



Chapter 4 : THEME 2

Transportation

Strengthen connections to keep the Central Area easy to reach and get around

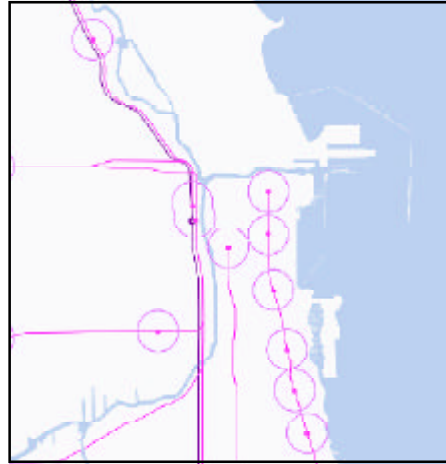


Figure 4.2.1
Promote region-wide transit investments. Metra commuter rail provides service to the east, south and west of the Loop.

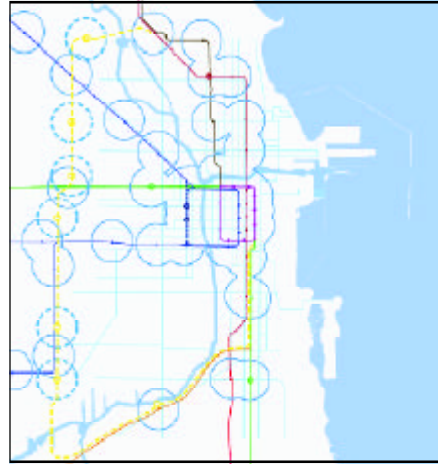


Figure 4.2.2
Much of the Central Area is within 5 minutes walk of a CTA station.

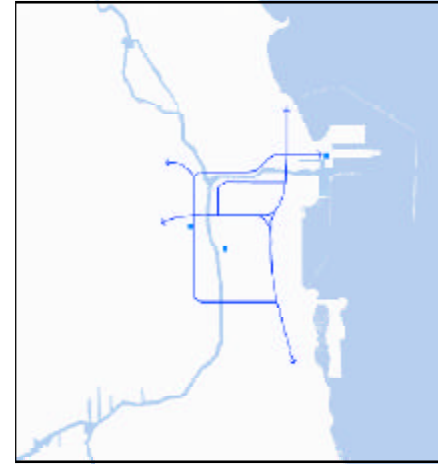


Figure 4.2.3
Preserving rights-of-way is critical to providing new transit services.

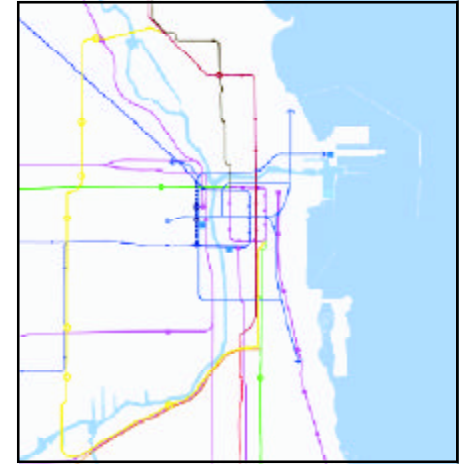


Figure 4.2.4
Convenient connections between all modes will be required.

- Key for Figure 3.2.5**
Development Framework
- Highest Density Loop and Corridors
 - High Density Corridors
 - Neighborhoods
- Transit Infrastructure**
- Existing Blue Line
 - Existing Subway and "L"
 - Regional Rail
 - Clinton Street Subway
 - Clinton Busway
 - Monroe Busway
 - Carroll Busway
 - Lakefront Busway

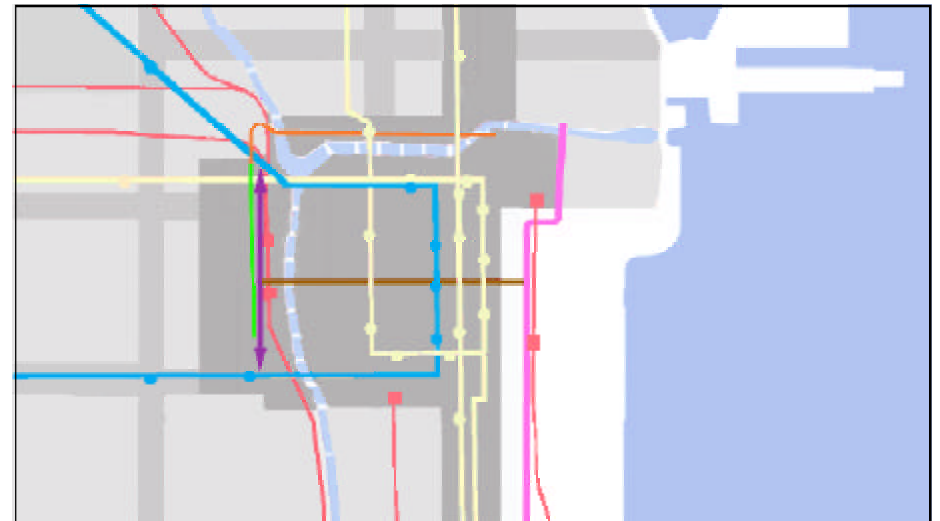


Figure 4.2.5
Central Area transit improvements will provide improved service to the Expanded Loop.

Theme 2: Transportation and Access

Strengthen connections to keep the Central Area easy to reach and get around

Guiding Principles

- **CENTRAL AREA TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS**
Make transit the first choice for people coming to the Central Area
- **WALKABLE CITY**
Improve the quality of the pedestrian environment
- **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**
Efficiently manage traffic circulation and parking to prevent gridlock
- **ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION**
Encourage alternative modes such as bicycles and water taxis
- **METROPOLITAN AREA EXPANSION PROJECTS**
Increase CTA and Metra capacity to bring workers to the Central Area.
- **MIDWEST AND NATIONAL ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS**
Improve national and international connections.

Central Area Transit Improvements

Key Recommendations

- Exclusive transitways will reduce congestion and offer rapid circulation
- A new West Loop Transportation Center will create an additional transportation hub
- Transit modernizations and enhancements will improve accessibility and comfort.

Make Transit the first choice for people coming in to the Central Area

Transit systems in the Central Area and throughout the metropolitan area must be upgraded to meet the challenge of bringing the projected 188,000 to 272,000 new downtown workers to the expanded Loop. Mass transit is the only practical means of efficiently moving large numbers of future workers to and around the Central Area.

Central Area transit improvements will be built in those areas of the expanded Loop slated for the highest density. The improvements will be built in phases as development progresses, but all will eventually be required as the expanded Loop reaches the projected build-out. All necessary rights-of-way must be preserved to permit implementation at the appropriate time.



Figure 4.2.6
The future Carroll Avenue Transitway, looking from LaSalle Street towards the Merchandise Mart, showing the connection to the Brown and Purple Line CTA trains.



Figure 4.2.7
A new generation of transit vehicles will offer energy efficient and comfortable transit on dedicated transitways that reduce congestion and travel times.

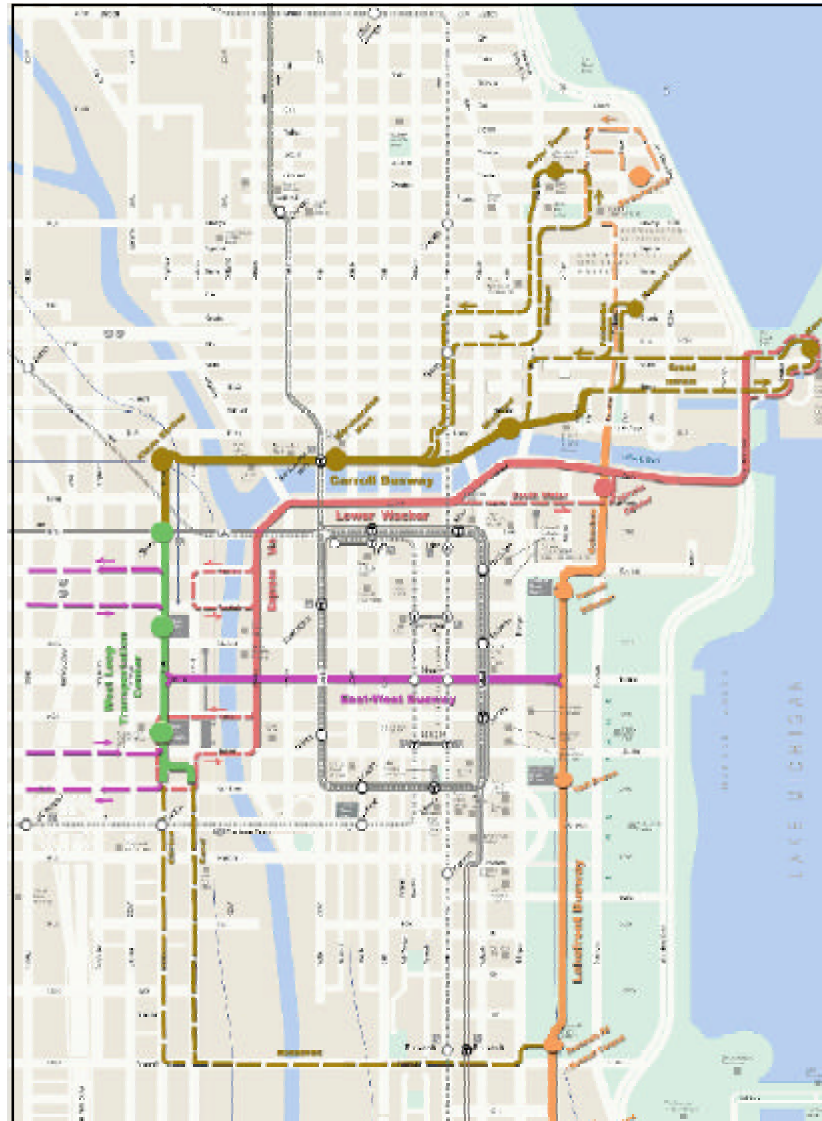


Figure 4.2.8 The future transitway system

Transitways

Exclusive transitways will ensure efficient transit circulation regardless of street congestion

Buses are relatively inexpensive and flexible and will remain an important element of the downtown transportation system. To ensure the continued viability of the bus system, many Loop-bound routes could operate in dedicated transitways, either at or below grade, in the Central Area. The proposed exclusive transitways will provide essential service to CTA and Metra stations. On heavily traveled routes it may be desirable to use high-capacity "bus rapid transit" (BRT) vehicles. BRT vehicles can carry as many as 120 passengers - more than double a standard bus. BRT vehicles use multiple wide doors and low floors to permit fast boarding of passengers who have previously paid their fares at a transitway station. Ultimately, the transitways may be served by light rail. The use of exclusive transitways offer numerous advantages:

- **NO SLOWDOWNS** - The exclusive right-of-way enables buses to maintain schedules regardless of street traffic conditions. Since transitways have multiple lanes and do not require fixed guideways, service can easily be routed around stalled vehicles.
- **LOW COST** - Since no tracks or power distribution equipment are required, transitways can be built for a fraction of the cost of rail.
- **FLEXIBLE ROUTING** - Although the transitway itself is fixed, buses exiting at portals en route complete their journeys via ordinary streets. This permits great flexibility in routing and minimizes the need for transfers.
- **INCREMENTAL CONSTRUCTION** - Transitways can be built in phases and use conventional streets to provide continuous service.
- **MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT** - Buses do not require overhead wires or tracks and clean-fuel alternatives are available.
- **NO SPECIAL VEHICLES REQUIRED** - Ordinary buses can be operated in transitways if desired. "Clean fuel" vehicles with minimal emissions will reduce the need for expensive or unsightly transitway ventilation.
- **PRE-BOARDING FARE COLLECTION AND WEATHER-PROTECTED PLATFORMS** - Transitway stations can be similar to rail rapid transit stations, with pre-boarding fare payment. Platforms can be heated, lighted, and weather-protected and provided with trip planning and tourist information kiosks displaying bus arrival times.
- **CENTRALIZED DISPATCHING AND CONTROL** - Advanced real-time location capabilities, service management software and voice/data communications between bus operators and dispatchers would enable precision performance of scheduled service.
- **CONVERSION TO RAIL** - If downtown growth requires added capacity in the future, transitways can be converted to rail operation.

The Central Area's first busway is the Lakefront Busway, which links McCormick Place with Illinois Center and Streeterville hotels. Buildings on its success, four new transitways are proposed:

LOWER WACKER DRIVE EXPRESS BUSES

Express bus service will be reintroduced to Lower Wacker Drive following the completion of the Wacker Drive reconstruction. Bus priority measures will be provided at key intersections leading to Wacker Drive from both Union Station and Ogilvie Center and on-ramps accessing Lower Wacker to provide more reliable service.

CARROLL AVENUE TRANSITWAY

The Carroll Avenue transitway will use a grade-separated railroad right-of-way along the line of Carroll Avenue north of the Main Branch between the west bank of the Chicago River to Rush Street. It will eventually link to the Clinton transitway and will substantially improve travel times between the West Loop and River North, North Michigan Avenue, Streeterville, and Navy Pier. It will provide two dedicated bus lanes, one in each direction. The Carroll Avenue transitway is a prime candidate for "bus rapid transit" (BRT) vehicles. Daily scheduled service will shuttle riders between the West Loop commuter stations via the Clinton transitway to offices and shopping north of the river, and to Navy Pier for special events. A transfer will be provided from the Brown/Purple Line station at the Merchandise Mart to the transitway station below.

EAST-WEST TRANSITWAY

CTA buses currently use eastbound lanes on Washington and Adams and westbound lanes on Madison and Jackson. These lanes are affected by vehicles making right turns at cross streets and by vehicles exiting driveways, extending travel times for bus riders and discouraging transit use. As a first step, these on-street bus lanes will be upgraded through improved signal timing, streetscape enhancements and other amenities. An exclusive transitway may be created at the street level, in the short term, on Adams and Monroe Streets.

If warranted by future traffic growth, a below-grade transitway could be built on Monroe Street to improve east-west bus times through the Loop. This below-grade transitway would make use of a right-of-way reserved by the City for a potential east-west subway in the 1970's. It would extend from Michigan Avenue to Clinton Street, crossing the Chicago River via tunnel. Portals would permit buses to enter and exit at Michigan Avenue and at Clinton. A connection could also be provided to the existing South Lakefront transitway to McCormick Place.

Buses operating in the East-West transitway could be primarily existing line-haul routes that currently use Loop streets. Convenient connections could be provided to the State and Dearborn subways below. Escalators and elevators would transport riders between platform and street level, with bus waiting times displayed on electronic signs. The platforms could be extended to create a continuous pedway between Michigan Avenue and Union Station, with connections to the existing pedway. As a first step, this right-of-way may also be developed as a pedway.

CLINTON CORRIDOR

The Clinton transitway will be provided as part of a multi-level bus/rail subway under Clinton Street, described in the following section.

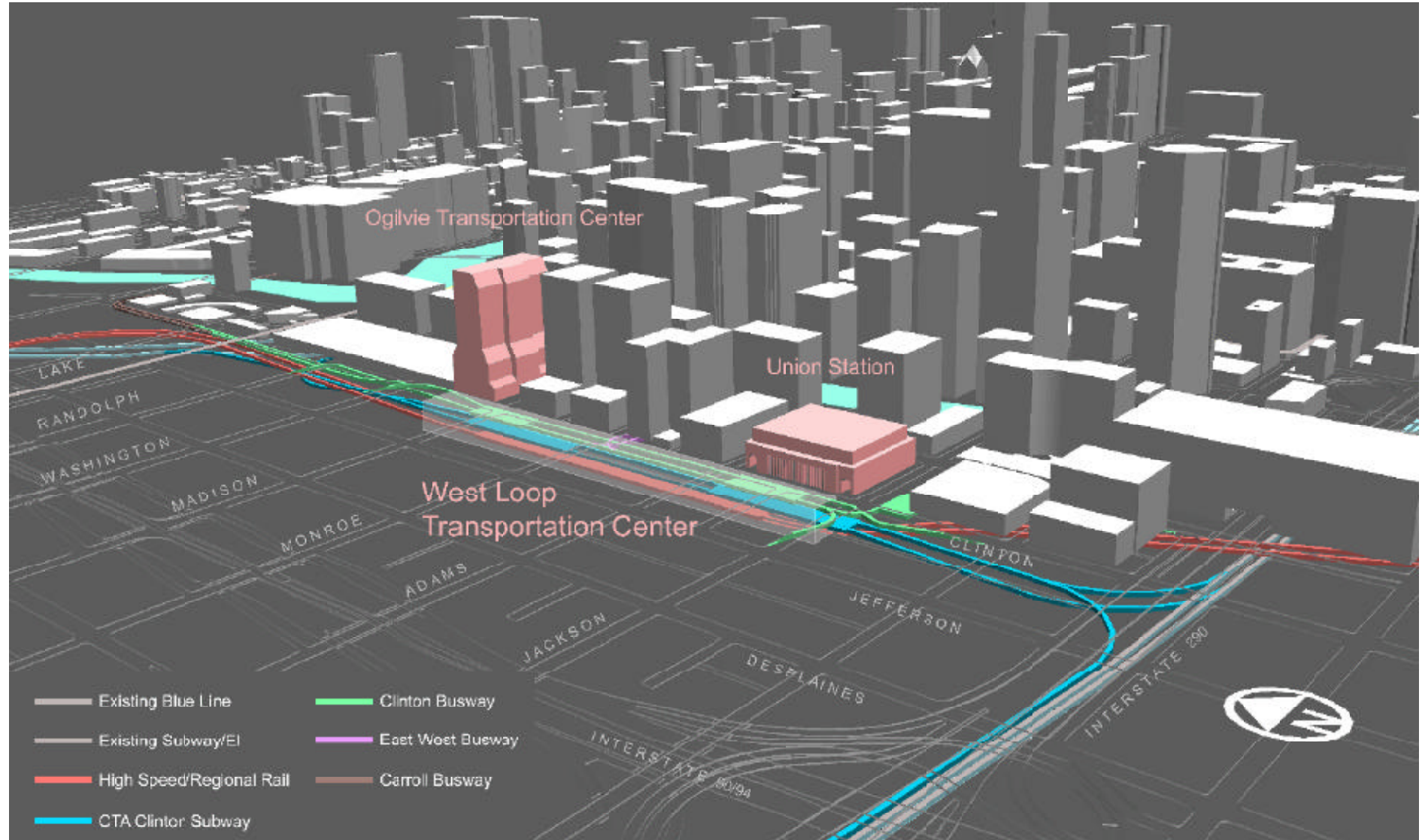


Figure 4.2.9
The future East-West transitway under Monroe Street.



Figure 4.2.10
The future East-West transitway on Adams Street.

Figure 4.2.11
 The proposed West Loop Transportation Center along Clinton Street between the Ogilvie Transportation Center and Union Station has the potential to connect all parts of downtown, provide the Expanded Loop with excellent transit access, and provide platforms to serve high-speed rail.



West Loop Transportation Center

A new transit hub under Clinton Street will provide the West Loop office district with the same convenient, high-volume transit service that supported the growth of the Central Loop.

A new transportation center is proposed under Clinton Street, called the West Loop Transportation Center. The development of the Clinton Street transitway, CTA rail services, commuter and high-speed rail lines can be phased. The construction of a shell for a multi-level tunnel in the initial phase will result in substantial long-term construction cost savings and simplify the eventual completion of the West Loop Transportation Center.

The Transportation Center will have four levels:

1. Mezzanine
2. Transitway
3. CTA Rail
4. Commuter and Intercity Rail

TRANSITWAY

A dedicated transitway connected to the Monroe Street transitway with portals at Randolph, Washington, Jackson, and Van Buren streets. Short- and line-haul routes would use this route. Line-haul routes crossing the Loop via the Monroe Street transitway would enter and exit the transitway system via portals on Clinton Street. Short-haul routes serving River North and Streeterville would exit via the north portals, cross the river south of Kinzie Street, and enter the Carroll Avenue transitway en route to their final destinations.

CTA RAIL

Two options follow for connecting the West Loop to the other parts of the Central Area and the CTA rail network.

OPTION A - BLUE LINE LOOP

The Blue Line Loop would create a second transit loop in the Central Area. The two existing CTA Blue Lines, the Congress/Douglas Park branches and the O'Hare branch would be connected via a branch below Clinton Street. Two stations would be provided, one at Union Station and the other at the Ogilvie Transportation Center. Clinton Street is the ideal alignment for this purpose because it is adjacent to the rail stations and also has no major underground utilities that would complicate construction.

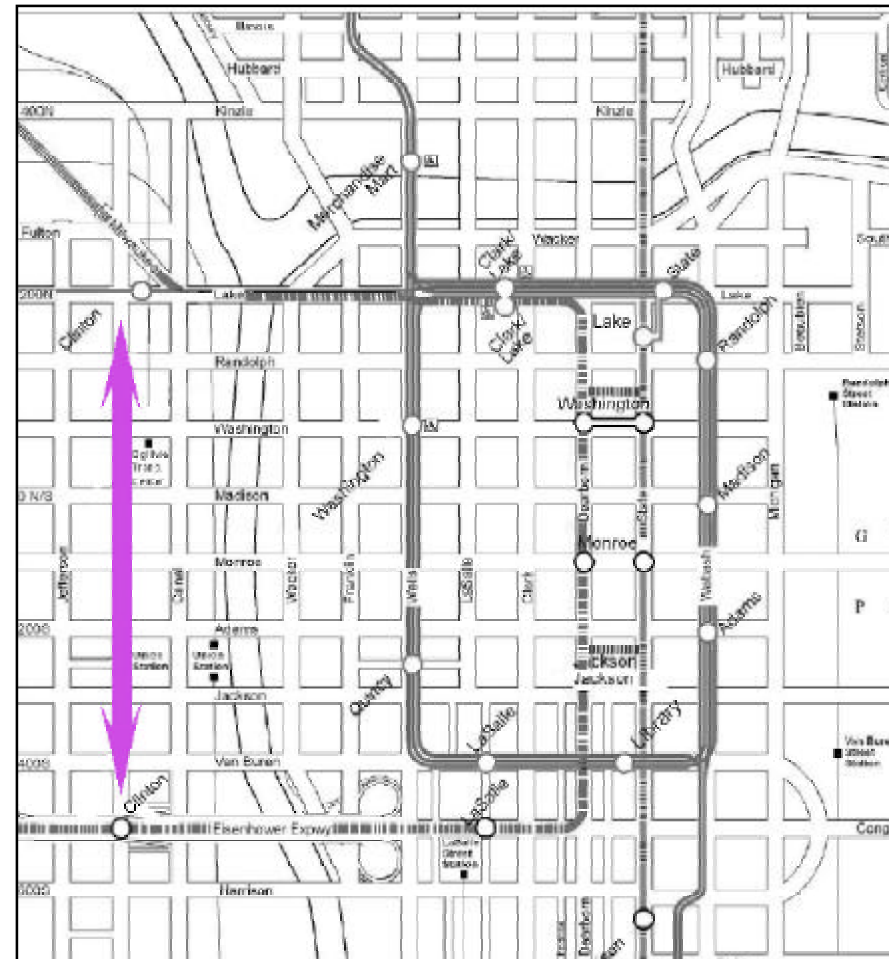


Figure 4.2.12

CTA improvements centered on the Clinton Street transitway would include either a Blue Line loop, connecting the Congress/Douglas and O'Hare branches; or a connection to the Red Line.

Figure 4.2.13
The proposed West Loop Transportation Center, a multi-modal facility to provide access throughout the Central Area and improve high-speed inter-city connections.



The Blue Line Loop would provide the West Loop with fast, convenient rail service comparable to that available in the Central Loop. Passengers on any of the Blue Line branches would have direct access to Clinton Street stops. Passengers entering the Central Area on other CTA rail lines would be able to change to Blue Line trains at existing Loop transfer points. The two proposed stations are within easy walking distance of the entire portion of the West Loop identified for higher-density development. The Blue Line Loop would also provide better distribution of commuter rail riders to the east side of downtown and other points on the Blue Line, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Medical Center, and O'Hare Airport.

OPTION B - CTA RED LINE CONNECTOR

The middle level could also be used by a new Red Line route extending for several miles in a north-south subway. This would provide direct connections to the West Loop from the north and south. It would provide additional capacity in the State Street subway for other services. This concept requires further feasibility studies.

COMMUTER AND INTER-CITY RAIL

The lowest level of the West Loop Transportation Center will provide two through platforms for commuter and intercity trains entering from either the north or south. The development of through platform connections will realize a plan to connect north and south railroad lines first identified in Burnham's Plan of Chicago in 1909. The platforms will provide overflow capacity for Union Station and the Ogilvie Transportation Center, both of which are approaching their train-handling capabilities. The platforms could also serve as the downtown terminal for the proposed high-speed regional rail system which uses Chicago as the hub and links major midwestern destinations using trains operating at 100+ MPH.



Figure 4.2.14
The West Loop Transportation Center - mezzanine entrance level will feature convenience retail serving commuters.



Figure 4.2.15
The West Loop Transportation Center - CTA Rail level, where passengers would access the new Blue Line loop or the new Red Line connection.