

Eastside Neighborhood Plan

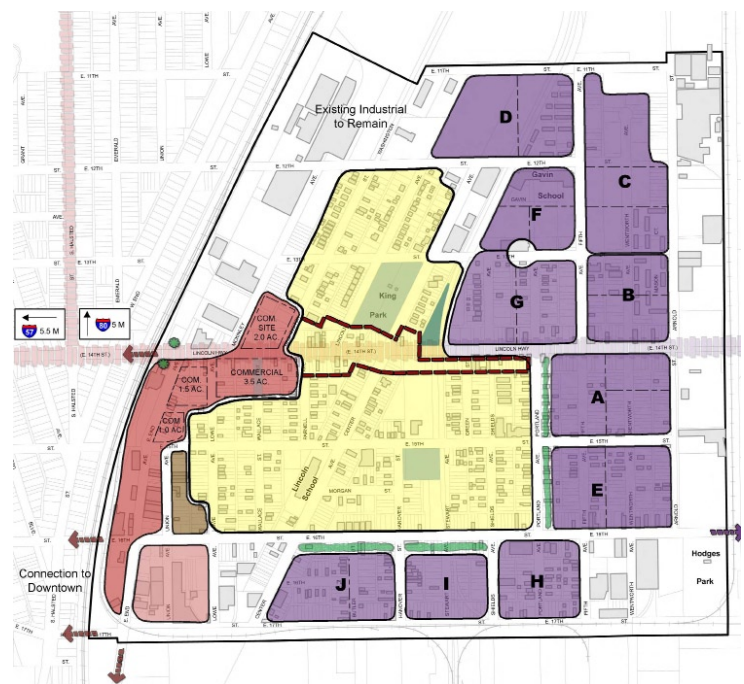
Chicago Heights, Illinois

For decades the Eastside Neighborhood of Chicago Heights, Illinois has been losing housing units and population. In response, the City has been demolishing abandoned homes and addressing problems in a piecemeal basis. Faced with a growing number of vacant lots but lacking a plan for their reuse, the City engaged PGAV in 2008 to study this neighborhood and develop a conceptual plan and redevelopment strategy for the Eastside.

Adjacent to heavy industrial uses and railroads, the Eastside neighborhood was traditionally home to workers employed in nearby manufacturing plants and businesses. As the industrial employment base in this south Cook County community eroded, many homes in the Eastside deteriorated and housing values declined. Businesses along Lincoln Highway suffered and infrastructure decayed.

PGAV's work began with a thorough assessment of field conditions, including land use, building conditions, vacancies, street and sidewalk conditions, neighborhood institutions and greenspace. This data was then compiled with existing zoning districts, parcel assessment values and ownership information. To ensure the revitalization strategy is rooted in market realities, Group assessments were conducted of the feasibility of alternate land-use scenarios in the neighborhood.

Using this analysis and the feedback of City stakeholders, PGAV developed a coherent conceptual development plan that calls for concentrating revitalization efforts in the southwestern portion of the study area. The plan also calls for the long-term transition of the eastern edge of the study area from mostly vacant land and a few remaining homes to new industrial uses. Industrial reuse sites are laid out for efficient use of utilities and would actually reduce the length of street to be maintained by the City. Commercial or mixed-use redevelopment on assembled lots will complement residential revitalization and infill development. In light of the City's parallel Downtown revitalization and rapid transit planning, strengthening the connection between the Eastside and Downtown Chicago Heights is a high priority,



revitalization

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