Chicago has a centralized transit system, combined with a more two-dimensional road structure. Cabrini-Green is located just north of downtown, and is intersected by most transit and road structures that run northwards. It is close to downtown, and has a lot of potential connections.

The site is situated north of downtown. Many transit connections northwards intersect the area, from west to east the Blue, Metra, Red and Purple lines. However, the site does not have transit stops. The potential is there, the connections are not.

The urban structure of Chicago is not strictly two-dimensional. It is affected by geological context. While the Loop runs in two dimensions, most of the area north of the Loop runs parallel to the river (River North) or to the lakeshore. These two systems meet with diagonal roads at our site, resulting in an interesting structure.

Cabrini Green consists of three parts: to the south are the Cabrini homes, low-rise houses Stalinist style. North of those, mid-rises were built, following the Modern principles of towers in floating space. This tradition reached an extreme at the northwestern edge, with high-rises built in superblocks.

Currently the Cabrini Green site is disconnected to the urban fabric and life of Chicago. Not only physically, but also socially, environmentally and economically.

Our goal is to reconnect the site to the rest of Chicago. Make new physical connections through transit oriented design, providing livable communities, exciting destinations, jobs, while enhancing the environment.
REUSE THE GRID: SPATIAL HIERARCHY

The current broken grid is restored and reused to create a new spatial hierarchy. Several spatial types are introduced, each with their own characteristics.

CONCEPT DIAGRAM

This main diagram shows the overall concept for the area. The current grid is transformed to create a spatial hierarchy, with red community boulevards and black high-speed roads connecting the area with the greater city. Four main transit stops form new centers in the area, with high densities surrounding them. Within the area, the new spatial hierarchy also forms new public spaces, such as parks, malls, plazas, and squares. Each of these public spaces is connected to civic buildings, around which communities are grouped. The greenway runs parallel to the river, forming a large north-south corridor through the area.

LAND USE PLAN

The land use of the site closely relates to transit-oriented design. Two new transit stops are proposed. Along these stops offices are created, to increase the use of the stop, and the ridership of the transit line. In the direct vicinity of these stops and along the main community boulevards, retail corridors are created, mixed with residential and office functions.

Reese Island will be focused on a mix of offices and industrial and entertainment functions, stocked with multiple space usage as a main concept. An office corridor will also be created along I-90.

CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

The half mile grid forms the base of the road circulation system. Added to this grid is the reconstructed Ogden Avenue, a major road from the southeast to the northwest. This road originates from the 1930s, but was demolished during the 1970s. The reconstruction will not alter highway intersections. Transit is an important aspect in the circulation system. The main transit stops are shown, including their walkable quarter-mile radius. Since most of the density is concentrated around the transit stops, most of the parking structures will be grouped in the station areas.
RECONNECTIONS
SOCIAL  |  PHYSICAL  |  ECONOMICAL  |  ECOLOGICAL

MUD FALL 05 CHICAGO
On the western edge of the project area, a small neighborhood is situated between the Chicago River, a railroad, and I-90. The spire of the St. John Cantius church tower above the mainly low-rise residential/industrial area. Both the Metro line and the Blue Line will have a stop in the area, making it very well connected to both the city and the greater region, creating Metropolis. The urban structures that cut through the area can be seen as assets for the area, that need uncovering. The different systems that form Metropolis each relate to each other. The speed relates to the building height, and the architectural expression of the proposed buildings. The new station area will be an example for the further development of Metropolis. Guidelines have been developed to encourage development while protecting the current identity of the site. The new area will have a new Metro station, a reconstructed Blue Line station that will show O’Hare airport visitors a glimpse of the area, and an improved Riverfront, accessible to the public. The down-to-earth industrial atmosphere will be maintained through the use of preservation districts.

For the guidelines, the station area is chosen as an example for the further development of the area. The main goal is to encourage development while maintaining the current identity of the area.

The blocks are based on the Chicago grid. All buildings, except the elevated Metro line, are to be built within the block.

The parcel plan shows parcelation, with the church and the Metro operator as the main landowners in the area.

These two owners also have the most easements on their properties. Most of the parks are easements on church and Metro property. The community boulevard runs mainly on easements.

These parks are shown on the landscape plan, with trees along the main roads, and in the middle of the block. The main parks are in the middle of the block.

The vehicular circulation follows a different pattern from the pedestrian and bike circulation. The latter can use the easements in the middle of the block.

The land use of the site concentrates offices around the station, with residential functions to the west. The site contains several institutional buildings.

The bulk control restricts the building height to the church tower. Most buildings cannot be constructed higher than 6 floors.

The architectural expression in the site is controlled by the presence of the public space. High-speed commuter roads and rails will have a higher speed than public squares and parks. The higher the speed, the more horizontal the expression of the building will be. There will be no grading requirements above the first floor. A ground floor needs 70% glazing.
why halsted?
The linear spine cutting Chicago into east and west connects existing and proposed assets better than any linear spine running N-S or E-W.

It strings the assets along the spine to provide a coherent structure giving identity and imagery to the city and create a place where today only an island exists.
The spine fosters permanent and temporal spaces making it more pedestrian and bike-friendly.
It's a connecting tissue of disconnected uses and create a vibrancy and dissipation of their energies - reconnections.

concept diagram

‘the goal is to reinforce the island and thereby the city fabric with diverse multiple space use programs’
The Cabrini-Green area lies directly north of downtown Chicago. Most of the land in the area is owned by the Chicago Housing Authority, an agency overseen by the federal government. The CHA provides public housing in the greater Chicago region, and is working hard to improve its tarnished image. This image is caused by the failure of Modern housing projects, and Cabrini Green is an interesting example of this effect.

The housing project started on the south side of our site, with low-rise housing, mainly built for returning war veterans. The Steeling model was followed, relying on the new principles of light and air, a great improvement over the blighted area that was then called "Little Hell." In the 1940s, the low-rise buildings got an extension in the form of mid-rise buildings, placed in larger blocks. The former Chicago grid was cut up into superblocks. Buildings were razed and replaced with symbols of Modern utopia. This model reached an extreme at the northern edge of the area, where high-rise buildings were built into even larger blocks. The ratio between footprint and plot size drastically changed, from the beginning of the construction onwards.

Aside from the abundant social problems, the area also experiences massive physical deterioration. Both the buildings and the public space are in poor shape. Interestingly enough, the low-rise buildings are in the best shape, followed by the mid-rises, with the newest high-rises being in the worst condition. Concrete pouring errors render them useless for renovation.

Currently, the surrounding areas are experiencing rapid gentrification, with land prices soaring, creating a significant affordable housing gap. The eyes of developers are slowly turning towards the Cabrini-Green area, as Hope VI projects slowly encroach into the Modern diagram. Unfortunately, one design diagram is replaced by another, both neglecting the surrounding built context. As the High-rises slowly replace a dense urban neighborhood in the postwar era, the new suburbanism slowly devours an already unstable community. New suburban housing types are situated next to old high-rise structures, each living in a separate world. Further urban design and community ambitions need to be raised.

The main goal of our team involves reconnecting the site to the rest of the city, not only through the use of physical connections, but also through vital social, environmental, and economical connections. The design re-locates the broken grid to a great extent, providing for a spatial hierarchy, and linking the neighborhood to the rest of the grid. The site is extended to the west, integrating an industrial corridor and a current vibrant community. The site is grouped around transit stations, some of which are newly created.
**Regional Phasing (Chicago Plan 2020)**

**2020 Build Out Overview**

- North Oakville Neighborhood: 32.1 acres
- South Oakville Neighborhood: 12.5 acres
- Goose Island Innovation Zone: 1.4 acres
- Total Acreage: 36.6 acres

The site is currently zoned for light industrial, commercial, and residential uses.

**Financial Incentives**

A strategic alliance between the private and public sector will be needed to redevelop this area. The City of Chicago is a major financial stakeholder, and the public funding sources are the TIF financing initiatives, HUD, and the Brownfield Economic Redevelopment Incentives. Since most of the developments on the site are income-generating uses, it is in the city’s interest to invest in infrastructure and invite developers to participate in the development.

In order to fund initiatives, it needs to leverage the city’s ownership of a large portion of the site. Developers would be able to acquire parcels at a reduced cost, closing the gap towards profitability, and the city would begin to collect funds towards building the new infrastructure. Typically, the city can convey land to private developers, lease it for long-term periods, or other financial terms, to capitalize on the profits for funding and maintaining affordable housing, parks and preserves, and industries. For the most part, the development and construction costs can be recouped through the high-income-generating uses in Goose Island, near the Metra Station and Division Boulevard in relatively few years. However, the income generated to subsidize the rest of the development may suffer some gaps based on market conditions either by GAP financing or temporarily reducing taxes.

**Density Bonuses**

The developer is offered an opportunity to create a user-friendly environment by providing public amenities in exchange for higher density through FAR. The section below shows the difference between the as-of-right densities and the allowed densities after these kind of negotiations have been made with the city. All these bonuses fall within shadow requirements. Of course, most of the density will be concentrated around the transit stations.

In conclusion, our goal is to reconnect Cabrini-Green and Goose Island with the city of Chicago. Currently, they remain as isolated under-utilized islands within the Midwest’s prominent economic and cultural city. The master plan area encompasses one square mile located two miles from the center of Chicago’s downtown Loop district. A reconnection will occur broadly, with social, ecological, physical, and economic improvements.

**Implementation**

**Goose Island Metra Center**

**Goose Island Innovation Zone**

**South Oakville**

**North Oakville**

**As-of-Right - Diagonal Section of the Entire Site**

**Maximum Development with Incentives - Diagonal Section of the Entire Site**