as a viable transportation corridor for pedestrians, cyclists and water taxis.



Figure 4.3.29 The South Branch today



Figure 4.3.30 The South Branch in 2020



Figure 4.3.31 The North Branch Canal in 2020

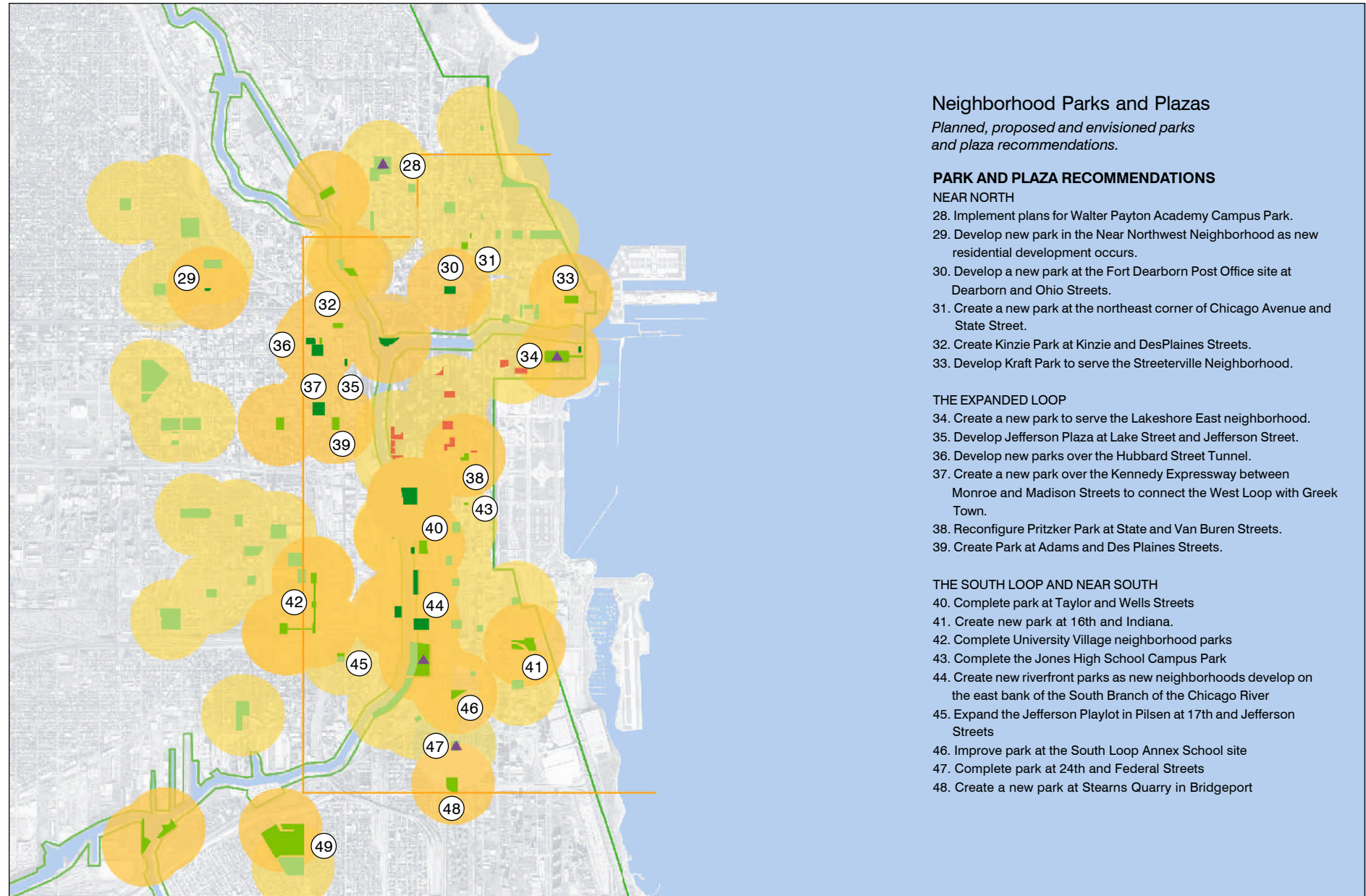
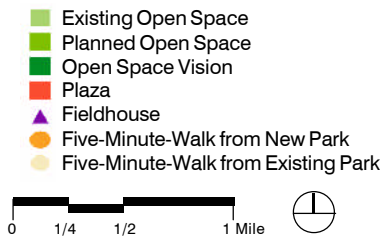
### North Branch Canal River Edge Improvements

The North Branch Canal on the east side of Goose Island will be transformed, serving as natural habitat and providing a variety of ecological and recreation opportunities.



Figure 4.3.32 The North Branch Canal today

**Figure 4.3.33**  
The Central Area will provide a range of new parks and plazas, serving a variety of needs.



### Neighborhood Parks and Plazas

*Planned, proposed and envisioned parks and plaza recommendations.*

#### PARK AND PLAZA RECOMMENDATIONS

##### NEAR NORTH

- 28. Implement plans for Walter Payton Academy Campus Park.
- 29. Develop new park in the Near Northwest Neighborhood as new residential development occurs.
- 30. Develop a new park at the Fort Dearborn Post Office site at Dearborn and Ohio Streets.
- 31. Create a new park at the northeast corner of Chicago Avenue and State Street.
- 32. Create Kinzie Park at Kinzie and DesPlaines Streets.
- 33. Develop Kraft Park to serve the Streeterville Neighborhood.

##### THE EXPANDED LOOP

- 34. Create a new park to serve the Lakeshore East neighborhood.
- 35. Develop Jefferson Plaza at Lake Street and Jefferson Street.
- 36. Develop new parks over the Hubbard Street Tunnel.
- 37. Create a new park over the Kennedy Expressway between Monroe and Madison Streets to connect the West Loop with Greek Town.
- 38. Reconfigure Pritzker Park at State and Van Buren Streets.
- 39. Create Park at Adams and Des Plaines Streets.

##### THE SOUTH LOOP AND NEAR SOUTH

- 40. Complete park at Taylor and Wells Streets
- 41. Create new park at 16th and Indiana.
- 42. Complete University Village neighborhood parks
- 43. Complete the Jones High School Campus Park
- 44. Create new riverfront parks as new neighborhoods develop on the east bank of the South Branch of the Chicago River
- 45. Expand the Jefferson Playlot in Pilsen at 17th and Jefferson Streets
- 46. Improve park at the South Loop Annex School site
- 47. Complete park at 24th and Federal Streets
- 48. Create a new park at Stearns Quarry in Bridgeport

# Parks and Plazas

Create the next generation of urban and neighborhood parks and plazas to support the growing population

## Key Park and Plaza Recommendations

- Expand regional parks to better serve Central Area residents
- Create new neighborhood parks
- Ensure that plazas contribute to the pedestrian realm with landscaping and seating, and are located appropriately

## Regional Parks

Regional parks include Ping Tom Park as well as Seward Park just outside the Central Area. Ping Tom Park at 18th Street and the Chicago River is being expanded to include a fieldhouse, baseball diamonds, a soccer field, and river edge connections to the north and south.

In addition, a 5.3 acre park and an adjacent elementary school are planned as part of the Lakeshore East development. The park will include indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, with fieldhouse services provided in the school building.

## Neighborhood Parks

These parks are intended primarily for nearby residents and workers. New neighborhood parks are being pursued at the following locations:

- Kinzie Street and Jefferson Street.
- Kraft Building site at Grand Avenue and Peshtigo Court. A two-acre park will be built above an underground parking lot, helping to ease both open space and parking shortages in the area.
- U.S. Postal Service site, Ontario Street and Dearborn Street. A 0.8-acre park serving the River North community has been proposed for this location. River North currently has no interior parks despite substantial population growth.

- A park over the Kennedy Expressway at Monroe Street that will connect the West Loop to Greektown and be a civic gateway.
- A West Loop Park at Desplaines Avenue and Adams Street. A 1.2-acre park has been proposed for this site, currently used as a parking lot. A grade school and numerous apartment buildings are in the vicinity. The West Loop has been proposed for high-density office development and will require adequate open space for workers on their lunch breaks.
- The southeast corner of Taylor Street and Wells Street. This 3-acre site is being reserved in anticipation of residential development in the vicinity.
- 24th Street and Federal Street.

## Plazas

Plazas serve the Central Area's workers. Although open to the public, in many cases they are actually privately owned and maintained. Many plazas in the Central Area were built under the bonus provisions of the Chicago zoning code, which permit developers to build larger buildings in return for providing public amenities. To ensure future plazas and other amenities are of high quality, the zoning code was recently amended to include design standards for character, size, landscaping, access, location, orientation, seating and lighting. Plazas are prohibited in areas where they would disrupt the continuity of the historic street wall such as sections of Michigan Avenue, LaSalle Street and Wabash Avenue.