CHICAGO PROMENADE PLAN
OPENING THE CITY’S STREETS TO ITS PEOPLE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
We are living in unprecedented times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered our daily lives in many ways: how we socialize with one another, how we procure our food, and even how much time we spend outside of our own homes. Many of us are working from home, only leaving the house for essential tasks and to spend a bit of outdoor time on solitary walks around the neighborhood. With warmer weather approaching, Chicago residents need viable options for getting out of their homes and stretching their legs.

This new way of living requires creative solutions to new challenges.

Innovative design must be able to adapt to new circumstances and needs in order to serve the public effectively.

Major cities like New York, San Francisco, Oakland, San Diego, and Minneapolis are piloting programs to convert streets to pedestrian walkways in order to ease the pressures of outdoor crowding and closed green spaces. Like those other cities, Chicago finds itself in uncharted territory.

This booklet aims to provide general guidelines for Chicago to temporarily convert neighborhood streets to public promenades. Read on to learn more about this idea >>>>
How do we do this, Chicago? How do we make more space for our neighbors and ourselves throughout the city? Let’s start by taking a look at the numbers...
Hey Chicago! Since COVID-19 began...

We’ve decreased total vehicle miles by 75%*

Meanwhile, we have increased the distance between humans due to CDC’s recommendations of at least 6’

However, it is still important (physically and mentally) to exercise, get fresh air, experience nature, and to safely interact with others.

*Data from INRIX as of April 26th, 2020
WE ARE LARGE
- Chicago City proper covers 234 square miles
- 2.7 million* people live within the city limits
- More than half of the state’s population lives in the greater Chicagoland area

WE LOVE OUR OUTDOOR SPACES
- 12,917 acres of parkland split between 570 parks throughout the city
- 24 public beaches across 26 miles of lakefront
- 18.5 miles of dedicated lakefront walking and riding path, stretching south to north
- 2.6 mile multi-use path, The 606
- Over 200 miles of dedicated bike lanes throughout the city
TYPICAL HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL BLOCK

- Characteristics: dense multi-family high rise residential buildings, 20-40 unit mid-rise / vintage residential buildings
- Average estimated occupancy: 1,050 people per block
- Available Public Open Space (Sidewalks): 6,600sf per block
- Minimum Required SF per person w/ 6' dia. Safe Zone: 28sf / person
- Maximum outdoor occupancy (6600sf /28sf per person): 236 people

Maximum percent of block occupants allowed outside while still practicing social distancing: **23%**
TYPICAL CITY RESIDENTIAL BLOCK

- Characteristics: denser multi-family residential buildings on street ends, single-family homes, 2-6 flats
- Average estimated occupancy: 400 people per block
- Available Public Open Space (Sidewalks): 7,920sf per block
- Minimum Required SF per person w/ 6' dia. Safe Zone: 28sf / person
- Maximum outdoor occupancy (7,920sf /28sf per person): 283 people

Maximum percent of block occupants allowed outside while still practicing social distancing: 71%
HOW DO WE DO IT?

Is there a repeatable process for creating temporary promenades throughout the city? Can this work everywhere? Here are some guidelines...
DESIGN CRITERIA

NOT ON COMMERCIAL STREET
essential locations are still accessible
restaurants still reachable for take-out

MINIMUM OF 4 BLOCK SPAN
creates a desirable trail and
encourages people to move through rather
than creating a destination or hub

NOT ALONG A BUS ROUTE
public transit still getting
essential workers to their destination

EQUALLY DESIRABLE AESTHETICALLY
each path shall meander through
tree-lined streets and there is no path
that is more interesting than the other

POLICE AND FIRE STILL ABLE TO ACCESS
temporary road blocks or barriers will
spare room on either side for emergency
crews to pass through if needed

CONNECT HIGH DENSITY TO LOW DENSITY
creates a safer path as more dispersal is achieved

IT’S A TRAIL. NOT A HUB
streets encourage movement
group mind - if individuals see others
around them moving, they will too

DELIVERY TO RESIDENTS
thru-traffic is prohibited but
essential deliveries and local residents
will still be allowed

LOCALLY-DRIVEN
community members shall provide input
and influence on the design as they are
the end users and know the area best

COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY
users should respect the trail
and each other and will be more likely
to as there are eyes on the street
PROPOSED HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL BLOCK

- Characteristics: dense multi-family high rise residential buildings, 20-40 unit mid-rise / vintage residential buildings
- Average estimated occupancy: 1,050 people per block
- Available Public Open Space (Sidewalks + Street): 6,600sf + 9,900sf = 16,500sf per block
- Minimum Required SF per person w/ 6’ dia. Safe Zone: 28sf / person
- Maximum outdoor occupancy (6600sf /28sf per person): 236 people

Maximum percent of block occupants allowed outside while still practicing social distancing: 56%
PROPOSED CITY RESIDENTIAL BLOCK

- Characteristics: denser multi-family residential buildings on street ends, single-family homes, 2-6 flats
- Average estimated occupancy: 400 people per block
- Available Public Open Space (Sidewalks + Street): 7,920sf + 13,200sf = 21,120 sf per block
- Minimum Required sf per person w/ 6’ dia. Safe Zone: 28sf / person
- Maximum outdoor occupancy (21,120sf /28sf per person): 754 people

Maximum percent of block occupants allowed outside while still practicing social distancing: 100% + space for almost double the current existing occupancy
LESS POPULATION DENSITY

BY CREATING TRAILS BETWEEN HIGH DENSITY AND LOW DENSITY AREAS, WE CAN DISPERSE PEOPLE, PROVIDING A SAFER ENVIRONMENT
WHAT IS THE VALUE?

There is no doubt that we all need fresh air from time to time, and the quarantine is testing our ability to get outside. What is the upside of instituting this program? Let’s take a look...
THE BENEFITS

SAFE PHYSICAL EXERCISE
it is important to find safe ways to exercise during a time where gyms, facilities, and most sports are not safe options

SAFE HUMAN INTERACTION
humans are social beings and are wired to connect with one another and it is important to provide safe means to do so

MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS
providing safe ways to exercise, socially interact, and spending time in sunlight is paramount to our mental health

INCREASED HAPPINESS
the higher your vitamin D levels, the more likely you are to feel happy

SAFE PATHS TO ESSENTIAL DESTINATIONS
slowing streets would allow for safer travels to and from essential locations

HEALTHIER CHICAGO
giving Chicagoans adequate space to disperse will decrease close contact with one another resulting in a lesser risk of transmittal
This set of guidelines for opening up portions of the city’s streets was created by Hammersley Architecture, an architecture and urban design studio located in Chicago, IL. Our goal with this booklet is to show how we as a larger community can open up our existing resources to offer relief to all of its inhabitants throughout the city. Neighborhood by neighborhood, these part-time promenades could be configured with guidance and input from neighborhood groups, local alderman, and City of Chicago government. If you like this idea, reach out to neighbors, social media, local newspapers, your alderman, the Mayor... unprecedented times demand bold designs!

We would love to hear from you - please visit us at www.hammersleyarchitecture.com or write us at info@hammersleyarchitecture.com to share your thoughts and ideas about this proposal.
DATA / REFERENCES / LINKS

Typical Block Data [source: Hammersley Architecture]

Typical City Residential Block
Characteristics: denser multi-family residential buildings on street ends, single-family homes, 2-6 flats
Occupancy: 160-180 people per block side, 350-400 people per block
Available Open Space, including street and sidewalks: 21,120sf
   - 13,200sf per block of open road using 660’ L x 18’ W
   - 7,920sf per block of available sidewalk, both sides of street; 6’W sidewalk x 660’L street (x2)
Minimum Required SF per person w/ 6’ dia. Safe Zone: 28sf / person
Maximum Occupancy, Outdoor Space of Typical Residential Block: 754 Occupants
Actual SF/person For Typical Residential Block: 53sf / person

Maximum Occupancy, Outdoor Space of Typical High-Density Residential Block: 589 Occupants
Actual SF/person For Typical Residential Block: 16sf / person

Chicago Population (source: US Census Bureau) : 2.7 Million as per 2018 census

Chicago Parkland Information (sources: Chicago Park District, The Trust For Public Land- tpl.org)
Total Parkland Acreage within Chicago City Limits: 12,917 acres
   - Chicago Park District 8,773 acres
   - Forest Preserve District of Cook County (w/in Chicago) 3,089 acres
   - Illinois Department of Natural Resources (w/in Chicago) 613 acres
   - Illinois International Port District (w/in Chicago) 442 acres
- 24 public beaches across 26 miles of lakefront
- 18.5 miles of dedicated lakefront walking & riding path, stretching south to north
- 2.6 mile multi-use path, The 606

Chicago Bike Lanes (source: Chicago Department of Transportation)
- Over 200 miles of dedicated & demarcated bike lanes throughout the city

ACTIVE TRANSIT CHICAGO  INRIX

STREETS BLOG CHICAGO  FRANK KRYZAK - DENSITY MAP