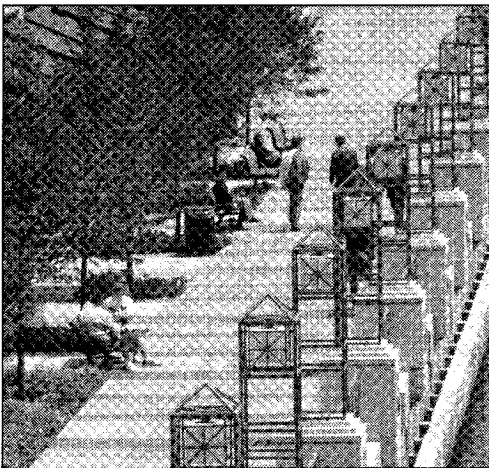


# IMPLEMENTATION

## V GETTING THE JOB DONE



MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

ACQUIRING AND IMPROVING THE LAND

ZONING FOR OPEN SPACE



# V GETTING THE JOB DONE



**D**efining needs and creating plans to meet them, as laid out in the *CitySpace Plan*, are only the first steps in the process of creating new open space throughout Chicago. If the ambitious goals of the Plan are to be realized, local governments must coordinate and organize their efforts to finance, develop and manage new open space programs and projects. An action plan is needed to create the intergovernmental and public-private compacts that will:

- Acquire and improve land for new open space, using a variety of public and private resources.
- Ensure that private development complements public open space goals.
- Recruit private citizens, businesses, civic organizations and neighborhood groups to develop and maintain public open space.

"This spirit — the spirit of Chicago — is our greatest asset. It is not merely civic pride: it is rather the constant, steady determination to bring out the very best conditions of city life for all people, with the full knowledge that what we as a people decide to do in the public interest we can and surely will bring to pass."

*Daniel Burnham, Plan of Chicago, 1909*

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## **MAINTAINING MOMENTUM**

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Establish a permanent intergovernmental structure to implement the CitySpace Plan.**

The CitySpace Project mobilized the support of more than 100 government agencies and local civic, community and business organizations to create the Plan. These groups identified hundreds of open space development sites throughout the city. The continued participation of these groups, plus new partners, will be needed to implement new open space projects. A structure for continued intergovernmental and public-private cooperation is proposed to expedite the completion of open space projects through various stages of planning and development (see Figure 3).

The CitySpace *Steering Committee* will to serve as the "Committee of the Whole," advising the participating governments on open space development policies, programs and priority projects. The Steering Committee includes representatives from public agencies as well as representatives from private civic and business organizations. The Committee will provide a forum for sharing information on progress in implementing the CitySpace Plan and will provide a forum for sharing information on local and national open space issues.

The *Development Committee* will be responsible for managing priority open space programs and projects through site planning, design, financing, public

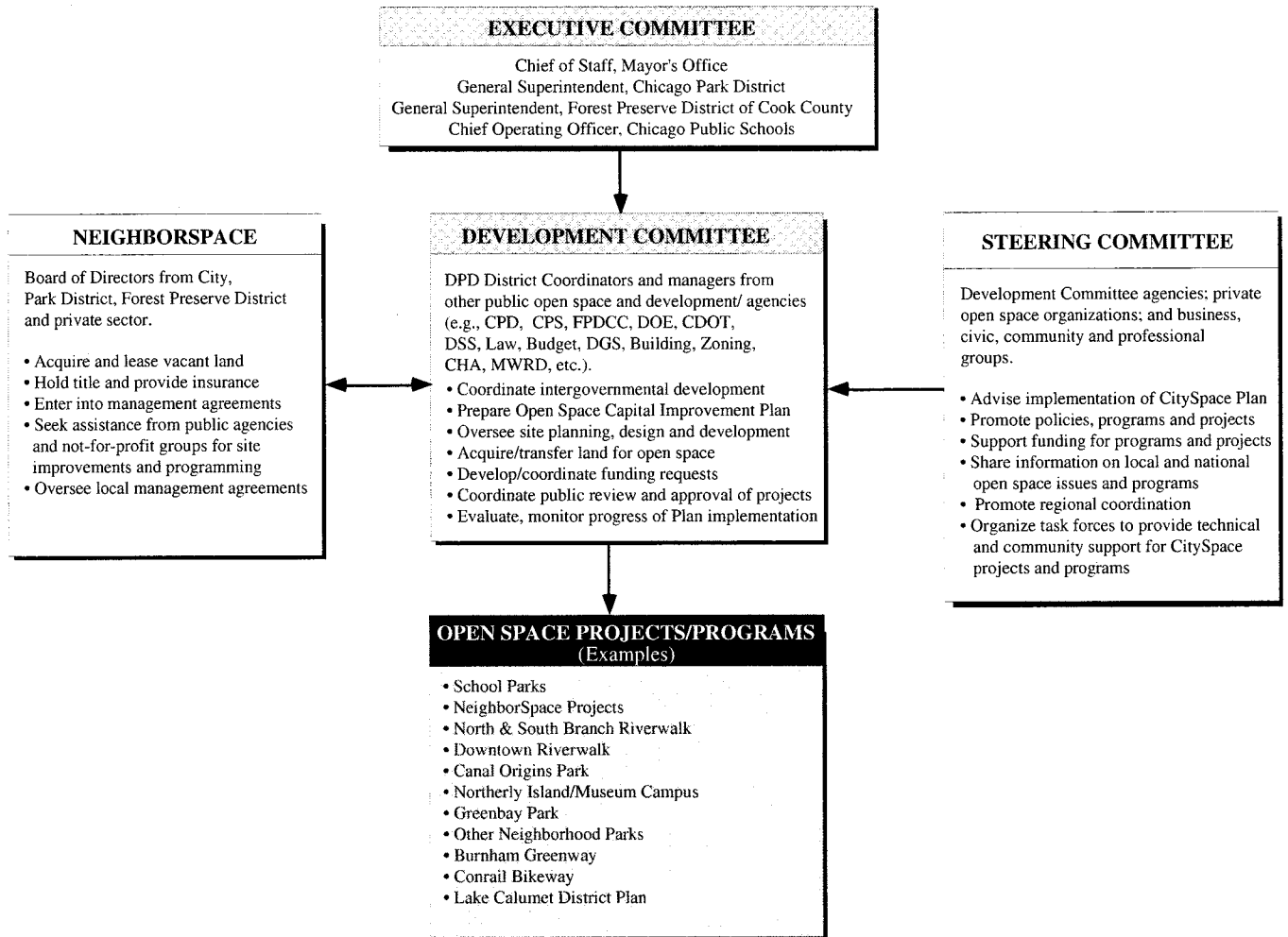
approval and construction. A key objective of the Development Committee is to establish an intergovernmental Open Space Capital Improvement Program that will identify all project capital needs, funding gaps and opportunities for leveraging resources. The Development Committee will include line managers from various City of Chicago departments as well as from the Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools and Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

Special *task forces* will be organized, as needed, to support CitySpace programs and projects (e.g., School Parks, Greenways, Lakefront, Downtown) by: 1) providing research and technical assistance to the Development Committee and community-based open space organizations; 2) recommending priority projects for implementation; and 3) identifying funding sources and supporting requests to local, state and federal agencies. Task force members will be drawn from the Steering Committee organizations and other community-based and professional groups.

**Figure 3**

**CITYSPACE IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE**

*City of Chicago • Chicago Park District • Forest Preserve District of Cook County • Chicago Public Schools*



Thus do the dreams of today  
become the commonplaces of  
tomorrow; and what we now  
deem fanciful will become  
mere matter of fact to the  
man of the future.

Daniel Burnham, *Plan of  
Chicago, 1909*

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### **ACTION 2:**

**Create a permanent organization and funding base for NeighborSpace.**

In 1996 the Chicago Park District, City of Chicago and Forest Preserve District of Cook County entered into an intergovernmental agreement to form a new not-for-profit corporation known as *NeighborSpace*. Under the agreement, the partners agreed to acquire, lease and insure land for community-managed open space. Further, each government agreed to provide \$93,750 per year for three years (1996 through 1998) to support the NeighborSpace program.

CitySpace planners have developed goals and budgets for the initial three years of the NeighborSpace program, and have identified 35 initial projects. These include community gardens, mini-parks and greenway river edges.

The NeighborSpace Board of Directors includes two representatives from each of the three sponsoring governments and one member jointly appointed by these governments. The board also includes three private sector members. With the full board of directors in place, a business plan should be developed for expanding membership to include an advisory committee of NeighborSpace clients and for continuing the program beyond 1998.

## **ACQUIRING AND IMPROVING THE LAND**

### **ACTION 3:**

**Develop open space projects through a consolidated capital improvement program.**

Each year the participating CitySpace governments prepare separate capital improvement programs (CIPs) that match projects with anticipated funding sources. Open space land acquisition and development projects should be integrated within a consolidated CIP that identifies funding requirements, planned and potential joint developments, and funding gaps. The CitySpace CIP should serve as the umbrella plan to coordinate all public and private open space development investments.

### **ACTION 4:**

**Continue to develop neighborhood parks on public school grounds.**

In October 1996, Mayor Richard M. Daley announced the *Chicago School Park Program*, with the goal of creating 100 school parks over a four year period (1997-2000). The \$50 million program will be funded by the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Park District. The school parks will be distributed throughout the city to serve a variety of park needs.

The School Park Program should be continued beyond 2000 as a means of expanding neighborhood parkland.

**ACTION 5:**

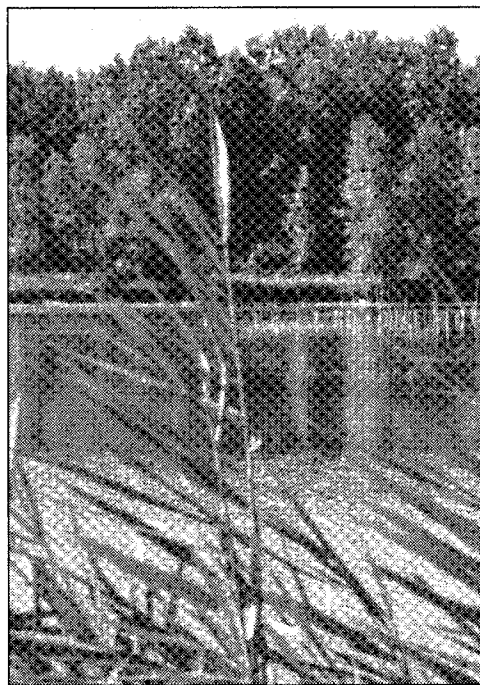
**Acquire publicly owned land along Chicago's inland waterways and in the Lake Calumet District. Develop and manage these properties as greenways and nature preserves.**

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County should lease land owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to expand FPDCC land holdings within the city.

When considering the disposition of property during the past ten years, the MWRD has followed a practice of giving first priority to governmental or recreational uses. The MWRD may lease property to a municipal corporation "with provisions that such property is to be applied exclusively to public recreational purposes or other public purposes." Further, the state statute governing the disposition of MWRD property allows the District to lease property to other governmental bodies at no cost if it would be "in the public interest."

The policies and practices of the MWRD and the location, size, and natural attributes of its land are highly compatible with the mission of the FPDCC. The FPDCC could lease, at little or no cost, large parcels of MWRD-owned land that could become natural preserves and recreational spaces that would serve the entire region.

The acquisition of unprotected wetlands and natural areas in the Lake Calumet District should be a priority for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The MWRD owns more than 200 acres of



high-quality land in this district. In addition, two other sites comprising over 500 acres are owned by the Illinois Port Authority and the Illinois Department of Transportation. These public lands represent a significant opportunity for the FPDCC to cost-effectively expand its land holdings in Chicago through leasing and management agreements.

**ACTION 6:**

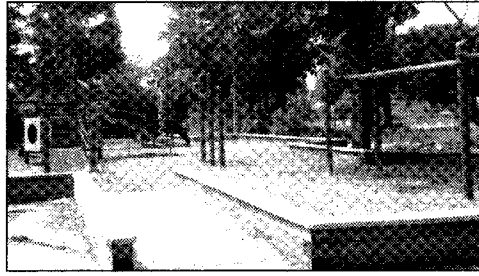
**Increase Chicago's share of Forest Preserve District of Cook County funding for acquiring and enhancing open space in Chicago.**

The Forest Preserve District should target Chicago projects as a priority for land acquisition, ecological restoration, facility development and wetland mitigation. Traditionally, the Forest Preserve District has spent a low percentage of its capital budget in Chicago because only five percent of its land is within the city. However, priority projects have been identified within Chicago that will advance the FPDCC's mission and land acquisition goals. Greater efforts should be made to apply FPDCC funds to projects and programs in Chicago, where the majority of Cook County's population resides.

The cultivation and maintenance of such stretches of natural beauty must have the co-operation of the people, to the end that the loveliness intended for all may be protected.

*Daniel Burnham, Plan of Chicago, 1909*





#### **ACTION 7:**

#### **Transfer City-owned vacant lots targeted for open space redevelopment to CitySpace partner organizations.**

The Chicago Plan Commission reviews all plans for acquisition and disposition of property owned by the City or other government bodies within Chicago. The *CitySpace Plan* will provide information on which publicly-owned parcels have the potential to fill an open space need. The *CitySpace Plan* will also guide the Plan Commission and other public agencies in their consideration of requests from open space organizations to acquire public property.

In reviewing land sales or lease requests made by CitySpace partner organizations, the Department of Planning and Development and the Chicago Plan Commission should evaluate requests based on: 1) the open space need and recommendations for the area included in the *CitySpace Plan* and 2) the financial and technical resources that are needed and available to create a community or regional open space. If it is determined that the land would provide significant open space benefits, the land should be transferred at no cost to the CitySpace partner organizations.

#### **ACTION 8:**

#### **Use the Chicago Tax Reactivation Program Ordinance to acquire land for open space.**

The *Chicago Tax Reactivation Program* allows the City's departments of Housing and Planning and Development to establish criteria, guidelines and procedures for screening and recommending applicants

interested in acquiring tax delinquent property for low- and moderate-income housing and commercial and industrial developments.

Upon recommendation by a City department, the City Council requests the Cook County Board of Commissioners to enter a non-cash bid on selected properties two or more years tax delinquent. If the County bid is successful, the City is responsible for following through on the legal requirements for obtaining a deed to the property. In 1991, the County *No Cash Bid Program Ordinance* was amended by allowing any park district within Cook County and the FPDCC to use the program. With this change, the County assisted in turning tax delinquent land into parks and open space.

In cases where open space is part of a housing development or expansion of an institution such as a day care center, the Department of Planning and Development has used the Tax Reactivation Program Ordinance to acquire land for playgrounds and open spaces on behalf of community organizations. To facilitate the creation of open spaces *not* associated with a development or institution, the Tax Reactivation Program should be expanded to recognize open space as a specific use, and DPD should establish criteria, guidelines and procedures to screen requests for such uses.



**ACTION 9:**

**Target land acquired through the City's demolition foreclosure process for open space redevelopment by CitySpace partner agencies.**

The City of Chicago demolishes hundreds of buildings every year. After demolition, the City places a lien on the property for the amount of the demolition costs. All demolition cases are filed with the City Law Department, which forecloses on the liens and gains title to the property.

The City's departments of Law, Planning and Development, General Services, Housing and Buildings have instituted a procedure for selecting priority demolition lien cases based on the City's need for the property for redevelopment. DPD should request that demolition cases be considered priorities if they are part of a planned open space project.

**ACTION 10:**

**Support efforts by the Chicago Park District, Forest Preserve District of Cook County and other taxing districts to use tax bonds for priority open space projects.**

All local governments in Cook County can issue tax bonds supported by real estate tax revenue, with restrictions imposed by the *Illinois Property Tax Limitation Act*. The Act limits the growth of a non-home rule taxing agency's tax levy to five percent or the percent of change in the Consumer Price Index, whichever is less. The agencies can issue tax bonds of any amount if allowed to by a voter referendum. In the absence of a referendum,



the agencies can issue "limited tax bonds." Limited tax bonds are secured by a bond debt service base established in 1995 using 1994 debt service extensions. As principal and interest are retired on outstanding general obligation bonds, the difference between the 1994 and current debt service extensions can be used to secure limited tax bonds.

The amendments to the Limitation Act also give the CPD, FPDCC and other local governments the power to issue alternate bonds. Alternate bonds are general obligation bonds payable from enterprise revenues or other revenue sources, which permit the local government to abate, on an annual basis, the general obligation tax extension otherwise levied on all taxpayers to secure alternate bonds.

The combination of limited tax bonds, alternate bonds, and operating budgets should permit the CPD and FPDCC to make meaningful progress toward fulfilling the open space goals and objectives contained in the *CitySpace Plan*. It is also possible for the CPD and/or the FPDCC to request voter approval for a bond issue of a higher dollar amount. Collar counties have had such referenda approved by voters and are reaping the benefits of improved open spaces.



**ACTION 11:**

**Identify and implement open space projects and programs within the Empowerment Zone.**

In December 1994, the City of Chicago was awarded one of the nation's six urban *Empowerment Zones*. The Empowerment Zone program included an allocation of \$100 million in Social Service Block Grant money for social service coordination, economic and business investment, and new and improved housing.

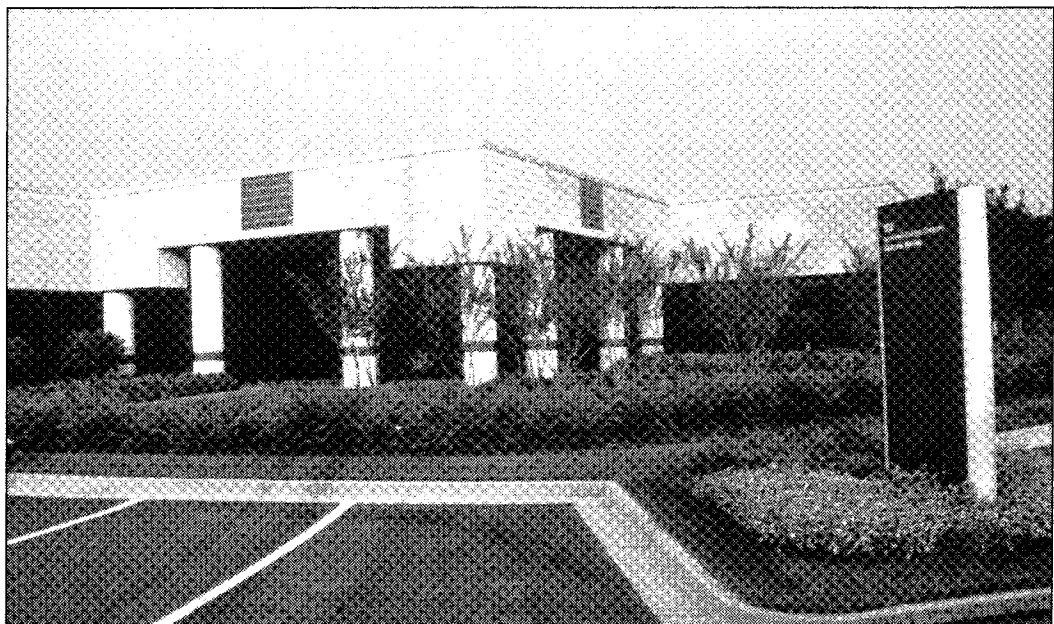
Chicago's Empowerment Zone consists of three non-contiguous areas on the City's west, near southwest and south sides. The Empowerment Zone, which has 200,000 residents living in a 14 square-mile area, contains a full range of land uses, including residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, industrial areas, parks and open space, and transportation corridors.

CitySpace planners should coordinate their efforts with the Empowerment Zone to develop and implement open space programs and projects within the Zone.

**ACTION 12:**

**Incorporate open space projects in redevelopment plans prepared for Tax Increment Financing districts, Special Service Areas, and Strategic Neighborhood Action Program districts.**

*Tax Increment Financing* (TIF) is a tool used by the City to finance redevelopment activities in blighted or deteriorated areas. TIF allows the City to capture the increase in property taxes resulting from a redevelopment project to pay for the public costs associated with the project. Funds can be used to purchase land and to construct public infrastructure, including open space.

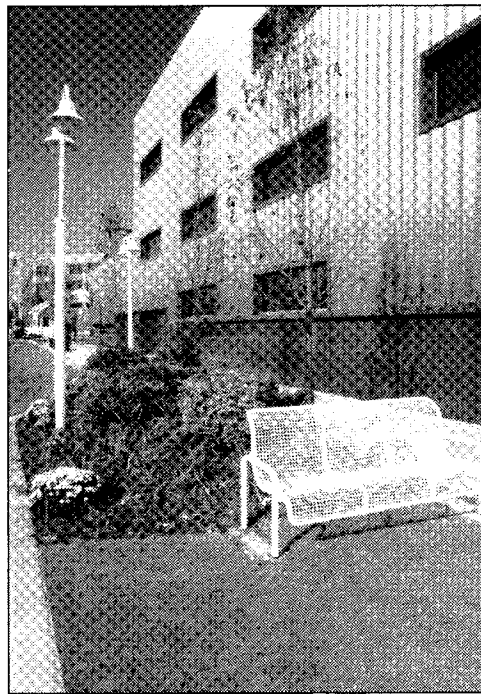


Open space needs and opportunities should be considered in the delineation of future TIF areas and in the preparation of redevelopment plans. In addition, existing TIF projects that are not already fully developed should be reviewed for possible open space enhancements that could be incorporated into the developments.

*The Strategic Neighborhood Action Program* (SNAP), funded under the Community Development Block Grant program, is designed to spur comprehensive redevelopment of selected neighborhoods. An intensive, highly-focused infusion of public dollars is intended to leverage a critical mass of private investment. The City's seven SNAP designated neighborhoods include the: 1) Near West Side, 2) Southeast Chicago, 3) Austin, 4) Lawndale, 5) Northeast Side, 6) Albany Park and 7) Logan Square. The City is identifying funding and open space projects in these SNAP development areas.

*Special Service Area* (SSA) financing is used by the City to finance physical improvements and to support special services, such as maintenance or marketing services, within designated districts. This technique involves levying a real estate tax or issuing bonds for a designated area that will benefit by the improvement or special service. Special Service Areas have been established in 13 areas of the City.

In addition to providing a mechanism for financing capital improvements such as new sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and other amenities, SSAs provide the means



for supporting ongoing maintenance and management of the improvements. The SSA program can be used as a funding source for open space development and management in neighborhood commercial districts and within the City's 22 designated industrial corridors.

**ACTION 13:**

**Allocate a share of future Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support the development of open space in Chicago neighborhoods.**

The City of Chicago receives an annual entitlement of *Community Development Block Grant* funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Over the last few years, the City's entitlement, together with income from prior years, has averaged close to \$138 million per year. CDBG funds are used by the City for a wide range of neighborhood revitalization programs designed to benefit low- and moderate-income families and to aid in the prevention or elimination of blight .

Many of Chicago's low- and moderate-income neighborhoods are below the minimum standards for open space

recommended in the *CitySpace Plan*. One existing program designed specifically to address this need is the City's *GreenCorps Chicago*, administered by the Department of Environment in partnership with the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.

The *CitySpace Plan* includes priority projects in CDBG eligible neighborhoods, including neighborhood school parks. In addition, NeighborSpace will be working in CDBG eligible communities. Future CDBG programs should include funds for priority open space development projects and NeighborSpace sites.

**ACTION 14:**

**Increase Chicago's share of state funding for developing and enhancing open space in Chicago.**

Local governments can receive one *Illinois Department of Natural Resources* grant per program per year, with no restrictions on the number of local governments that can be funded for a given location. The City, Chicago Park District and Forest Preserve District should apply regularly for IDNR grants to support the *CitySpace* development program. The following is a summary of the five Outdoor Recreation Grant programs administered by IDNR:

- The *Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development* (OSLAD) and *Land and Water Conservation Fund* (LWCF) programs are funded by the state and federal government, respectively, to assist local governments in acquiring and developing land for

public outdoor recreation. Funding for 50 percent of project costs can be obtained, with maximum grant awards of \$400,000 for acquisition and \$200,000 for development and renovation projects.

- The *Illinois Bicycle Path Program* assists local governments in acquiring, constructing and rehabilitating public, non-motorized bicycle paths and support facilities. There is a \$200,000 maximum grant amount for development, and no upper limit on land acquisition. This program requires an equal match of funds.
- The *Boat Access Area Development Program* provides financial assistance to local governments for the acquisition, construction, expansion and rehabilitation of public boat and canoe access areas on Illinois lakes and rivers. The maximum grant is \$200,000 for both acquisition and development. The program provides up to 100 percent of funds for project construction and 50 percent of funds for land acquisition.

**ACTION 15:**

**Support continued funding of federal programs that support open space development and preservation in Chicago.**

Several federal programs have contributed significantly to the expansion and improvement of parks and open space in Chicago. However, many of the programs targeted to urban areas are being threatened by current efforts to reduce the federal budget. The *CitySpace* partners should be advocates for these programs or their successors and support continued and expanded funding for urban open spaces.



The following federal programs should continue to play an important role in improving public open space in Chicago:

The *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991* (ISTEA) requires states to set aside ten percent of their share of Surface Transportation Program funds for projects that enhance local transportation systems. Funding has been used for pedestrian and bicycle improvements; to acquire scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; for scenic or historic highway programs, including landscaping and other beautification; to preserve historic railroad facilities and canals; and to preserve abandoned railway corridors for conversion to pedestrian or bicycle trails.

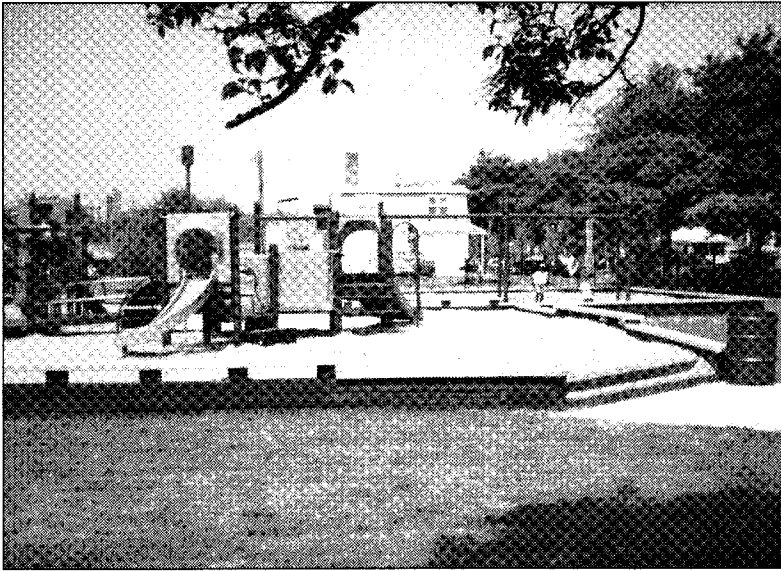
During the first three years of the program, the ISTEA program leveraged a total of \$150 million for Illinois enhancement projects, with 80 percent in federal funds and 20 percent in local matching funds. Close to \$20 million, or 13 percent of this funding, has been awarded to Chicago projects.

Enhancement projects funded under ISTEA include the LaSalle and Madison

street median landscaping and Wacker Drive streetscape improvements; Metra Station landscaping in Edgebrook, Southeast Chicago, and at 85th and Loomis; Montrose Commercial District improvements; Humboldt Park Stables and Paths; and the Navy Pier Bike Path. Another \$7.8 million was awarded for Chicago bicycle and pedestrian projects under the ISTEA Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program, including \$2.5 million for the Conrail Bikeway land acquisition and design. Future funding is dependent upon federal reappropriation of the ISTEA program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides significant funding for Chicago's *GreenStreets Program*, which has succeeded in initiating the planting of more than 500,000 trees since 1989. The GreenStreets Program received \$100,000 in 1990 and 1991, close to \$1 million annually from 1992 through 1994. In 1996 and 1997, the program received \$700,000 from USDA, which was matched by \$1 million each year in City funds.

The *Urban Resources Partnership* (URP) assists community-based organizations and public agencies to enhance, restore, and sustain urban ecosystems in the Chicago metropolitan area. URP is directed by a coalition of several federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service and Forest Service; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection



Agency Water Division; the City of Chicago's Department of Environment; and the State of Illinois Governor's Office and Department of Natural Resources.

The *Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act* (UPARR) of 1978 established a grant program to help urban areas in economically distressed communities improve their recreation facilities. The program provides grants to local governments to rehabilitate existing indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and to develop innovative strategies for improving neighborhood park and recreation opportunities.

UPARR capital funds are particularly well-suited to support the neighborhood school park program. However, the future of this program is uncertain due to federal budget cuts. The program, which provided nearly \$10 million in funding for Chicago recreation facilities in the 1980s and early 1990s, has been reduced significantly in recent years.

#### **ACTION 16:**

**Form partnerships with local and national foundations to implement programs and projects recommended in the CitySpace Plan.**

Private philanthropic foundations and corporate giving programs represent a significant open space development resource for public agencies, non-profit organizations, neighborhood groups, and local development corporations. More than thirty foundations in Chicago provide grant assistance for neighborhood beautification, parks and open space projects.

The Chicago Community Trust has played a leading role in supporting open space planning and greening in Chicago. In addition to funding the CitySpace Project, Chicago Community Trust initiated the *Urbs in Horto* Tree Fund on Arbor Day in April 1991. The fund, managed by the Chicago Community Trust, captures and directs private sector enthusiasm for greening the city. Corporations provide funds to local neighborhood groups, block clubs, schools and community organizations. The organizers set a goal to raise \$5 million over five years to support the program. Seventy-five percent of every dollar raised is used for current greening projects, and 25 percent is set aside for a permanent endowment to fund future projects.

National organizations, such as the Lila Wallace/Readers Digest Fund, have also made significant contributions to the development of Chicago's open space

institutions and physical environment. The CitySpace partnership should continue to seek funding from these sources for its collaborative efforts to implement projects.

## **ZONING FOR OPEN SPACE**

### **ACTION 17:**

**Require park and recreation contribution as a condition of approval of new residential development.**

Zoning policies can help ensure that usable open space is provided as part of new residential developments, and that new residential developments do not create or exacerbate open space needs in surrounding community areas.

While many suburban communities require land or fees in lieu of land for parks and schools as a condition of new subdivision approval, most new residential development in Chicago does not require subdivision approval and is of such a small scale that on-site parkland dedication would not be practical. Nevertheless, the cumulative impact of many smaller residential developments has placed the same strain on existing public parks. A new park and recreation fee (or land on site dedicated open space) should help support the *CitySpace Plan* goals.

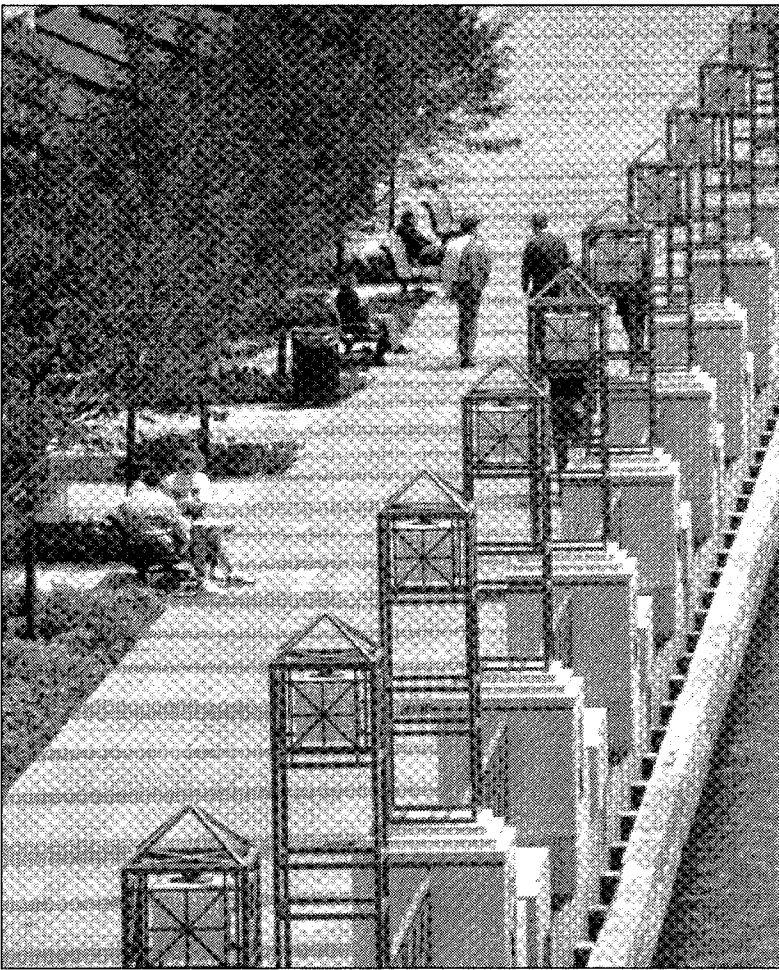
### **ACTION 18:**

**Review yard requirements in the Chicago Zoning Ordinance to ensure that new residential developments have a minimum amount of usable open space.**

In some neighborhoods, new townhouse and condominium developments are replacing single-family homes and multi-family buildings. Consequently, a larger portion of the site is covered by the new structures, leaving little or no usable open space. Exceptions to the minimum requirements for setbacks and yards are often granted, which further reduce open space provided on the site.

The elimination of front and back yards resulting from these development practices creates additional demands for public open space. Zoning provisions pertaining to yard requirements should be reviewed to ensure that new residential developments have a minimum amount of usable open space offered on site to complement the area-wide open space system.





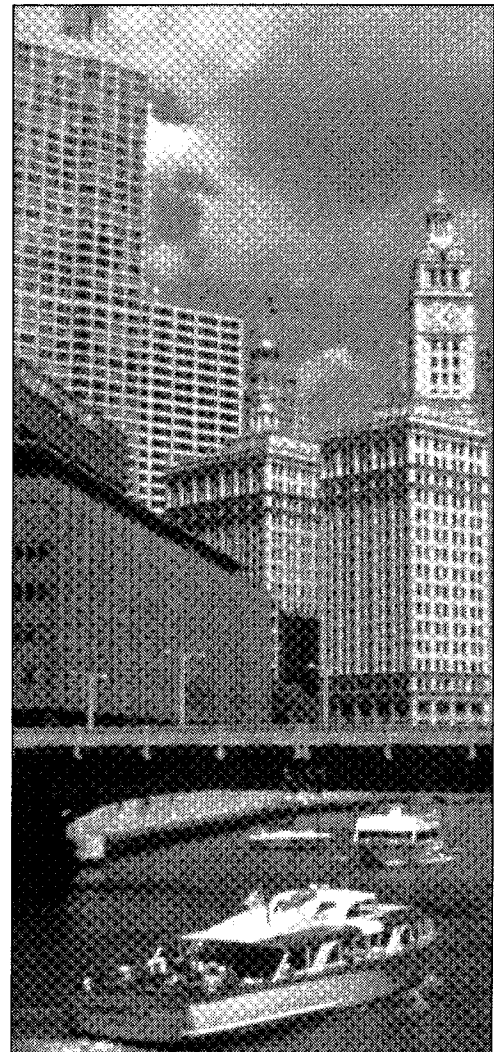
The City's waterway goals and policies are being expanded for citywide application through the *Chicago River Corridor Development Plan and Design Guidelines* being prepared by the Department of Planning and Development. These guidelines will provide the framework for securing public open space and easements as part of future residential, commercial, industrial and institutional developments along the Chicago River.

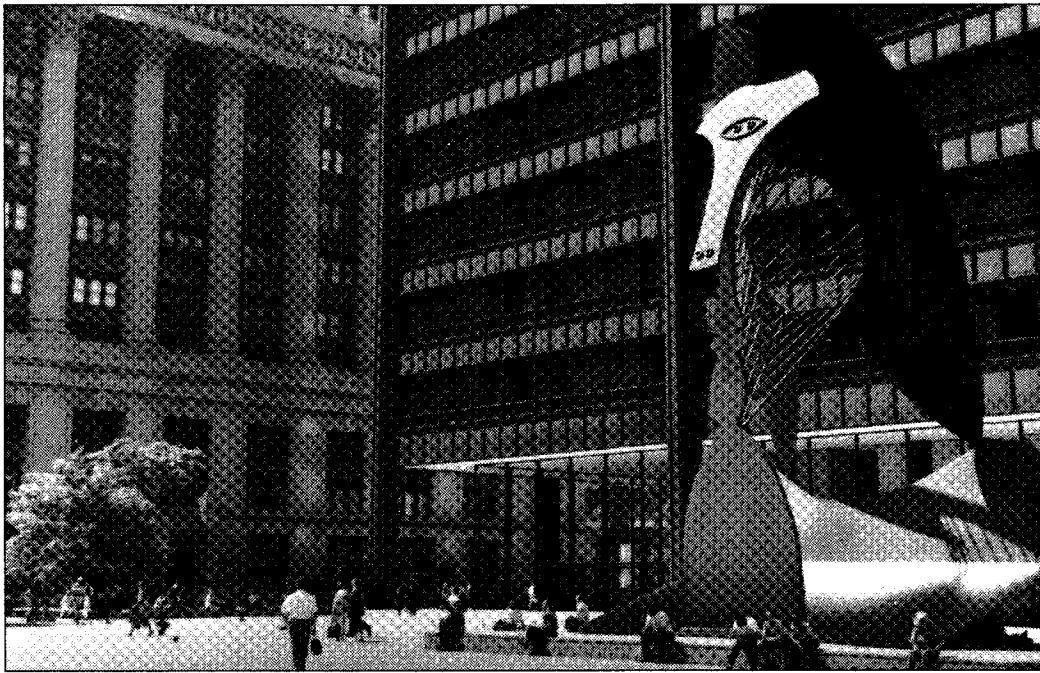
**ACTION 19:**

**Secure public open space and conservation easements along rivers through zoning review of waterway planned development.**

In 1990, the Chicago Plan Commission approved the *Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines: Downtown Corridor*. The purpose of the guidelines was to ensure new development along the river's edge provided for public access and to promote development of a continuous riverwalk throughout the Downtown area.

In 1992, the Chicago City Council approved the *Waterway Planned Development Ordinance*, which requires that all developments within 100 feet of a waterway be processed as planned developments. These are subject to review by the Department of Planning and Development and the Chicago Plan Commission prior to approval by the City Council.





**ACTION 20:**  
**Review density bonus provisions of the Chicago Zoning Ordinance relating to downtown open spaces.**

Density bonus provisions also have an impact on the open space system. While many downtown office buildings have claimed extra density in exchange for public plazas and arcades, these open spaces are often inhospitable and unusable. Better design standards are needed for arcades and plazas, as well as a broader menu of open space-related amenities. Bonuses should be considered for new development that contributes to the public open space system in a more substantial way than the current Zoning Ordinance allows.

**ACTION 21:**  
**Establish appropriate zoning designations and public review of development plans for public open space.**

The *Chicago Zoning Ordinance* does not contain a separate zoning classification for parks and open space. The majority of the Park District's 551 parks are zoned for residential uses; all or part of 35 parks are zoned for manufacturing uses; all or part

of 45 parks are zoned for businesses uses; and all or part of 22 parks are zoned for commercial uses.

An Open Space Zoning District classification should be established and applied to existing parks, forest preserves, public plazas, boulevards, greenbelts, and to land acquired for future parks. As is the case for all zoning districts, provisions should be created that specify what is allowed and what is prohibited within the Open Space Zoning District.



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