

INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR MODERNIZATION

Ravenswood



PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

November 13, 2018



DPD

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT



On November 13, 2018, the City's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) hosted the second Ravenswood Industrial Corridor public at Ravenswood Elementary School from 5:30pm to 7 pm. Approximately 41 property owners, business owners, residents, area workers, and other interested parties attended the meeting. DPD staff presented proposed goals, principles, and guidelines for the Ravenswood Industrial Corridor that were developed using existing conditions data and input received from the Working Group and public. Following the presentation, attendees participated in a group question and answer session with city staff's project team, and then were given the opportunity to review and comment on the meeting materials which was posted on boards.

The presentation from the meeting along with the informational boards are posted on our website. This report summarizes the information presented at the meeting and the feedback received from meeting attendees. Prior to this public meeting, the draft goals, principles and guidelines that were reviewed with the Working Group were posted on DPD's website on November 2, 2018.

The next step in the process will be for the City to share a draft Framework Plan online for public review and comment prior to proceeding to the Chicago Plan Commission for plan adoption.

STAY INFORMED

Details about public meeting dates, times and locations will be posted on the project website [here](#).

Please email DPD with any questions or comments, or if you would like to be added to our contact database: DPD@cityofchicago.org.

EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Zoning

Primarily M and C:

- Allows light manufacturing (including breweries with accessory restaurants & bars), and offices.
- Limits residential and retail (unless manufactured on site).

Land Use Trends

Over 28 years:

- Overall, industrial decreased from 63% to 36%
- The south portion is transitioning to an active hub for light industrial and commercial uses.
- The north portion remains industrial with commercial providing a buffer from residential areas.

Employment

4,375 total jobs in the Ravenswood Industrial Corridor:

- 775 jobs in North portion (mostly manufacturing).
- 3600 jobs in the south portion (mostly office).



Transportation

Well served by transit:

- 3 CTA Brown-line stations
- 1 Metra station

Historic Character

Many buildings in the southern portion display distinctive industrial characteristics:

- National Register District
- Orange-rated buildings
- Brick/stone facades
- Brick street



PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Public feedback was collected at the November 13, 2018 public meeting via group discussion, one-on-one conversations, post-it notes and comment cards. Below are highlights of the feedback received for each proposed strategy:

LAND USE

Proposed Strategies

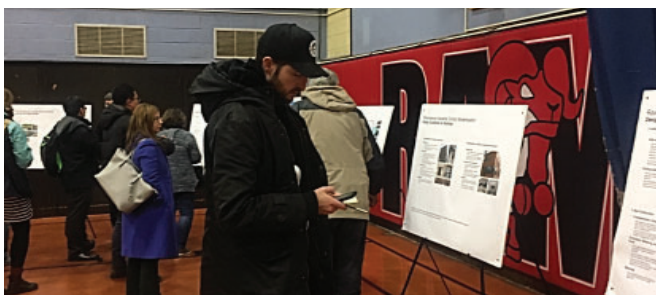
Feedback

Maintain the existing Industrial Corridor boundary designation to support the continuation of the Ravenswood Industrial Corridor as a job center:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodate existing developing uses in designation, not just an “industrial corridor”. • Support maintaining the existing designation as a job center for manufacturing or other jobs.
Encourage residential uses to locate in areas outside of the industrial corridor boundary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments
Encourage light manufacturing, office and retail uses compatible with the scale and character of the study area to locate within existing buildings, and larger retail uses to locate in the adjacent arterial corridors including Irving Park Rd. and Lawrence Ave.:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments
Encourage Preservation and reuse of industrial buildings into office and light manufacturing using financial incentives and programs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I support the preservation and use of industrial buildings with light manufacturing through financial incentives and programs (include incentives in the plan).
Are there any other strategies/priorities that we should consider:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please increase the notification range for proposed zoning changes so that more stakeholders are made aware.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

TRANSPORTATION

Proposed Strategies	Feedback
Determine the need for appropriate parking policies and regulations for the use of the public right of way that supports the changing needs of existing and new businesses and transit users:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricting (*parking*) 8 – 10 AM is tough for residents who may not want to leave home at 8 AM. New condos will have nowhere to park. Consider diagonal parking at Argyle and Ravenswood, west of station.
Support the safe and efficient use of the right-of-way by providing Best Practice Guidelines for the Public Realm in the Framework plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you encourage bikes to ride on roads and not sidewalks?
Identify opportunities to improve the existing bike infrastructure on Ravenswood Ave and connect to the city-wide bicycle network:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase road width to create space for bike lane.
Address conflicts between truck loading and other transportation modes with particular attention to bicycles and pedestrians and determine if safety enhancements can be made:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments
Are there any other strategies/priorities that we should consider:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve way finding from/between rail stations Improve signage/access from CTA to Metra stations How do we educate drivers to stop at crosswalks for pedestrians? New Metra Station @ Peterson? Connect Winnemac Ave. to Metra station? Encourage new businesses to incentivize patrons to use public transportation rather than add more cars here. We need clear, visible way finding signage that indicates & maps out the businesses located in the corridor. We need much more lighting – it's too dark.



PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

SUSTAINABILITY

Proposed Strategies	Feedback
Support the authentic industrial heritage of the area through the use of design guidelines for buildings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist building owners with window improvements by reducing costs, by grouping together. • Limit the height of new buildings so they don't dominate skyline + take away from historic nature/ tone buildings.
Pursue a National Register District nomination:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase visibility of historic features and character. • Provide story boards of original users of buildings and how they built corridor. • Landmark to preserve history/character.
Encourage multiple uses of the parking areas along Ravenswood Avenue to provide outdoor activities for businesses and the community:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking can be a challenge to find along Ravenswood from 9-11 am (north of Montrose). Would be open to multi-use if it doesn't further limit parking to manufacture. • Make more public spaces (squares, plazas) for meeting/hanging out. • Yes, need weekend neighborhood fests and events.
Encourage enhancement and management of the landscaped areas near the rail embankments through existing and new partnerships:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes sense - Green space/open space requires local partners like Montrose Metra Community Gardens did. • Railroad Embankment - Add trails, and connect the trails. • Concern about safety around embankment gardens. • Improve design of storm water swales and bump-outs. The swales on Lawrence are dangerous pits that you can fall into and are filled with weeds, rats, and trash. • The corner at the church on Sunnyside Ave/Paulina St. flash floods a lot and cars are damaged annually. • The area is a "Greenbelt" not just an industrial corridor, particularly on east side of tracks north of Lawrence.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

SUSTAINABILITY (CONTINUED)

Proposed Strategies	Feedback
Encourage sustainable development practices within the corridor through the use of solar power and green building techniques and promote available incentives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote opening/funding for solar/green building.
Are there any other strategies/priorities that we should consider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic impact of public art and artists: interesting and vibrant public art provides a stable community, attracts jobs and retains business.• Consult with neighborhood associations like the Ravenswood Neighbors Association.• Consider mandatory solar and green roof requirements in the corridor. If financial hardship, City provides low- or no-interest loans to install them. Loans repaid tied to revenue.



Q & A SESSION

Q: Who are stakeholders?

A: Stakeholders are any interested party, and for this project, included city agencies, other related agencies, the Aldermen, businesses, residents, local groups, etc.

Q: How would a national register district restrict what property owners can do?

A: First step would be to evaluate feasibility, then obtain state and federal review and approval. National Register Districts are not regulated by the City, but would offer programs for eligible properties and rehabilitation projects.

Q: What does “multi-use of parking areas” mean?

A: Using space along the public right-of-way that is sometimes used for street parking, for other purposes, such as through CDOT’s Make Way for People Project.

Q: How can something be parking and people uses at the same time?

A: For example, using space as street parking during certain hours or days of the week, and converting to another use, like a gathering space, during others.

Q: How will the details of People Spots be determined? My busiest time is on weekends.

A: The program would be initiated by the community who would determine the appropriate places and times, so it matches the needs of local stakeholders.

Q: Is there any discussion of making solar or green roofs mandatory?

A: No, solar and green roofs are optional. Grants are available for solar. Most buildings in the corridor have big, flat roofs, so this seems like a good area to develop this, but is not mandatory.

Q: What does an Orange Building rating mean?

A: This was part of a building survey conducted in the 1980’s - 90’s. Orange-rated buildings possess potentially significant architectural features. If there is a demolition request for an Orange or Red-rated building, the City can hold the demolition for up to 90 days and evaluate if the building merits Landmark designation.

Q: Are there plans to encourage public art? Example, on the train tracks, embankment? The neighborhood Art Walk showcases interesting works – how to beef this up and get local participation – incentives for local businesses to provide art, murals, etc.?

A: Staff agrees public art is an important feature. Implementation requires strong partnerships and funding. The Best Practice Guidelines in the Framework Plan will include guidance on public art.

Q: How does this Plan work? Once it’s adopted, how much of it is binding on the community?

A: This is a Framework Plan, a broad guide for the community. The Design Guidelines will be referenced for a property if there is a request for zoning change or request for City funds.

Q: How does this Plan benefit the neighbors in adjacent neighborhoods? Is it too restrictive a boundary? What recourse do we as neighbors have if there is a proposal for a 10-story building in the Ravenswood Industrial Corridor that blocks light, for example?

A: The Plan retains the current Ravenswood Industrial Corridor boundary which keeps the zoning review procedures in place. Development proposals will need to be consistent with the Design Guidelines in the Framework Plan.

Q & A SESSION

Q: Does the name “Ravenswood Industrial Corridor Framework Plan” downplay the open space and transportation assets in the corridor? This place is not just industrial, there are interesting green space and transportation functions here. It’s a unique, character filled place. Need to emphasize green connections, necklace of parks, multimodal transportation.

A: The name stems from the boundary of the study area – a designated “Industrial Corridor.” The 3 Goals established for the Framework Plan relate to land use, transportation, and sustainability. DPD is undertaking review of all of the City’s industrial corridors, and the title of this plan is consistent with the overall planning initiative.

Q: There are spots where continuous access is interrupted – no crossings, no stroller-accessible curb cuts/stairs, etc. If the City can fix these, then the community can take it from there.

A: The GRCC can collaborate with the Alderman, CDOT, and the community to address public realm safety improvements, and coordination of priorities dependent on available funding.

Q: This is not just an industrial corridor, now it’s a creative district, historic district too. Seeing lots of residential variances, increases in height, out of character. Who is approving these and why are they getting through?

A: (from 47th Ward) These have come in over time. Any time there is a zoning request, there were public hearings and opportunity for comment/discussion. Community members need to work with the new Alderman (as current Alderman is not running for re-election) on this concern – this Plan is being put into place to help guide the character of the district and help negotiate future changes.

Q: Why not plan for a continuous bike-way on the rail embankment while there is still the opportunity to not tear down the bridges where 3rd tracks are being removed on east side of rail ROW? What’s the status of investigating this idea?

A: DPD and CDOT staff are doing some due diligence on this idea. There may not be sufficient width for safe placement of a trail next to an active rail. Historically, railroad companies have not been accommodating to similar ideas. DPD and CDOT are looking at ways to extend bike lanes through the Corridor as an alternative.

Q: Are there ways to explore use of surplus embankment space?

A: The Framework Plan recommends that the GRCC collaborate with and identify partners in the community to explore opportunities and implement embankment enhancements.

Q: Office vacancies in the Corridor seem low – it’s an attractive place to have a business. The idea of Live/Work/Play is attractive – how to make this easier in the corridor?

A: Our data suggests that office vacancies are low, which backs up your perception. Work/play uses can be accommodated in the corridor. Residential uses will be encouraged to locate adjacent to the corridor to ensure that the corridor remains a job center.

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