East Garfield Park
Quality and Opportunity: A Retail and Urban Design Plan

Volume One: Executive Summary
February 2007

The City Design Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago
ROADMAP (Retail Opportunities And Design, the Madison Advisory Partnership)
Greater Garfield Park Chamber of Commerce
Madison Western Chamber of Commerce

© 2007
Participating Organizations

Madison Western Chamber of Commerce
LISC New Communities Program

UIC Credits

Project Director
Brent D. Ryan, Ph.D., AICP
Assistant Professor, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs; Co-Director, City Design Center

Consulting Faculty
David Brown, M.Arch.
Associate Professor, College of Architecture and the Arts; Associate Director, City Design Center
Rachel N. Weber, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs

Project Coordinator
T. Abraham Lentner, MUPP
Coordinator of Technical Assistance Projects, City Design Center

Graduate Assistants
Ryan Siegel, MUPP
Dror Ram

Undergraduate Assistants
Jason Marshall
Robert Yuen

Plan Design and Layout
Bryce Bushman
Zara Kadkani-Schmitt

Urban Planning Students
Ja’Net Defell
Nicolette Jorgens-Tamminga
Kathryn Lowe
Jeremy Thompson
Elise Zelechowski
Karla Walter
Sean Terry
Andrea Traudt
Ryan Siegel
Emily Tapia

Volume One: Executive Summary, is available on the internet at: www.uic.edu/aa/cdc
Volume 2 will be available in Summer 2007.
Table of Contents

Letters of Support ii
Acknowledgements iii
Introduction 1
Timeline and Methodology 2
Background and History 6
Existing Business Conditions 7
Retail Market 9
Business Space 11
Critical Issues 15
Planning Principles 17
Recommendation 1: Store Size 19
Recommendation 2: Flexible Design 23
Recommendation 3: Community Partnership 28
Recommendation 4: Local Business Growth 29
Recommendation 5: Streetscaping 31
Next Steps 33
February 12, 2007

Ernestine King
Executive Director
Garfield Park Chamber of Commerce
Chicago, Illinois 60624

RE: ROAPMAP

Dear Ms. King,

The Westside Leadership Roundtable is comprised of area religious leadership from community organizations and ministerial alliances. It is our desire to go on record in continuing in support of the Garfield Park & Madison Western Chambers collaborative effort in the coordination of ROADMAP. We pledge to participate in this effort in a significant and active role.

The WESTSIDE LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE’S primary focus is to upgrade the quality of life and mobilize residents of the Westside community towards a positive action and community development. The ROUNDTABLE also facilitates access to resources and services of city, county and state agencies.

It is our position to support:

* The five subcommittees areas of focus
* A cultural theme and symbol to be associated with the shopping district, reflective of the community’s history and racial composition (i.e., pyramids)
* The utilization of the resources, collective wisdom and planning of the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance/New Communities Program’s Quality of Life Plan.

* The WESTSIDE LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE will provide:
  o A clear and constant line of communication to area residents through our congregations and outreach programs
  o Volunteers
  o A collective voice of leadership to the political and commercial entities involved in this development
  o Adequate facilities to host community and sub-committee meetings, pre-screenings of prospective business operators, financial resource events etc...

This process can be beneficial and profitable to our community. In order for the process to maintain integrity there must remain full disclosure from the city’s Department of Planning and Development, full cooperation from prospective developers and financial institutions and full respect of the input from community residents, organizations and leadership.

It is our position to leverage the influence of this roundtable to always address quality of life issues affecting residents of the Greater Westside of Chicago.

Sincerely,

Rev. Michael Eaddy, Co-Convener
Rev. Dwight Gunn, Co-Convener

Westside Leadership Roundtable
Acknowledgements

Several individuals and organizations should be recognized for their special contributions to make the ROADMAP planning process successful. The New Communities Program at the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance provided necessary financial support and assistance. Rev. Michael Eaddy of People’s Church of the Harvest provided valuable support and hosted two community meetings and many of the ROADMAP meetings. Rick Jackson and Tony Raggs of Ceasefire gave important assistance with community outreach and survey collection. Andre Napolez, John Stultz, and Marcus Davis volunteered their time on special initiatives related to the ROADMAP planning initiative. Credell Walls, NCP Youth Specialist for the Green Teen Program, coordinated the student volunteers who helped conduct the shopper surveys. La Wanda Kelly and Kevyn Porter both volunteered their time and talents at the community meetings. Rev. William Brown, Rev. Carolyn Vessel, and Barbara Parks volunteered to be group facilitators at several of the community meetings. Numerous others from within and outside of East Garfield Park who donated time, expertise, and interest in support of the ROADMAP planning process also deserve thanks.

Participating ROADMAP Members

Introduction

Quality and opportunity: a new vision for retail in East Garfield Park

A national retailer opens a high-quality new store in the suburbs, but neglects to locate additional stores in urban neighborhoods nearby. Residents of these neighborhoods must get in their cars or endure long bus rides to enjoy the same quality retail enjoyed by suburban and downtown residents.

A local entrepreneur senses a market opportunity for new retail in her neighborhood, but cannot find a secure, affordable, accessible location nearby. She opens her store in a different neighborhood a few miles away instead.

Today, these two retailing scenarios are all too common in East Garfield Park, one of Chicago’s most historic neighborhoods and one that is currently undergoing a development renaissance. This renaissance, however, has not yet brought to East Garfield Park the appropriate quality and opportunities for retail development that the community desires and deserves.

Quality and opportunity: these two themes guided the planning strategies for an improved retail environment in East Garfield Park described in this comprehensive plan, the first ever created specifically to guide retail development in this neighborhood. Quality and opportunity also describe the two key principles for new EGP retail as envisioned by this plan.

Quality retail will bring to East Garfield Park a greater range of shopping opportunities, serving basic needs better, adding new destinations for area shoppers, and giving East Garfield Park the same retail balance and variety found in so many other Chicago neighborhoods.

New retail opportunities are equally important. East Garfield Park has a unique mix of residents and cultures characteristic of its long history as one of Chicago’s “second downtowns”, and later as one of the city’s principal African-American cultural centers. New retail development should reflect this history, respecting East Garfield Park’s uniqueness, while also provide opportunities for local residents to be employed, manage, or even open up new retailing establishments of their own.

Quality and opportunity. The ROADMAP steering committee, a group of over 100 neighborhood residents, business owners, community leaders, and retail experts who met for over a year to discuss, debate, and strategize the content of this plan, is proud to present this plan to the East Garfield Park public, to the City of Chicago, and to the Chicagoland retail community. We are confident that the plan represents an innovative, well-supported, and implementable range of retail development strategies, and we welcome your participation in bringing the many visions of this groundbreaking plan to fruition as East Garfield Park’s retail renaissance begins.

Prof. Brent D. Ryan
Timeline and Methodology

In early 2006, the Greater Garfield Park Chamber of Commerce, the Madison Western Chamber of Commerce and the New Communities Program of the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance commissioned the UIC City Design Center to draft a revitalization plan for Madison Street. The purpose of this plan is to: 1: establish specific redevelopment strategies and recommendations for Madison Street and the commercial areas of East Garfield Park, and 2: ensure that the planning process incorporates a high level of community participation. This plan builds upon the priorities and partnerships established by the May 2005 LISC/Chicago’s New Communities Program Plan, East Garfield Park: Growing a Healthy Community (available at http://newcommunities.org/tools/).

In March of 2006, the project partners convened a steering team of community residents, business and building owners, community organizations, city staff and local clergy to oversee the planning process and ensure substantive community participation (Figure 4). This steering team was called ROADMAP (Retail Opportunities And Design, the Madison Advisory Partnership). This team met monthly to discuss issues and challenges related to revitalizing Madison Street, review the findings and research of the City Design Center and the project staff, recommend new ideas, as well as help to organize and facilitate three large community meetings.

ROADMAP

The planning process was conducted in three phases over the course of a year (Figure 3). During the first phase, the project staff conducted research about the history, conditions, and background of the commercial areas of East Garfield Park. In the Spring of 2006, a class of eight UIC graduate urban planning students conducted a series of preliminary market studies about the types of new businesses that could be supported in East Garfield Park. Some of the findings of this class can be read on pages 21-22. This work also included an inventory of the stores in East Garfield Park, which is shown on page 8.
During the second phase, the ROADMAP Committee and project staff reviewed the findings and research to determine a set of the most challenging issues facing the effort. These critical issues can be found on page 15. The ROADMAP Committee also convened a series of sub-committees to examine other important issues related to improving economic opportunity in East Garfield Park. Most notably, the Marketing and Beautification sub-committee worked to organize a community plaza at the corner of 5th, Madison and California. The Youth Involvement sub-committee helped to inspire collaboration between the Garfield Area Partnership and the University of Illinois Extension to provide entrepreneur training to young people in East Garfield Park.

During the third phase, the ROADMAP Committee and project staff worked to develop specific ideas, recommendations and strategies. In October of 2006, ROADMAP held a session to develop guiding principles for future efforts to improve Madison Street (more about this on pages 17-18). In order to develop these principles, the ROADMAP Committee had to consider and balance the different concerns and visions for Madison Street that had been expressed. These principles guided the work of the project staff to write recommendations and ultimately this plan document. Also during the third phase, the project staff and volunteers from the Green Teen Program collected over 300 shopper surveys from local residents. The surveys asked residents about what type of stores they would like to see in East Garfield Park. The results of the surveys will help guide the project staff in 2007 as they work to create new retail opportunities in the community.

In January of 2007, the ROADMAP Committee met to review a draft of the plan document and share their suggestions, ideas and concerns. The final plan reflects the comments provided at that meeting.

Community Meetings

During each phase of the planning process, a large community meeting was held to gather public input. The ROADMAP Committee members, project staff and volunteers worked to spread the word, make phone calls, distribute fliers, and send post-cards and emails to residents in the community to attend the meetings. At each meeting there were more than 60 participants. Each meeting proceeded from the work of the previous meeting and the work of the ROADMAP Committee.

The first meeting, held in May of 2006 at the Landmark Missionary Baptist Church (Figure 1), was an opportunity for the project staff and ROADMAP Committee to listen to community members. Each participant in the meeting had an opportunity to mark assets, challenges and action areas on a map of East Garfield Park. The results are shown in Figure 24 on page 18.

The second meeting was held in August of 2006 at People’s Church of the Harvest (Figure 2). Participants in the meeting had an opportunity to see the work of ROADMAP and the project staff and learn about the research findings. Then the participants were asked to describe what they wanted Madison Street to be like in the future. They were also asked what assets would help to get there and what challenges would be faced along the way. The compiled results from this discussion helped form the critical issues described on page 15.

The third meeting was held in November of 2006 at People’s Church of the Harvest. At this meeting, the participants heard about the guiding principles that the ROADMAP Committee helped to develop as well as the recommendations and strategies that project staff devised. The participants were asked to respond to the ideas, suggest their own ideas, and express their concerns. One nearly universal concern that came out of the third meeting is the need for a new, quality grocery store in East Garfield Park.
Key Points:

1. Community process was led by ROADMAP steering team

2. Community meetings occurred during each phase of the process

3. A one year research and planning process
Figure 5  An existing mixed-use building at Madison Street and Kedzie Avenue

Figure 7  Madison Street toward Western Avenue, circa 1939 (Courtesy of the Chicago Public Library)

Figure 6  Design concept for a mixed-use infill development on Madison Street

Figure 8  5th Avenue toward Madison Street and California Avenue, circa 1939 (Courtesy of the Chicago Public Library)
Background and History

by Ryan Siegel

The first wave of settlers came to the East Garfield Park area in the late 1860s. In 1869, the area was annexed to Chicago. That same year, the Chicago West Side Parks Board established three major parks, including Central Park (later renamed Garfield Park). This 187-acre park was laid out by William LeBaron Jenney as part of a network of parks and boulevards around the center of the city. The fire of 1871 prompted displaced Chicagoans to relocate to the West Side. Residents from all over the city came to the community in the 1890s for three main attractions: Central Park, Chutes Amusement Park, and the open-air theatre at Kedzie and Madison.

The first two decades of the 20th century saw rapid growth as many immigrants moved to the area. By the 1930s, Madison Street was the major commercial spine of the West Side. The intersection of Kedzie and Madison was one of the busiest shopping centers of Chicago.

The Madison Street commercial area was also home to entertainment attractions like the Senate Theater, the Madison Roller Rink, and the Kedzie Theater (Chicago Daily News, 1932). According to the 1936 Garfield Park Businessmen’s Association, there were 328 businesses on Madison Street. In 1949, there were 692 retail stores in East Garfield Park as a whole, with over 216 restaurants and bars, 25 drug stores, and 36 apparel stores (Local Community Fact Book for Chicago, 1950). Commercial buildings almost entirely filled Madison Street from Central Park to Damen Avenue in the late 1940s.

Influxes of people continued to pour into the community during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, but there was almost no new construction. The population of East Garfield Park grew to 70,091 people by 1950. The resulting housing shortage caused many single-family homes and other buildings to be split up into smaller kitchenette apartments which contributed to the deterioration of the neighborhood.

Madison Street began facing difficulties by the 1960s when many residents started traveling outside the community for their shopping. The corners of Madison and Pulaski as well as Madison and Western remained important shopping areas for the community. The closing of the Merchants National Bank at Kedzie and Madison in 1962 signified the beginning of the departure of banks from the community (Chicago Tribune 12/7/1961).

The riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968 caused the destruction of many homes and businesses in East Garfield Park. The 3300 block of West Madison Street was almost completely burned to the ground (Chicago Tribune 4/21/1968). By the late 1960s, the community had already experienced almost 40 years of disinvestment and overcrowding.

Through the 1970s, ‘80s, and ‘90s, there was a sharp decrease in population and many older buildings were torn down. The population decreased 60% from 52,185 in 1970 to 20,881 in 2000. Demolition efforts have left the neighborhood with large tracts of vacant land and a 47% decrease in housing units from the peak in 1960.

The only substantial new building between the 1940s and 1990s consisted of subsidized housing projects built in an effort to satisfy the extreme need for affordable housing for a low-income population.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, booming urban real estate markets brought a dramatic increase in private residential development in East Garfield Park. The redevelopment of large Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) housing projects, gentrification in nearby neighborhoods and significant reinvestment brought a new era of construction and development to East Garfield Park.
Existing Business Conditions

**Major Findings:**

1. **There are 89 establishments in the study area**
2. **Businesses are not concentrated into nodes**
3. **Businesses are mainly convenience-oriented**

In March of 2006, UIC City Design Center staff completed an inventory of the buildings in the study area. Figure 10 shows a map of the businesses that were identified during the inventory. Altogether, 89 establishments were counted. In March of 2006 there was about 225,000 square feet of commercial space within the study area. About 60,000 square feet of space, or 27% of the commercial space, was vacant at the time of the inventory. In addition to these vacant store fronts, there were also numerous vacant lots within the study area.

Most of the businesses in East Garfield Park are convenience oriented, providing convenient goods and services to the local community. These businesses include convenience food/liquor stores (18% of stores), personal services like laundries and hair salons (16%) carry-out restaurants (15%), automotive businesses like car repair, gas stations and car washes (11%). Most of the stores in East Garfield Park are small, independent businesses.

There is a small, but significant number of large companies in East Garfield Park. 16% of the businesses in the study area are run by major companies like Walgreen’s, McDonald’s, Shell Gas and Mid-America Bank. Most of the major name-brand businesses are clustered on Western Avenue north of Madison Street. With a traffic count of 21,000 cars per day, Western Avenue is the most heavily trafficked automotive corridor in the study area. All of the name brand stores on Western Avenue were designed for convenient access by car to take advantage of the heavy traffic volume.

The map on the facing page (Figure 9) also shows how the businesses in East Garfield Park fit within the concentrations, or nodes, of current retail activity. One-quarter mile is the general standard measure of easy walking distance. Shopping districts are considered walkable when they have many businesses and buildings close together over a quarter mile stretch. Vacancies, empty spaces, overpasses, or other breaks along the street make a district seem less walkable, even if the distance is the same. Walkability and concentrated activity are important aspects of a successful shopping district. This is especially important for a community where 45% of households do not have an available vehicle (2000 US Census). The nodes shown in this map all have significant disruptions and lack business concentration, which diminishes walkability and vitality.
Figure 9  Map of Existing Businesses
Major Findings:
1. Residents leave the neighborhood for shopping
2. East Garfield Park has more consumer spending than Bronzeville--and the gap is growing
3. Quality, concentration, convenience can attract new shoppers

Competitive Shopping Districts

While there are not a lot of destinations for shopping on Madison Street, within a few miles of the district there are many places to go to shop, eat or find entertainment. Shopping destinations are especially frequent to the east of Damen Avenue and west of the city limits. These established shopping centers and lively neighborhood districts are the competitors for East Garfield Park shoppers.

Despite this competition, there are great numbers of shoppers who could become the customers for stores in East Garfield Park. The West Side and Near West Side of Chicago lacks good access to shopping destinations, let alone convenient neighborhood shopping. East Garfield Park is in a good position to draw shoppers from these areas because of its good transportation access, its central location, and nearby amenities like the United Center and the Garfield Park Conservatory.

Local Spending on Retail Goods and Services

Another challenge that the district faces in attracting new business or helping local businesses to grow is the modest level of consumer spending power in the area. Consumer spending is the amount of money each household spends on retail goods and services in a year. Multiplying each household’s consumer spending by the total number of households in the area shows the total spending power. For the area within one mile of the Madison Street district, the total spending power was $589 million in 2005 (Claritas Market Data). This is about 48% more than Bronzeville, but only about half of the spending power found in Oak Park (Figure 11).

Because of population growth, the consumer spending power in East Garfield Park is expected to grow faster than inflation. By 2010, consumer spending in East Garfield Park is expected to grow to levels like Chatham or Hyde Park (Figure 11).

Business District Mix

Most successful shopping districts draw shoppers from outside their communities. This way, even if local consumer spending is relatively small, there can still be a lively, successful shopping district. For example, Bronzeville has less local consumer spending than East Garfield Park (Figure 11). However, stores in Bronzeville have a larger sales volume than stores in East Garfield Park (as shown by the size of the circle in Figure 10). This is because Bronzeville attracts shoppers from surrounding neighborhoods to the stores that are tightly clustered around the Green Line station on 47th Street. The neighborhoods around Bronzeville lack access to shopping, and a third of the businesses in the 47th Street district sell consumer goods (like clothing). As a result, people from the surrounding neighborhoods come to Bronzeville to shop for things that are not available in their own neighborhoods.

There are not a lot of businesses on Madison Street, they are dispersed rather than concentrated, and they primarily offer local convenience items. East Garfield Park could draw more customers if it had a stronger concentration of stores that offer quality shopping opportunities that are not available in surrounding neighborhoods.
Figure 10 These charts show the mix of businesses in these neighborhood shopping districts, the size of each circle shows the relative volume of retail sales in each district in 2005.

Figure 11 This chart shows the total volume of consumer spending (spending power) in 2005 and projected growth for 2010.

Figure 12 This chart shows where East Garfield Park residents might purchase retail goods and services.

Figure 13 This map shows the shopping destinations within 4 miles of Madison Street.
Madison Street contains a mixture of mainly retail and mixed-use buildings with residential units above ground floor retail. There are also residential, community, and industrial buildings scattered throughout Madison Street. The eastern portion of Madison Street contains a mixture of old and new buildings, with a significant amount of rehabilitated and new construction currently underway. During the 2006 field survey, project staff observed four different market rate housing projects under construction between Damen and Rockwell on Madison Street. The western portion of Madison Street has been untouched by the market, consisting of older retail structures and a couple of affordable housing projects on either side of the Madison & Kedzie intersection. The older building stock is mostly mixed-use two to three story buildings with ground floor retail and residential above. Most older buildings have distinctive architectural elements and large ground floor windows that are conducive to a neighborhood retail environment. The buildings create a pedestrian friendly environment with most buildings built up to the sidewalk. The older buildings house small retail spaces, typically a storefront averaging close to 1,500 square feet.

Vacant lots are the largest component of the physical environment of Madison Street in the East Garfield Park community. There are 104 vacant lots, varying in size from an average city lot (25X125 feet) to an entire city block (approximately 80,000 sq. ft). Vacant lots are currently used as informal parking lots or playlots, but most often are left unkempt. There are 166 vacant parcels along Madison Street. 84% of those vacant lots are privately owned, and 16% are owned by the City. While vacant lots can be found all along Madison Street, the middle portion of the Madison Street study area from Campbell to Sacramento holds the highest concentration of vacant land.

The North-South streets have a different physical environment. Western Avenue is home to newer commercial and institutional buildings. Many vacant lots along Western are currently under development, including the redevelopment of CHA’s Rockwell Gardens. California and Homan Avenue are populated with mostly small residential buildings with occasional retailers at selected intersections. Kedzie Avenue is home to large institutional and commercial buildings; most notably the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus barn, the Garfield Community Service Center, Marshall High School, and several suburban style retail strips. The CTA bus barn creates an unfriendly pedestrian environment because of its long windowless blank façade, its frequent curb cuts, and its lack of sidewalks.

The newer retail buildings tend to occur in three forms: a standalone retail building with accompanying parking lot, a retail strip with several retailers clustered into a building separated from the street by a parking lot, and mixed use condominium and row-house buildings (as seen on Madison east of Campbell). The newer retail buildings are one-story modest structures with prominent signage. They are auto-oriented with substantial parking lots, buildings set back or facing away from the street, and sometimes drive-through lanes. The new retail buildings are located around major intersections, while older retail buildings are scattered along the length of Madison Street.

Major Findings:
1. Development is moving from East to West
2. Many newer retail buildings are auto-oriented
3. Open land and storefronts are opportunities for new businesses

Business Spaces
Figure 14 Vacant Parcel and Building Map

Figure 15 Example of a local business in a pedestrian-oriented retail space

Figure 16 Vacant or under-used buildings, like this one at 2725 W. Madison, can be renovated for new businesses
Retail spaces in newer buildings on average tend to be larger than retailers in older buildings in the study area. According the data collected in the field survey, buildings 100 years or older average 1740 square feet per retail space, while buildings 30 years or younger average 3110 square feet per retail space.

The study area contains a significant stock of older buildings. While the Madison Street retailing environment has been deteriorating for the last 50 years, with urban renewal programs and deterioration destroying many of the buildings, the remnants reveal the old urban fabric of a traditional inner city retail strip before the proliferation of automobiles. According to the 2006 field survey, over 50% of the surviving buildings in the study area are over 80 years old. Many of the older buildings have distinctive architectural elements and add to the character of the street. According to the Chicago Historical Resources Survey completed by the city’s Department of Planning and Development, there were 17 properties possessing some architectural feature or historical association that made them potentially significant in the context of the surrounding community or in the broader context of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States. However, the 2006 field survey found more than 40 buildings with significant architectural details, whether it was a limestone façade on a “greystone” building or detailed cornice, roof, or façade on older brick buildings, that contributed to the built environment.

Over 95% of the buildings in the study area have brick facades, with several “greystones,” and some terra-cotta buildings as well. Madison Street contains a mixture of one to three story buildings. The survey also examined the exterior condition of the buildings and found that 65% of the buildings surveyed are either in excellent or good condition (i.e. requiring little or no maintenance). There are 46 buildings in need of major repairs and renovation and another 19 buildings that are dilapidated and in danger of demolition.

The pedestrian environment is poor along Madison Street. There are many large vacant lots and gaps between buildings that interrupt the street wall. Madison Street has a dilapidated streetscape and no gateways or uniform signage to promote or delineate the area. The sole banners are those for Advocate Bethany Hospital that run from Central Park to Kedzie Avenue. There are no parkways, few street trees and planters. Crosswalks are not marked in most intersections and there are few places to sit or rest. Often people are seen sitting or leaning against a garbage can, light post, or fire hydrant indicating a need for street furniture, like benches. The two large residential developments along the western portion of Madison are set back from the street, providing some green space, but the perimeter of the development is fenced off from the street.

**Development Activity**

There is a definite trend for new development activity in East Garfield Park. During the summer and fall of 2006, new construction activity could be seen along the eastern end of Madison Street and among the houses on the boulevards. A walk down Madison Street clearly shows that development activity is least intense in the western end of the community and becomes more intense as one moves eastward. The photos on the facing page show how development becomes more dense towards the eastern end of the community, from two-flats, to four-story row-houses, to mixed-use condominium buildings.

The Chambers of Commerce and UIC Professor Rachel Weber’s graduate studio course sponsored a forum of retail development experts in March of 2006 to hear their thoughts about the future for retail in East Garfield Park. Many of the retail development experts expressed a common sentiment: development is coming to East Garfield Park. In the words of one seasoned community economic development expert, “East Garfield Park should get itself ready and educate itself for dealing with this coming growth”.

Construction and Development on Madison Street

Figure 17 Madison at St. Louis: no new construction

Figure 18 New two-flats on Madison just east of Washtenaw with no ground floor retail space

Figure 19 New small-scale multi-family condominiums with ground floor commercial space on Madison Street between Campbell and Western

Figure 20 New large multi-family condominium building on Madison Street at Leavitt with ground floor retail space
Critical Issues

Leading Issues:

1. Demand for quality stores to serve the neighborhood
2. Need for economic opportunity for East Garfield Park residents
3. Desire for community involvement in development decision making

Assets and Challenges

Over 70 community members attended the first public meeting for the Madison Street planning initiative. The participants identified the positive and negative aspects of Madison Street, and priorities for action areas to create a better shopping district in East Garfield Park. Each participant had five green, five red and three blue dots to place on maps of East Garfield Park. The combined results are shown in Figure 24.

Developing a Vision

During the second community meeting on August 10, 2006, attendees were asked to describe their vision for Madison Street and the assets and challenges that would be faced in achieving this vision. Many common ideas were mentioned for a vision for Madison Street. These common visions identified that the shopping district should:

1. Be lively, vibrant and active to draw a lot of people to the district
2. Include things to see and do, including entertainment, recreation, art and open space
3. Build a stronger business community that is responsive to needs of the neighborhood
4. Develop into something with its own character, and not the same as everywhere else

5. One group summarized their vision as the 4 Cs:
   Continuous, Complete, Convenient, Comparable

But there were also differences of opinion about what the future of Madison Street should be. Some community members wanted a retail district that featured name-brand stores that can be found in other neighborhoods, while others desired a district with mainly small and independent retailers. Some community members wanted a district that looks historic, the way Madison Street looked in the 1940s, and others wanted a district that has modern conveniences. On October 7, 2006, the ROADMAP Steering Team met to discuss these differences and the critical issues (listed here) to form a balanced vision for Madison Street. The result is the set of guiding principles on pages 19 and 20. Together, these form the collective vision for the future of Madison Street in East Garfield Park.

Critical Issues

1. Existing East Garfield Park businesses are physically scattered. There is no continuous business district.
2. There is a limited mix and variety of desired businesses, and an overabundance of other businesses, some of which are undesired.
3. Market demand is uneven. It is very strong in some areas but is weak in others.
4. New development is not always consistent with or reflective of the cultural and historical character of East Garfield Park.
5. Low, medium, and high-income shoppers from the West Side are not shopping in East Garfield Park, despite its central location and convenient transportation.
6. The East Garfield Park community has not always been strongly involved in the content, form, and type of new retail development.
7. The East Garfield Park community has not always benefited economically from new retail development, particularly small business development and local employment.
Figure 21 This map shows the combined results from the First Community Meeting held 4 May 2006, community institutions and quality stores were identified as assets and challenges included businesses with a poor appearance or poor service, a high number of liquor stores and areas that contribute to problems in the neighborhood.
Principle 1: Madison Street should be the primary neighborhood shopping district (the “Main Street”) for East Garfield Park.

Madison Street should be composed of commercial and mixed-use buildings stretching from the United Center to Garfield Park. Madison Street was historically a center for commercial activity in East Garfield Park. Recent residential construction has diminished the commercial character of Madison Street, but the community has expressed a strong desire that Madison Street maintain as much commercial consistency as possible. Commercial and retail development should be limited to areas around transit nodes in other parts of East Garfield Park.

Principle 2: The development of Madison Street should be market-oriented, but must also respect the interests and needs of the East Garfield Park community.

The community should provide clear criteria and preferences for new business. Local organizations should offer programs and support for locally owned businesses. Businesses on Madison Street should be reflective of the East Garfield Park community and responsive to its needs. There is a current strong need for the development of local, community based businesses and a need for retailers that serve the community with quality goods and services. Because the market and the needs of the community will change over time, the community should have an on-going presence in business development decisions.

Principle 3: New business development should start near strong-market areas and community business anchors. Strategic catalyst projects should be used to improve parts of the district that show less market potential.

The community should attract businesses that respond to the demands of customers on Chicago’s West Side and support each other through proximity and concentration. New businesses should be located near other successful businesses, not isolated throughout the study area. Business development should occur around existing anchors and strong points in the community. Beautification, public developments or cultural attractions can help strengthen areas of Madison Street without immediate development potential, and help prepare them for future opportunities for businesses.
**Principle 4:** New development along Madison Street should respect the small-scale, pedestrian design of the district in strong-market areas, and allow for a flexible range of design styles in weaker-market areas.

Historically, Madison Street was a mixed-use shopping district with buildings occupying city lots only one half block deep (about 125’). Most buildings were two or three stories, with taller buildings at major intersections like Madison and Western. This historic pattern should be replicated and enforced in areas where development potential is strong. In weaker-market areas, historic design should be encouraged, but limited construction of automobile-oriented developments should be permitted.

**Principle 5:** Larger development sites should be for businesses that will draw shoppers from the greater West Side. Smaller sites should be for businesses serving the local community.

East Garfield Park needs stores that cater to residents as well as stores that attract outside shoppers. Quality destination retail businesses often require larger buildings, larger sites and automobile access, while local establishments can occupy smaller structures and be accessed by foot. Urban design guidelines for East Garfield Park should reflect this need for a balance between local and destination retail.

**Principle 6:** All businesses in East Garfield Park should be encouraged to recruit locally and give preference to neighborhood residents for employment. Special attention should be paid to the economic needs of youth in the community.

East Garfield Park has severe employment and workforce development needs. Retail represents one of the best opportunities to enhance employment in this underserved neighborhood. All new retail establishments in East Garfield Park should be educated about how to recruit local job applicants and how to find opportunities for local contracts and employees. Local organizations and city government should encourage businesses to hire local residents first and provide opportunities for local young people wherever possible, in order to help fill this important community economic need.
Planning Recommendation 1

**Key Ideas:**

1. **Efforts should focus on businesses for small and mid-sized spaces**

2. **Quality stores for mid-sized space can attract many area shoppers**

3. **Smaller storefronts are suited for local shopping and entrepreneurs**

The available land for commercial development in East Garfield Park is best suited for mid-size and small retail buildings. However, the potential for Madison Street is not small or even mid-sized. With a good business development strategy, Madison Street can fulfill its great potential. A strong strategy for business on Madison Street has three parts:

1. Recruiting quality, national retailers
2. Retaining as well as attracting small, Chicago-based businesses
3. Helping retail entrepreneurs to get their start in East Garfield Park

On all three counts, business development efforts will be more successful if they are focused on retailers that use small and mid-size spaces. This strategy promotes a vision of Madison Street as having a diverse and balanced business community. This type of diversity and unique character will someday help Madison Street to be a more successful destination for shoppers from all over the region.

Business recruitment and small business development efforts can be very successful when they focus on the most prominent strengths and needs in the community. In the case of East Garfield Park, the popular restaurants and neighborhood attractions (like Edna’s, Wallace’s, the United Center and the Garfield Park Conservatory) can help more restaurants and cafes to succeed. Stores that offer higher quality merchandise for residents’ daily needs, like grocers and hardware stores, should find a substantial clientele in East Garfield Park. These types of business development are a starting point for bringing more retail opportunity to Madison Street.

**Market Analysis**

The area within one mile of the Madison Street shopping district has a population of 65,000 people and spent about $589 million on consumer goods and services in 2005. This is a modest population density and level of retail activity for an urban neighborhood. Despite its modest size, this local market area could support new stores to serve the local community with daily shopping needs, like hardware and groceries. The local market alone is not sufficient to support destination retail attractions. However, because of East Garfield Park’s central location, convenient transportation access and many amenities, it could potentially become a destination for shoppers from surrounding neighborhoods.

The greater West Side of Chicago lacks a variety of options for shopping. There are large parts of the West Side that lack convenient access to daily shopping, restaurants or places to shop for things like clothes, gifts, music and hardware. Households in this area travel outside of their neighborhoods for shopping (Figure 28). New destination shopping and attractions on the West Side of Chicago could potentially serve some or all this area. Figure 28 shows the parts of the West Side that lack convenient shopping. This area has a population of over 167,000 people (2000 US Census). The total consumer spending of households in this part of the West Side was over $1.3 billion in 2005 (Claritas). Over $500 million in consumer spending left these parts of the West Side for shopping destinations like Oak Park, Cicero, and other neighborhoods of Chicago.
Figure 2.2 A typical block on Madison Street, the diagrams of retail developments on this page are drawn to the same scale to show how they might fit into the available space in East Garfield Park.

Figure 2.3 Example of a large-format retail development, note that it would take almost three full blocks for this type of retail to fit in East Garfield Park.

Figure 2.4 Small storefronts like these can be found in historic buildings or in new mixed-use condominium developments.

Figure 2.5 Small and mid-sized stores. These types of buildings include new kinds of shopping centers with rear parking, as well as suburban style strip malls (shown here).

Figure 2.6 Mid-sized retail buildings, like this one at Madison and Western, can be home to destination retailers that need larger sites and possibly more parking.
Madison Street needs to have attractive, inviting and convenient shopping in order to attract more shoppers. These new stores should offer goods and services that shoppers do not have near their homes. The West Side is in particular need of national, name brand retailers and higher quality stores. Without these types of stores, the West Side lacks access to the type of shopping that is available elsewhere in the region.

It will also be important for Madison Street to cultivate a small business environment that respects the community’s history. One way to do this is to actively recruit successful, small businesses from other parts of the city. Businesses that have more than one location and are successful, positive members of their home neighborhoods would be good candidates for a location in East Garfield Park.

In the Spring of 2006, a class of graduate planning students evaluated the local retail market for different types of new stores. The market analysis revealed a few types of businesses that would be likely to succeed in East Garfield Park: Hardware stores, Grocers, and Cafes and Restaurants.

There are no consumer Hardware Stores in East Garfield Park, despite the tremendous amount of construction and demand for a hardware store (Figure 29). The nearest large-size hardware store is over two miles away. The analysis indicated that a new mid-size hardware store, like a full-service Ace Hardware franchise, would probably do very well in East Garfield Park.

Conventional retail market data indicates that it would be very difficult for a new grocery store to succeed in East Garfield Park. A student in the UIC class conducted her own field inventory to verify the data. Her findings indicated that conventional market data is likely overestimating the amount of grocery shopping options in the local area. A refined estimate based on the field inventory and industry statistics indicates that a new mid-size grocery or produce mart would probably be successful with a location on Madison Street.

Cafés and restaurants would be another good addition to Madison Street. East Garfield Park already has some restaurants, like Edna’s and Wallace’s, that draw people from surrounding neighborhoods. Adding more restaurants to this mix would increase the attractiveness of Madison Street as a dining destination. A sit-down restaurant near the United Center may also be able to capture post-game traffic. Cafés and breakfast restaurants could also do well on Madison Street. With over 25,000 cars passing the intersection of Western and Madison every day, this highly-visible corner would be a very advantageous place for a new coffee house to open.
**Figure 28** Underserved trade area around East Garfield Park, this area represents about $1.3 billion/year in consumer spending and almost half of that is spent in other communities; this underserved area could provide potential customers for a shopping destination in East Garfield Park.

**Figure 29** Map of hardware stores within 5 miles of Madison Street, note that there are no hardware stores in East Garfield Park.

**Figure 30** Revised grocery store estimates showing that a new mid-sized store could be supported.

**Figure 31** A coffee shop (like Starbucks) would be a good candidate for business recruitment to Madison Street; a high-visibility corner would be best for this type of store.

---

### One Mile Trade Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Satellite Starbucks Requirements</th>
<th>Madison &amp; Western Actual Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>15,000+ people</td>
<td>19,526 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Count</td>
<td>High traffic count</td>
<td>25,100 cars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning Recommendation 2

Encourage new Madison Street retail development through flexible design that changes over time.

Key Ideas:

1. Balance good design with shopping needs of the community
2. Use design restrictions to encourage new retail development
3. Promote balanced development

Urban and suburban development styles

The community can balance the desire for good design with the pressing need for new stores and services. This balance can be achieved by requiring a traditional urban design in some areas, but allowing a limited amount of suburban design in others.

In East Garfield Park, there is a preference for the type of shopping environment found in Wicker Park, downtown Oak Park and other traditional neighborhood shopping districts. These districts feature historic architecture and new mixed-use buildings in addition to a good selection of stores. These areas are built with a traditional urban design style (as shown in Figure 32), and resemble the historic design of Madison Street in East Garfield Park.

The community meetings and shopper surveys also indicated a desire to bring new stores and services that generally require a more suburban design and greater amounts of off-street parking. This suburban design (as shown in Figure 33) can be found in many of the near-by suburban areas, like Cicero and Riverside, where some East Garfield Park residents currently travel to shop.

Figure 32 Urban, or restrictive, development maintains a historically urban character with mixed-use buildings set up to the sidewalk

Figure 33 Suburban, or permissive, development often is only one-story tall and has a front parking lot
Figure 34 Map of permissive and restrictive development areas

- **1** 0% Permissive / 100% Restrictive
  - Mixed use with rear parking
  - For strong-market and/or strong-context areas

- **2** 25% Permissive / 75% Restrictive
  - Side or rear parking, buildings at sidewalk

- **3** 50% Permissive / 50% Restrictive
  - Some buildings with front parking

- **4** 75% Permissive / 25% Restrictive
  - Mostly front parking, single-use buildings
  - For low-demand and low-context areas
Urban Design Features

- Urban style
- Matches historic appearance of Madison Street
- Multi-story, mixed-use (retail with residential or office above the first floor)
- Rear parking
- Pedestrian oriented
- Often more costly and more difficult to lease

Suburban Design Features

- Suburban style
- Single-use
- One story tall
- Simple, unornamented architecture
- Parking in front of building
- Cheaper to build
- Often easier to lease to retailers

In dense urban areas where there is a lot of commercial activity, it is easier to build and lease urban style commercial spaces. Because of the cost of construction, and retailers’ concerns about parking, it can be more difficult to lease urban style commercial space in areas where the commercial real estate market is still soft. This is one of the reasons why mixed-use urban style developments are found more often closer to the Loop.

The parts of East Garfield Park with more construction and business activity or unique character should have restrictive design guidelines for new construction that require a traditional urban style. New developments should match the character of the surrounding neighborhood with mixed-use, urban style buildings.

Where there is less business and construction, there is also a greater and more urgent need for new stores and services. The design of new buildings in these areas should be more permissive at first to encourage new development. As new buildings are built, the design requirements can become more restrictive for a more urban style.

If there is a specific limit to the amount of space where suburban development is allowed, there will be an incentive for builders to bring new businesses to the community. If builders wait, the suburban space allotment may be used up and they will have to build with a more traditionally urban design.
Figure 34 shows recommended limits to suburban design space. These recommended levels strike a balance between requiring good design and encouraging new development. For those areas where suburban design should be allowed, the maximum area for suburban style should be calculated as a percentage of the total commercial land in the district, minus any existing suburban style buildings. As each new suburban style building is constructed, it subtracts from this allowable maximum area. Once the maximum level is reached, all new development should be required to build using the more restrictive, urban-style design standards.

This recommendation makes the land available for suburban style development a scarce commodity. This means that developers would need to compete to bring suburban style buildings to the community or else miss the opportunity. This type of competition can help speed along new development and bolster the commercial real estate market in the neighborhood.

There are two different approaches to implementing this phased approach to the district design. The first approach would be to use the City’s legislative and regulatory authority to establish the phased design guidelines and the necessary monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. This type of approach would be difficult and costly to put into place, but it would have a predictable and straightforward enforcement process.

An alternative approach would be for community groups and neighborhood representatives in East Garfield Park to act as the monitors of development style. A community group, such as the proposed Madison Street Development Committee would have to monitor new developments, evaluate the design and advocate for or against a proposal based on the amount of suburban development already in the area. For either approach to work there must be a public announcement that suburban development space is scarce, and that once it is used up, no new suburban development proposals would receive support.
Strengthening Markets through Catalyst Projects

In addition to using permissive design quotas as an incentive for development, catalyst projects can help bolster weaker-market areas. Catalyst projects are often special initiatives or capital projects funded through public or public-private contributions. Examples of such catalyst projects can include the construction of a neighborhood cultural center, streetscape or infrastructure improvement projects, or the construction of a government building like a branch library.

In East Garfield Park catalyst projects can take advantage of the open land and empty buildings to create events and attractions that draw shoppers from the West Side. A few empty parcels of land on Madison Street could be used for a seasonal open-air market for local vendors and part-time retailers. Another area of open land could be fenced in and used as a recreational park space and venue for open-air performances (like the one the ROADMAP Committee proposed for 5th Avenue and Madison, Figure 40). If, in the future, the areas around the market or performance space become vibrant shopping areas, then the community could have the option to move the catalyst to another area that needs support, or upgrade it into a permanent structure.

Smaller scale catalyst projects can include beautification efforts, like open space projects, street banners or public art. These smaller projects may be especially useful to improve the impact of small-scale private investment in Madison Street, like when a small building is renovated or a new store opens.
Planning Recommendation 3

The East Garfield Park community and businesses should be partners in Madison Street’s future

Create a Madison Street Development Committee

Development decisions should include community input. New development should meet the community’s needs and expectations. A new “Madison Street Development Committee” should include local community members who can represent the community and participate in development decisions. This type of committee can do much to promote economic opportunity on Madison Street. The committee can represent the community’s perspective on development proposals. Committee staff and volunteers can reach out to developers and retailers about bringing businesses to East Garfield Park. The committee can provide leadership and support for new catalyst projects, new partnerships and business programs. The community development strategy and business criteria will also need to be updated as needs and conditions change in the community. Finally, such a committee can continue the work of the ROADMAP Steering Team to ensure that there is a high level of community participation in achieving the vision for Madison Street.

Employ More Neighborhood Residents

Local employment helps businesses and the community grow together. Businesses should be educated about how to recruit local job applicants. The Chambers of Commerce, local churches and job training centers can help businesses to find neighborhood employees and contractors.

Key Ideas:

1. Continuous community involvement in the development process
2. Build an organization for positive change
3. Ensure community benefits from future development

Figure 41 Potential Organizational Structure for a Development Committee
Planning Recommendation 4

Create space and a path for new businesses to grow in East Garfield Park

Open Market - Temporary Space
There are many home-based and part time businesses in East Garfield Park. A gathering area will give these informal businesses a more formal space to find customers. Vacant parcels can be converted to a seasonal open air market can provide a way to add vitality and new shopping opportunities to Madison Street.

Open Market - Permanent Space
Permanent structures for seasonal retailers (like the Garfield Market Place at the Conservatory) can draw more customers and a more stable presence in the community. By linking these spaces into support systems and opportunities to move into permanent spaces, a permanent market space can become part of a growth plan for a seasonal business owner.
Retail in “incubator” spaces
When business owners are ready to operate a full-time, year-round store, they may open in an “incubator” space near Madison Street where rent is less expensive. Partnerships to renovate older storefront spaces can help lower the cost for independent retailers to open a store. Local organizations can offer business support and development services, like software training and business plan writing, to help these businesses become established.

Relocate Retail to Madison
Businesses that are successful in an incubator space can “move up” to a space on Madison Street. The rents may be higher, but there is better visibility and more customers. Madison Street can achieve a greater level of positive activity by having clusters of successful businesses grouped together. Local organizations can help good, positive businesses to find suitable spaces on Madison Street so that locally owned businesses and the Madison Street district can both enjoy greater prosperity.
Key Ideas:

1. Set a specific menu of improvements so new developments achieve a coordinated style
2. Improve public areas to enhance the district's image

Improving Streetscapes in East Garfield Park

Improving the public areas along Madison Street in East Garfield Park can help create an inviting and successful shopping district.

Successful neighborhood shopping districts in Chicago usually have a well defined streetscape that creates an environment in which businesses and their customers can be comfortable. Madison Street should have a strong identity as the shopping district of East Garfield Park. A consistent and continuous streetscape design will unify the district, add to its unique character, and encourage shoppers to come to Madison Street.

Tier Program

Proposed improvements for the Madison Street streetscape have been divided into three levels or tiers based on existing City ordinances, funding options, and City programs. Tier 1 includes the improvements required by the City of Chicago. Tier 2 includes improvements that the Chambers of Commerce, Community Development Committee, or some combination of such organizations, may request from a developer through negotiation. Tier 3 consists of the improvements that can be requested from the City of Chicago.

Tier One: Required Improvements

The City of Chicago requires developers to include some streetscape improvements as part of their construction plan. Because developments along Madison Street will occur individually over some period of time there needs to be a plan in order to achieve a consistent and continuous streetscape. Each new development should adhere to a set of guidelines to contribute to the overall identity of Madison Street. These design guidelines can be developed by the Madison Street Development Committee or another organization. This program should identify a set of species of trees, shrubs and other plants that will thrive on Madison Street and enhance the appearance of the corridor. Also, there should be guidelines for the styles for required parkway planters and fencing (Figures 47 and 48). These guidelines can ensure that Madison Street develops into an inviting and attractive retail district.

Tier Two: Optional Improvements to be negotiated with each developer

These streetscape improvements are not required by the City but may be negotiated or required for certain developments. Tree grates, raised planter railings, and electrical outlets would enhance the “main street” shopping appeal of the Madison Street shopping district. Figures 46, 49, and 50 show the types of improvements that can be incorporated into development negotiations.

Tier Three: Improvements that can be requested from the City

The City of Chicago can provide other streetscape improvements. The community, Alderman, and other city organizations must all be involved in developing the program of improvements. Included in these streetscape improvements are pedestrian lighting (Figure 45), curb extensions (Figure 51), new benches, bus stops and trash cans, as well as community identifiers (Figure 52).
Figure 45 Streetlight Types, vehicle oriented (background) and pedestrian oriented (foreground) (Tier 3)

Figure 46 Stamped/Colored Concrete (Tier 2)

Figure 47 Raised Parkway Planter (Tier 1)

Figure 48 Ornamental Metal Fence (Tier 1)

Figure 49 Raised Planter Railing (Tier 2)

Figure 50 Example of Tree Grate Styles (Tier 2)

Figure 51 Curb Extension (Tier 3)

Figure 52 Community Identifier Examples (Tier 3)
Next Steps

East Garfield Park and the Madison Street shopping district are experiencing a great deal of change. The organizations in East Garfield Park have a challenging task of steering new investment in the community towards a better quality of life for the whole neighborhood. These organizations also face the challenge of meeting community needs and supporting local economic opportunity. The *East Garfield Park Quality and Opportunity Plan* will be a useful tool to succeed in these challenges.

The ROADMAP planning process represented a successful approach to improving Madison Street. It will be important to continue to incorporate the input and wishes of the East Garfield Park community. Partnerships and collaboration between community organizations, the public sector and private businesses should be maintained. And there should continue to be leadership from a strong and committed group of community representatives to tackle the challenges to revitalizing Madison Street.

The business development efforts in the community need to strike a balance between attracting major, high-quality retailers; promoting small business; and assisting entrepreneurs. A balanced approach can help provide both a quality shopping district and equitable economic opportunities.

Finally, catalyst projects, special events and public space improvements can help make Madison Street an inviting place for shoppers and businesses once again.