

Chicago River Design Guidelines

City of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development

River Implementation Committee
Updated Draft November 13, 2018

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Project Background

Purpose

Building off of the River Edge Ideas Lab and previous plans and guidelines, the Chicago River Guidelines will outline the guidelines for development in and adjacent to the setback area along the Chicago River and its branches within the city limits.

- The Chicago River has a major role in the City's economic success.
- Recent land use shifts from primarily industrial to mixed uses and recreational activities.

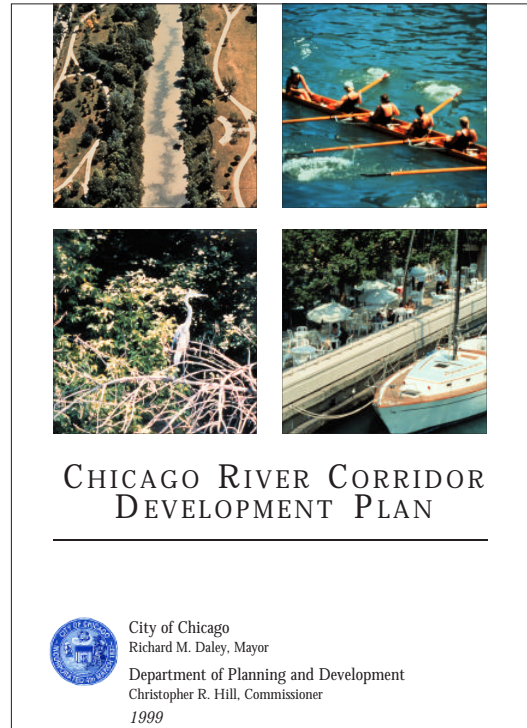
Chicago River: 26 miles

Existing Chicago Riverwalk: approx. 15 miles

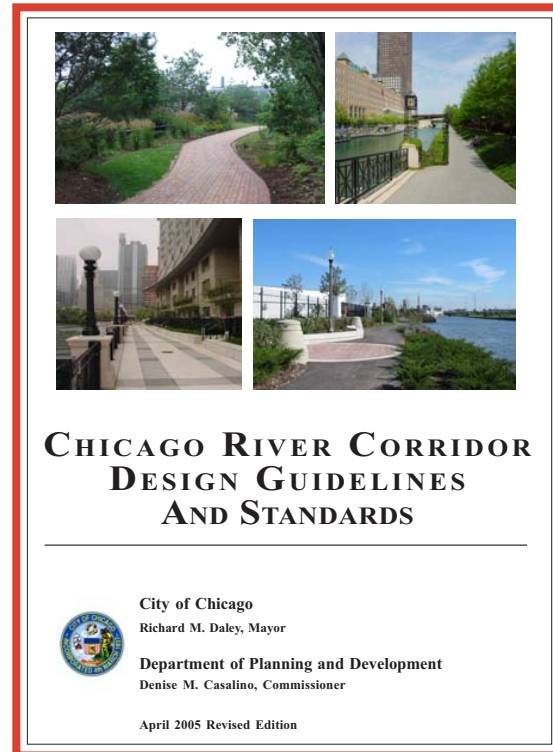


Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Previous Plans and Guidelines



Chicago River Corridor
Development Plan
1999



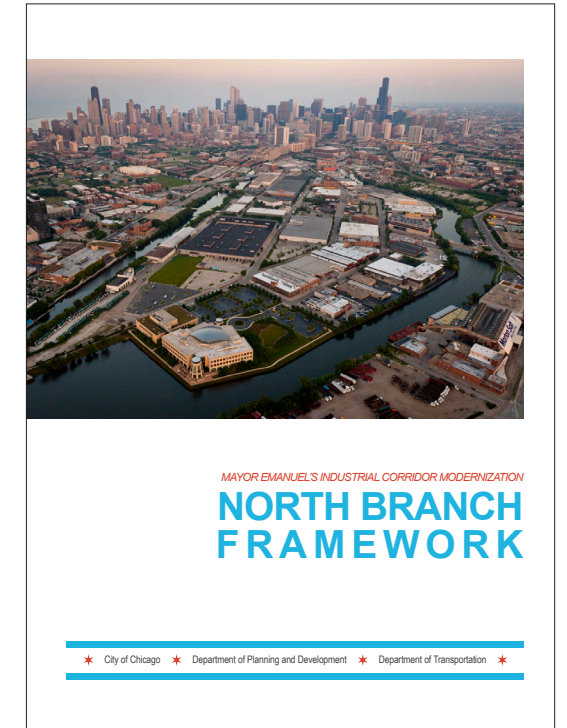
Chicago River Corridor
Design Guidelines and
Standards
2005



Chicago Riverwalk Main
Branch Framework Plan
2009



Our Great Rivers
2016



North Branch Framework
Plan and Design
Guidelines
2017

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Proposed Riverfront Projects

Public



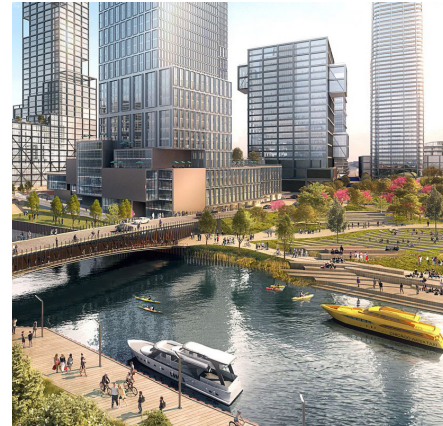
**2FM Chicago
Riverwalk East**



312 River Run

- CDOT South Branch Implementation Plan (Lake to Ping Tom Memorial Park)
- Throop Street Park
- Wild Mile and Turning Basin

Private



Lincoln Yards:
riverfront 2,500 LF &
2,700 LF

- Greyhound site
- Morton Salt site



The 78: riverfront
2,500 LF



**The River District
at 777 W Chicago:**
riverfront 2,100 LF

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Where are we in the process?



Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Community Feedback Process

A robust, multi-part public engagement process is ongoing in an effort to include as many voices as possible, and includes:

River Edge Ideas Lab / Sept 2017-Jan 2018

- Public Exhibit/Gallery (11,500 visitors)
- Weekly Gallery Talks
- Exhibit Tours
- Traveling Exhibit (24,000 visitors)
- Multi-Media Website/Video
- Online Survey/Written Feedback (500 respondents)
- Public Panel Discussion

CDOT South Branch Implementation Plan / ongoing

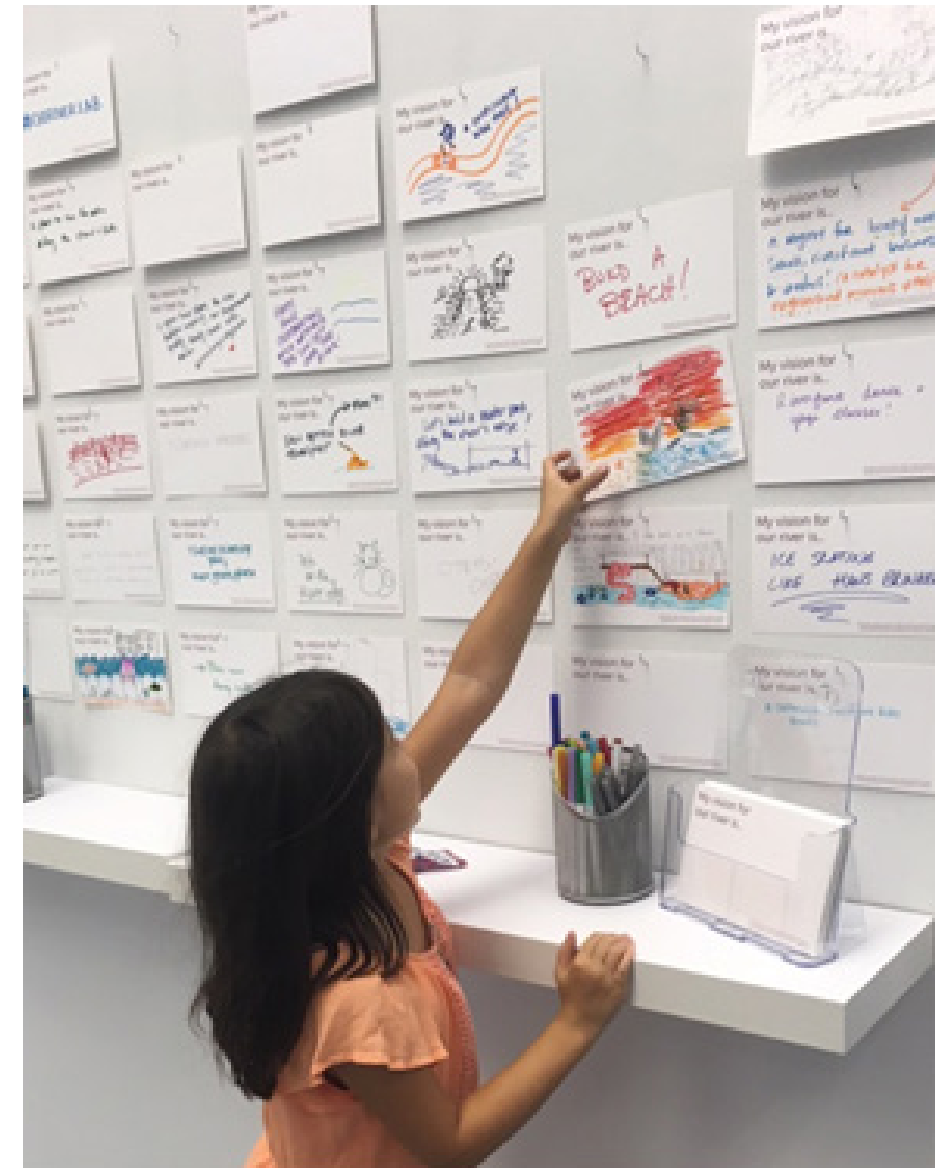
- Stakeholder Interviews

Great Rivers Chicago / 2016

- Group Interviews
- Public Meetings/Activities
- Online Survey (3,800 respondents)

River Implementation Committee / ongoing

- Committee of community leaders, elected officials, business owners, residents, and key stakeholders to provide input and feedback.



Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Community Feedback Summary

Three key themes emerged across the various public participation opportunities:

NATURE: The river edge should have a natural aesthetic

RECREATION: Recreation and public access should be central to any design

CONNECTIVITY: Designs should be creative and unique, while utilizing consistent elements to unify the entire river edge



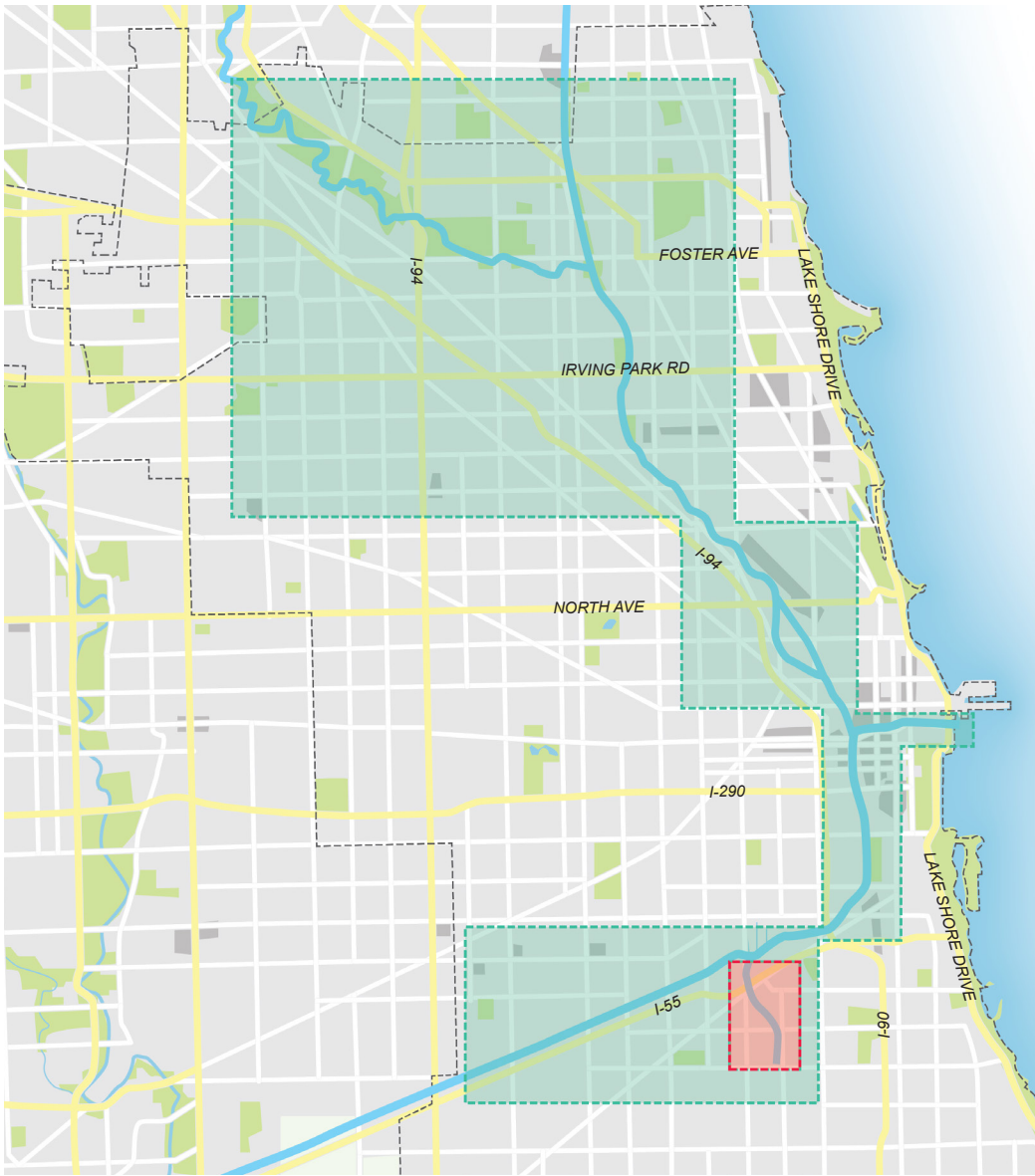
Chicago River Design Guidelines



Chicago River Guidelines

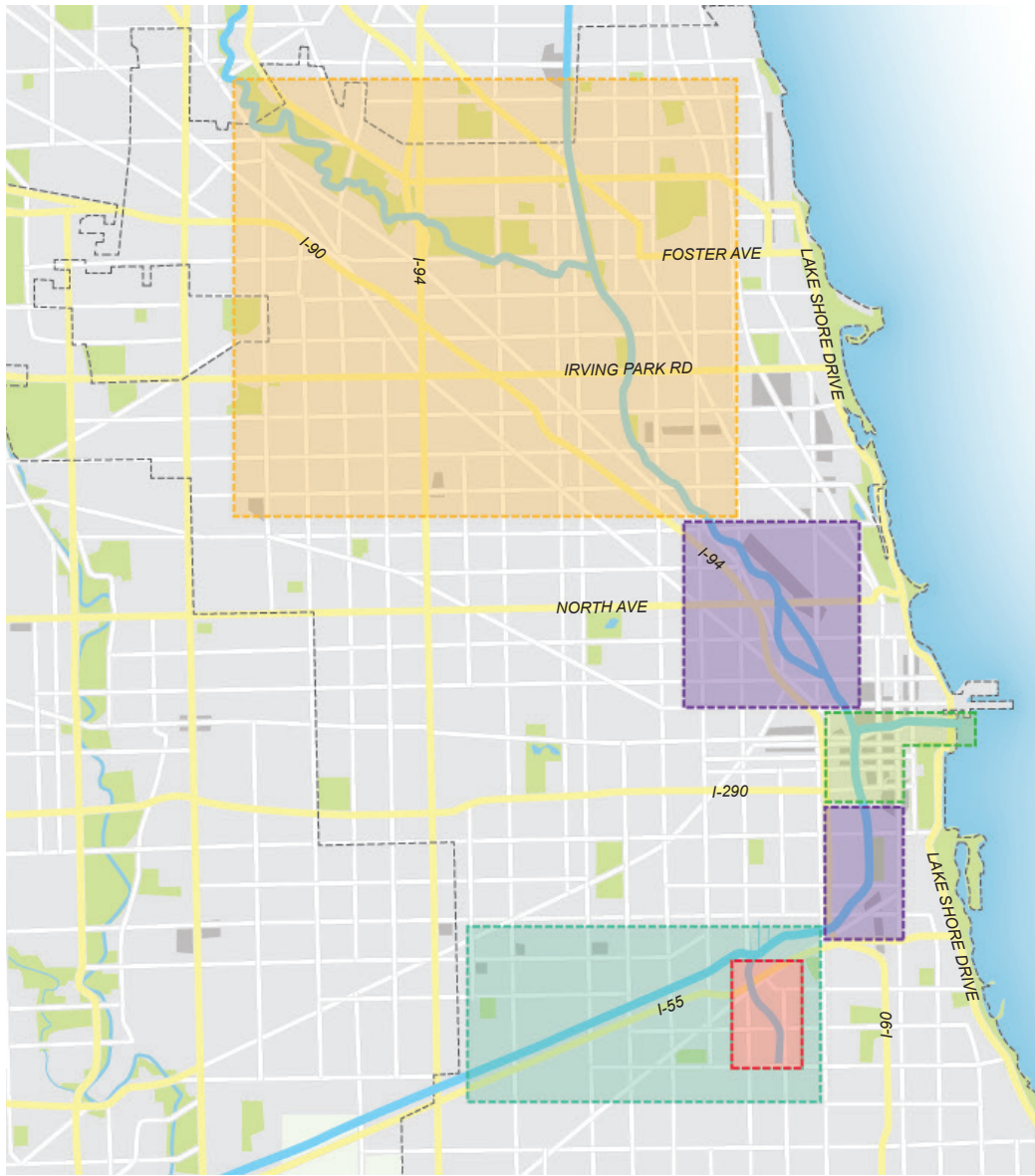
Areas Affected by the Design Guidelines and Standards

Existing Zones



- Chicago River
- Bubbly Creek

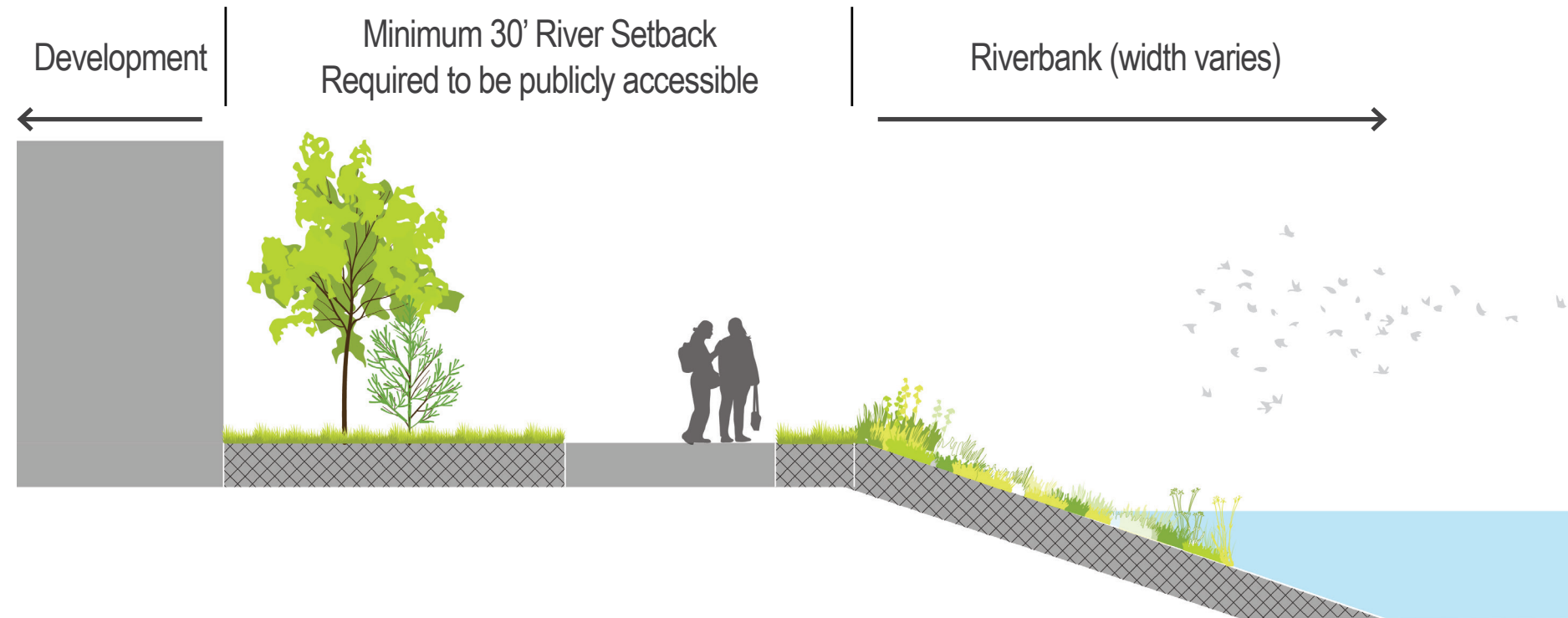
Proposed Zones



- Northwest Zone
(City limits to Fullerton)
- Southwest Zone
(City limits to Ping Tom Park)
- North Branch /
South Branch
(Fullerton to Grand)
(Harrison to Ping Tom Park)
- Loop Zone
(Between Harrison, Grand,
and Lake Michigan)
- Bubbly Creek Zone

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Minimum 30' Setback Requirement



2005 Tree Planting Requirements:

Fence: 4-6' ornamental metal fence required for vehicular use areas. 4' ornamental metal fence for non-vehicular areas

Tree: 2 per 25 linear feet of river frontage for vehicular use areas. 1 per 25 linear feet of river frontage for non-vehicular use areas. May be placed in natural layout.

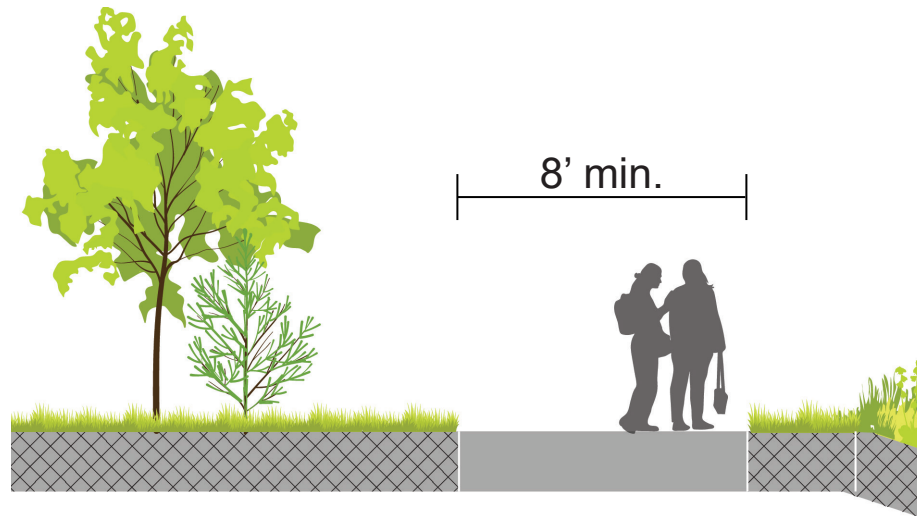
Hedge: Continuous hedge on river side of fence for vehicular use areas. Not required for non-vehicular use areas.

Foundation Plantings: Not applicable for vehicular use areas. Required for non-vehicular use areas.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Trail Paving & Width

2005 Guidelines



- Forest Preserve NB Trail: 10' + 2' shoulders
- Eugene Field and River Parks: 10'
- 312 River Run: 10' + 2' shoulders
- Main Branch Riverwalk: 10'
- Riverline: 10'
- The 606: 10' + 2' paved shoulders

Proposed place-specific trail width guidelines:

North Branch and South Branch zones:

Separated Trails: 12' bicycle, 8' pedestrian path

Combined Multi-Use Trail: 16' wide

Loop zone:

Combined Multi-Use Trail: 10' wide

Northwest and Southwest zones:

Combined Multi-Use Trail: 10' wide with 2' paved or gravel shoulders on each side

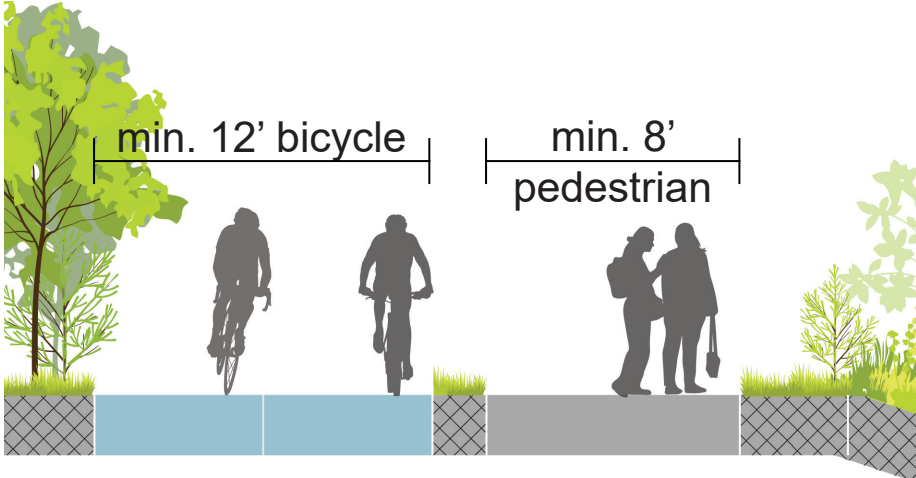
With a 30' setback, these path widths only allow a 10' or 14' strip for any additional amenities, such as plant communities. This is not particularly robust. A greater than 30' setback should be provided in areas as can be accommodated.

Does multi-use include bicyclists? If so, 10' seems narrow to allow for active, pedestrian use and riders. Should this be pedestrian only?

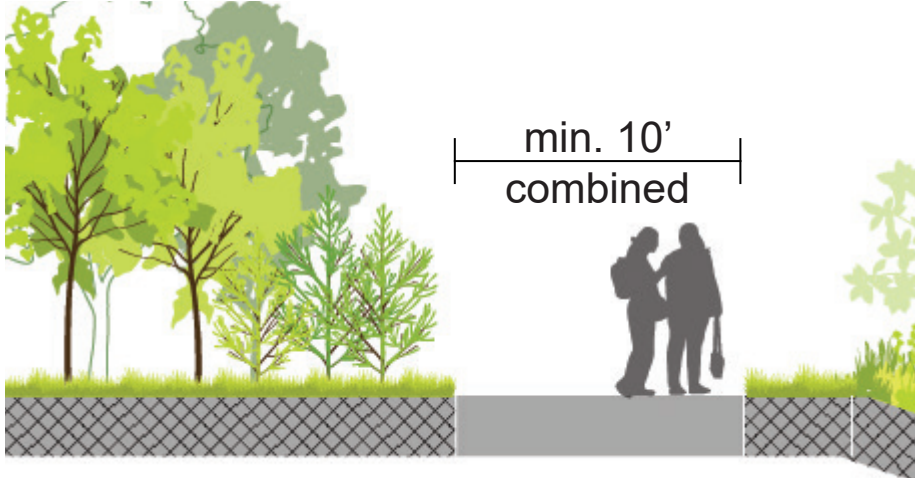
Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Minimum Trail Paving & Width

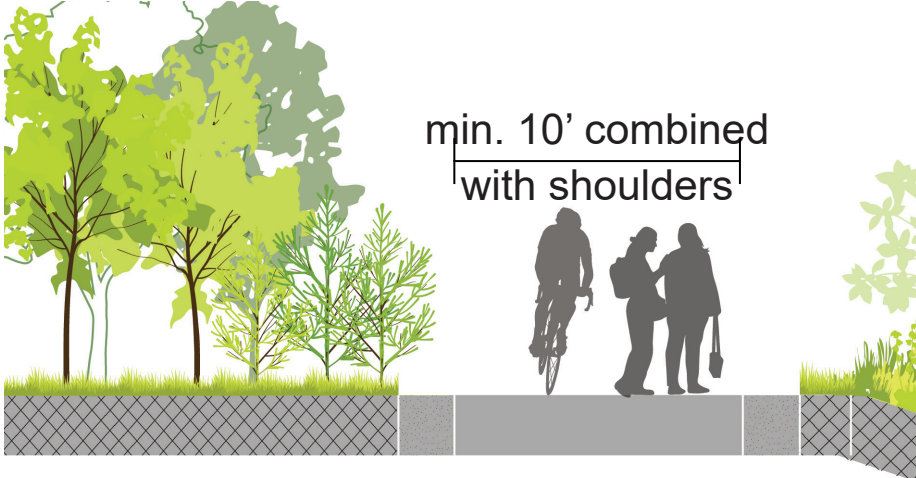
North Branch and South Branch Zones: Separated Trails



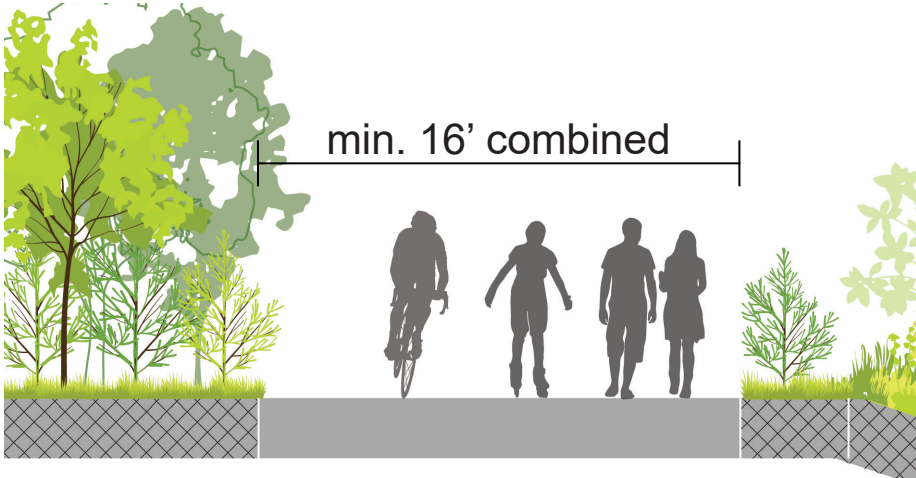
Loop Zone:



Northwest and Southwest Zones:



Combined Multi-use Trail



Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Materials

Paving and Masonry Materials:

- Granite, Architectural Granite, Concrete, Concrete Pavers, Unit Pavers, Permeable Paving / Pavers
- Neutral tones / colors

Metals:

- **Stainless Steel**, Cor-ten steel
- When necessary, powder-coated finishes to be neutral colors (e.g. gray tones or colors in related to innovative placemaking design).

Wood:

- Hardwoods, including but not limited to, teak, **ipe**, white oak, black locust, and thermally-modified ash.

Depending on amount used, stainless can be significantly more expensive. May make sense to include galvanized steel as an option as well from a cost perspective.

From a sustainability standpoint, may want to include that all woods should be responsibly sourced. Particularly important with ipe.

Additional materials for Northwest and Southwest Zones

Paving and Masonry Materials:

- Asphalt Pavement for primary riverwalk
- Decomposed aggregate for secondary trails and gathering spaces

Metals:

- Galvanized Steel or Powder Coated Steel in neutral colors (e.g. gray, black, or colors in related to innovative placemaking design)

Wood:

- Recycled plastic lumber in warm, wood-like tones is also allowed.

Does this material page also apply to site furnishings and general placemaking? There are a number of composite materials that can be used for furnishings that may not fit in with the current materials listed, but may be appropriate for the riverfront. May be helpful to have a disclaimer that notes that other materials may be appropriate and is dependent on review.



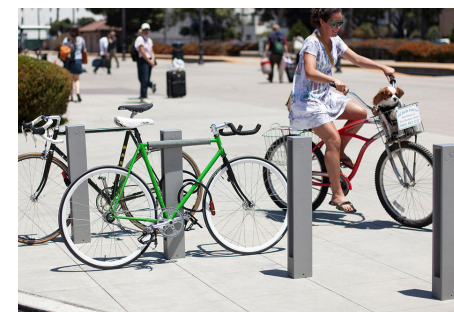
Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Site Furnishings

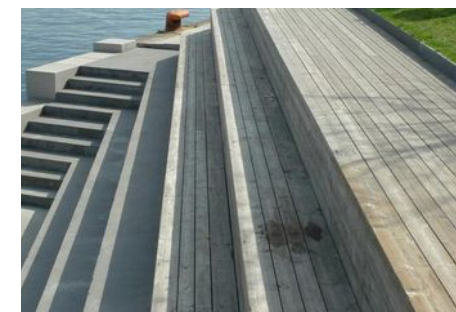
Design Best Practices

- Integrate seating with landscape design.
- Provide a variety of seating options. Consider a mix of fixed, movable, bench, table/chair, and platform seating.
- Provide opportunities for individual and group seating.
- Ensure the site furnishings palette is cohesive in material, color, and aesthetic.
- Consider ways to incorporate brand and identity elements into site furnishings.

Generally-acceptable furnishing options for all zones:



Additional acceptable furnishing options for Northwest and Southwest Zones:

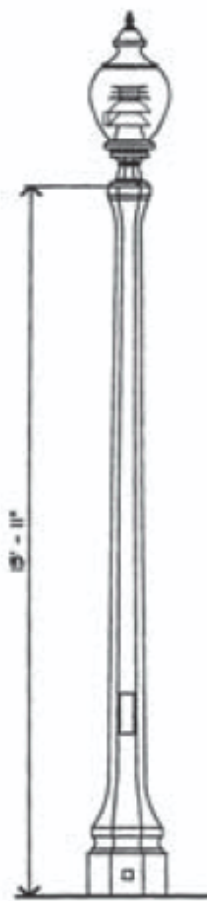


Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Lighting

Is more decorative lighting permitted throughout, for example bollard or step lighting?

Existing 2005 Guidelines



- Adequate lighting levels.
- Spaced no further than 100 feet apart.
- Fixture specified Hadco acorn fixture with precast concrete pole.

Updated Guidelines

- LED lighting, white in color, between 2800 and 3200 Kelvin
- Height: Recommended height between 20' and 30'.
- Luminaires should aim for dark-sky compliance, and be equipped with shields so that light does not shine into adjacent residential or institutional areas or negatively affect wildlife.
- Equipped with shields to minimize glare and avoid shining onto adjacent residential or institutional areas.
- Sleek, contemporary fixtures that pay careful attention to the site's context are encouraged.



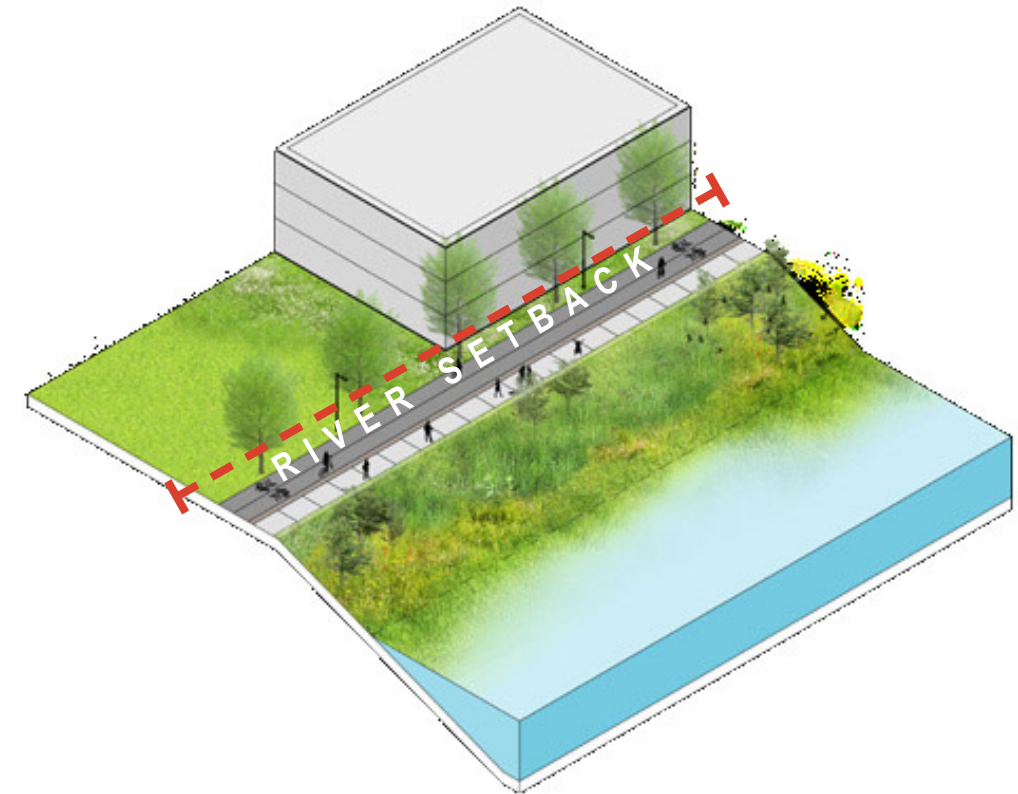
Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Development Design Guidelines

Are there any limits on building height or FAR along the riverfront?

1. Buildings and vehicular use areas are required to be located outside of the river setback.
2. Facades facing the river are to be designed as a primary facades.
3. Active public uses are encouraged at the first floor of buildings with direct access to the river and river trail.
4. Step-back massing of building frontages along river to create pedestrian friendly scale and increase sunlight access.
5. Buildings should be located to create placemaking opportunities along the river.
6. Screen upper-level parking, loading, mechanical equipment with appropriate architectural and landscape treatment.
7. Solar modeling of proposed development to assure sunlight access to river corridor (for approx 6 hours/day in non-winter months).
8. Incorporate bird-friendly design features.
9. Industrial storage to be located outside of the river setback.
10. Screen and buffer industrial uses with architectural treatment and/or landscaping.

#1 Buildings and vehicular use areas required to be located outside of river setback:

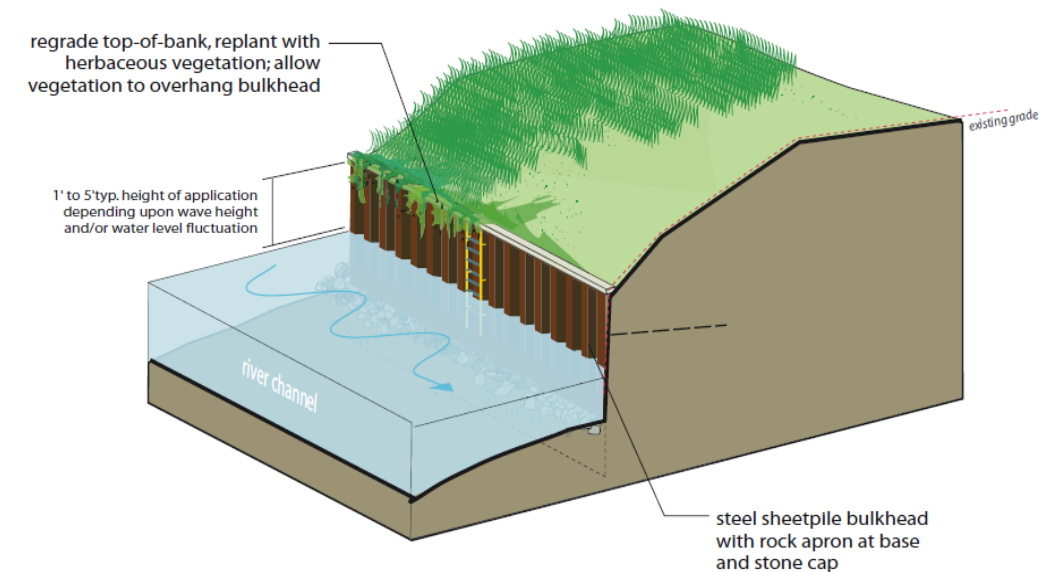
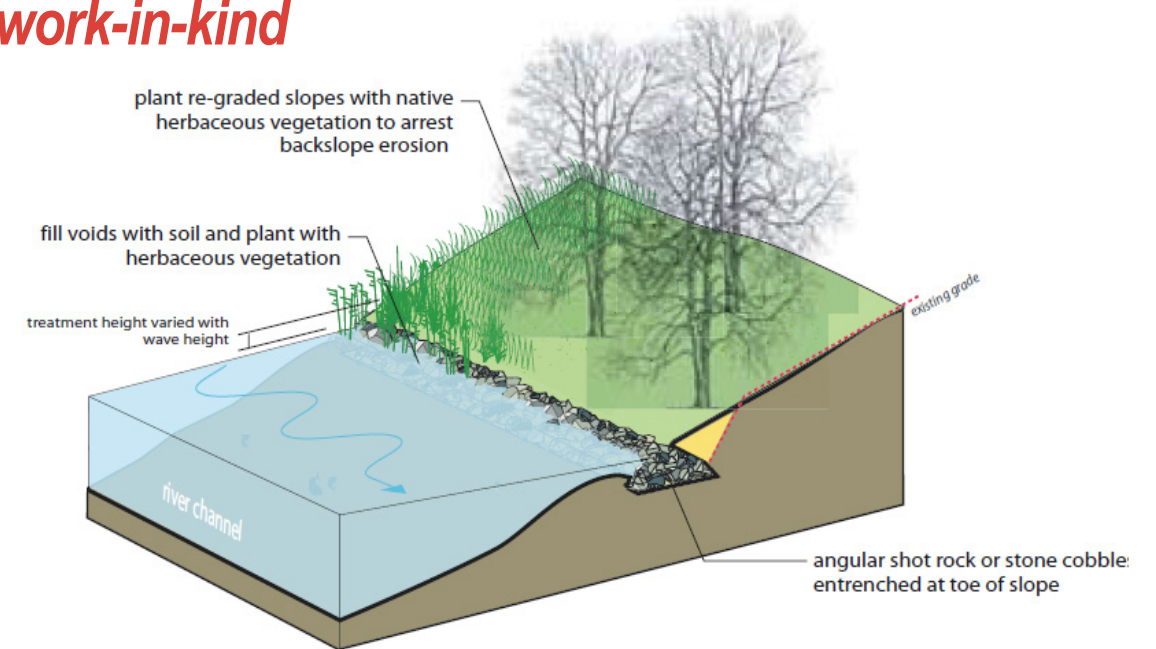


Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Anticipated Technical Updates with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work-in-kind

- Federal Navigation Channel Maps
- City of Chicago Harbor Permit Review
 - Regional Permit Process, Independent Permit Process
- City of Chicago Pollution of Waters Ordinance
- Riverbank Restoration Solutions, per the regional permit program
- Stormwater Best Management Practices, per the regional permit program

Is DPD defining maximum slope requirements for banks with help from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?



Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Menu of Unique Improvements






NATURE

-  Increased Setback
-  Large Riverfront Park
-  New Naturalized Shoreline
-  Robust Upland Habitats
-  Aquatic Wildlife Habitats
-  Innovative Stormwater Management







Is there a acreage or size requirement for what would count as a large riverfront park?

May be helpful to provide some examples of what Innovative Stormwater Management includes.

RECREATION

-  Access to Water & Docking Facilities
-  Expanded Seating Area(s)
-  Riverfront Overlook
-  Recreational Areas
-  Support Amenities, including Public Restroom(s)*

CONNECTIVITY

-  Under-bridge Riverwalk Connection
-  Connections to Street and Transportation Network
-  Elevator / Increased Accessibility
-  Cantilevered & Floating Walkway
-  Interpretive Signage
-  Public Art & Lighting

May want to separate out public art and lighting. Is lighting not a requirement?

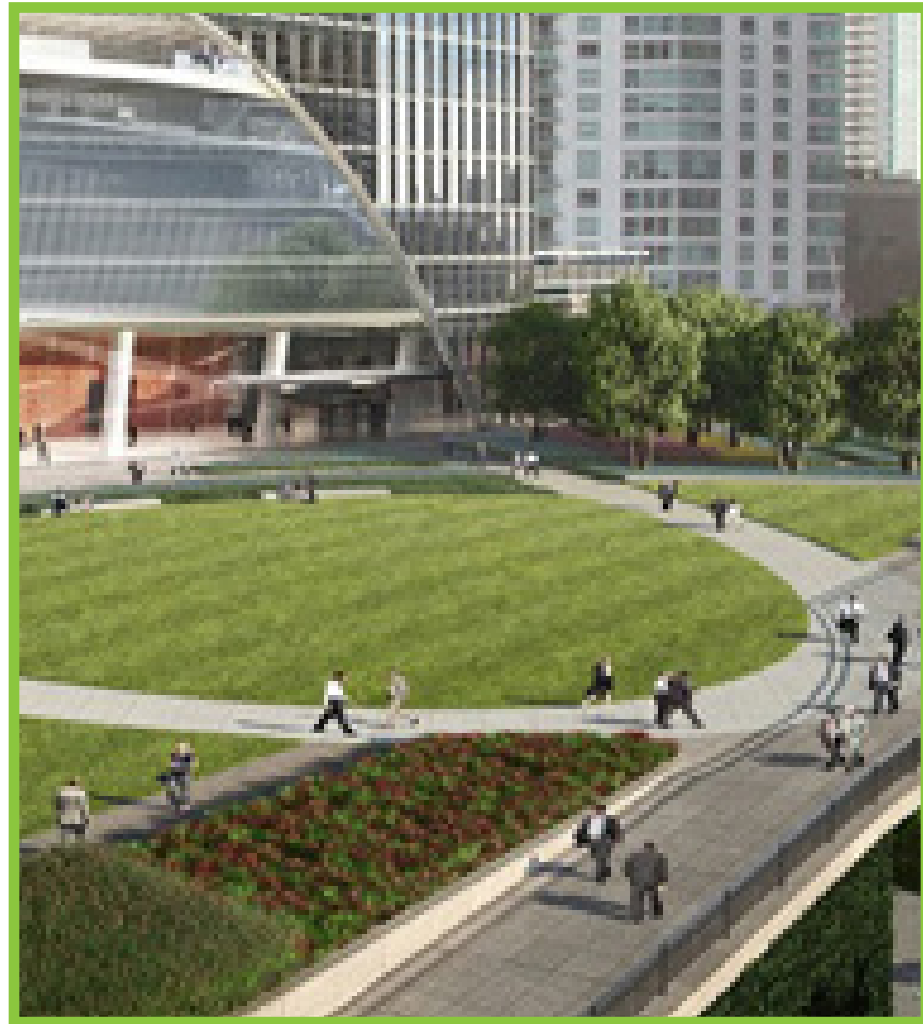
Consider adding an item for supportive infrastructure for multi-modal connectivity. An example would be bike racks.

- Select amenities should be agreed upon in consultation with DPD and the community.
- For Loop Zone projects, focus of menu items should be under connectivity theme.
- LARGE PD projects: >1,980 LF of riverwalk and min. 5 FAR or more to incorporate most of these menu items.
- MEDIUM PD projects: 660-1,980 LF of riverwalk and min. 3 FAR to incorporate 5-10 menu items
- OTHER PD projects to incorporate a minimum of 3 menu items
- Industrial land uses to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

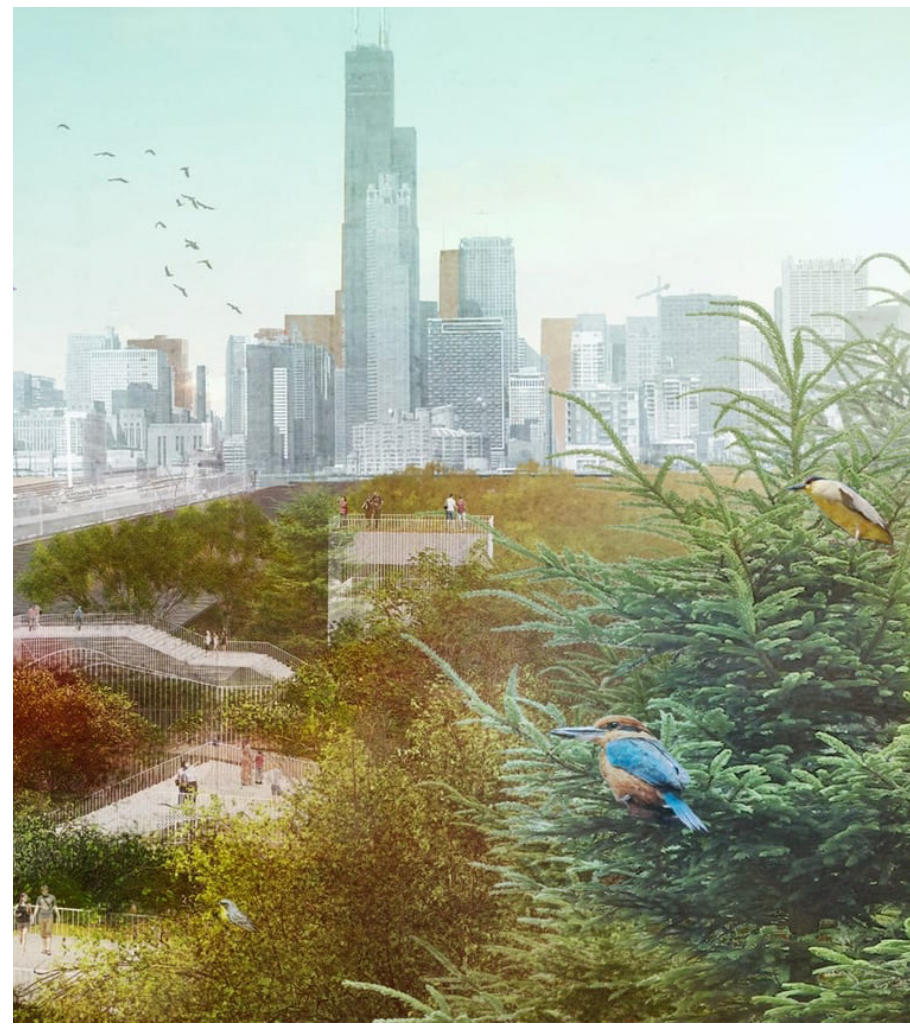
*Denotes menu items that should be part of development amenities and not within the 30' setback.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Menu of Unique Improvements: Nature

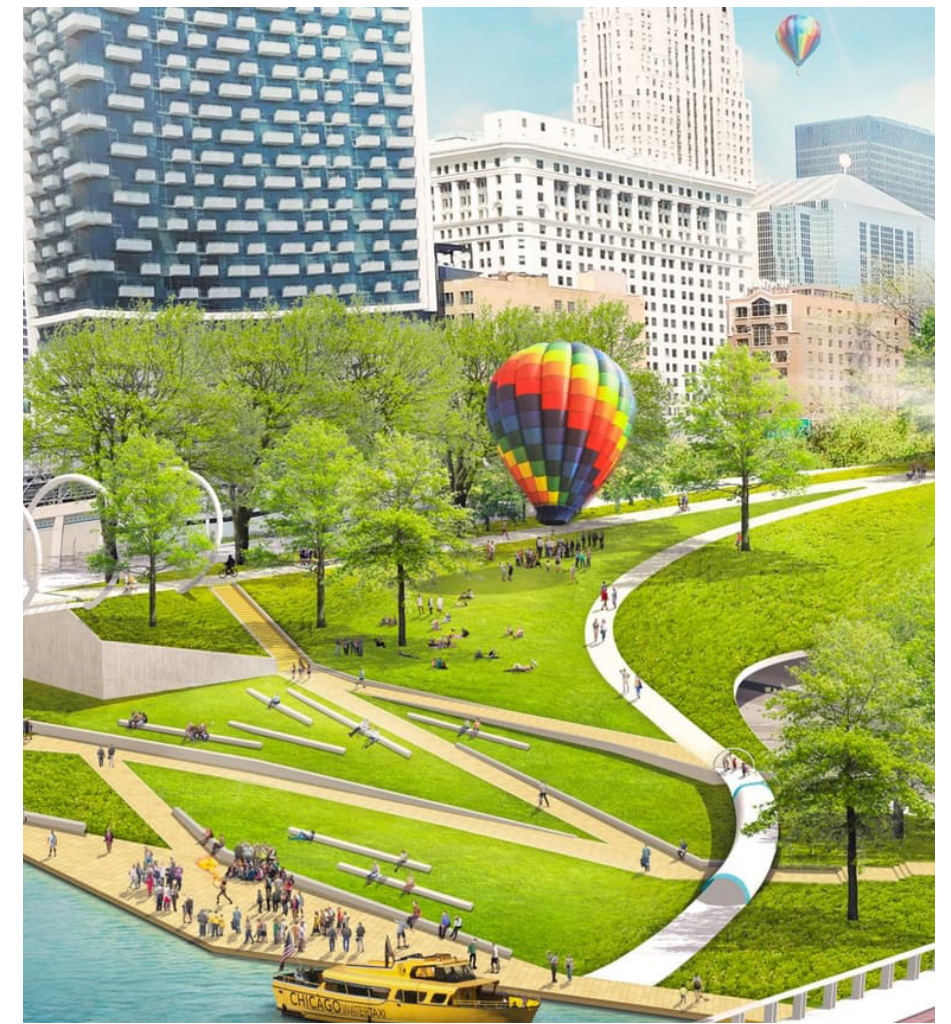


+ **Increased Setback**
Priority Menu Item to provide an increased setback for additional landscaping and recreational amenities.



🌿 **Robust Upland Habitat**
Use native plantings only, diversity of plantings, erosion control

This may be limiting. May also want to include well adapted, non-invasive plants species.



👥 **Large Riverfront Park***
As large as possible, active and passive recreation, save / connected pathways

*Imagery is courtesy of the Rivers Edge Ideas Lab, and is for conceptual purposes only. Imagery illustrates how menu items may be applied to sites along the river corridor.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Menu of Unique Improvements: Recreation



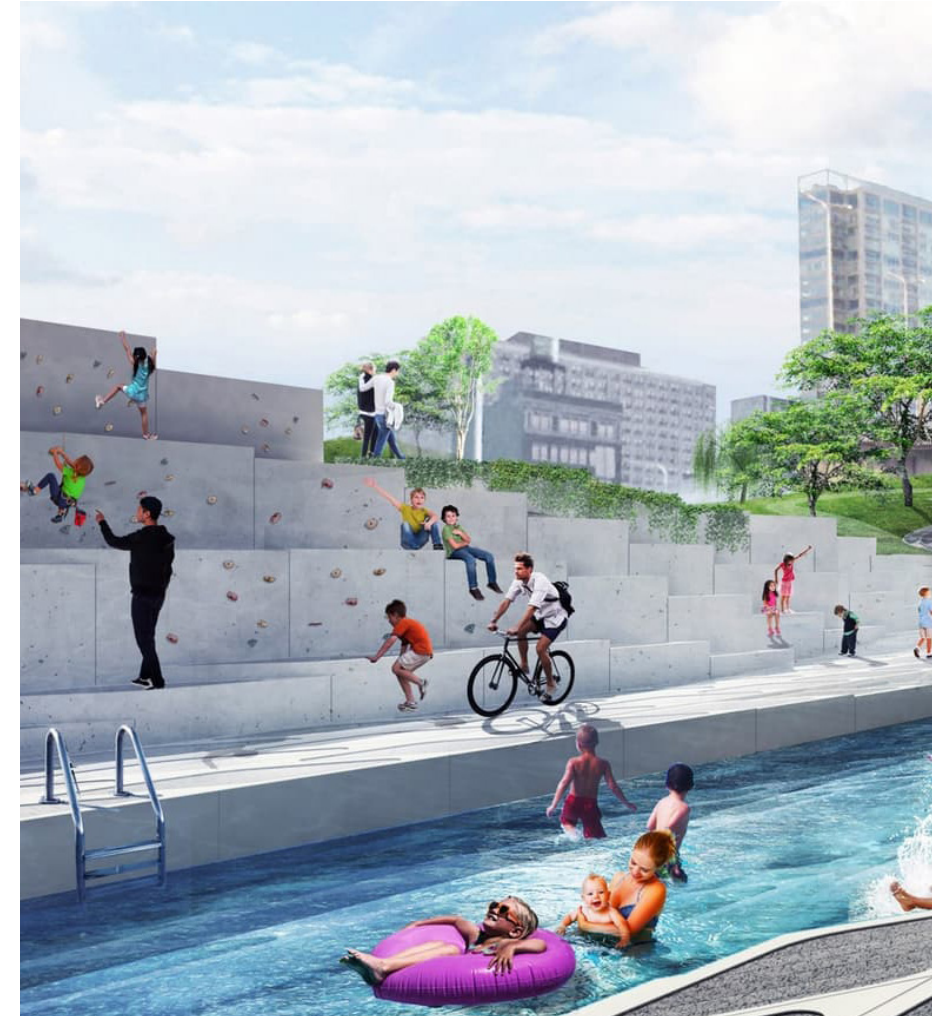
Access to Water & Docking Facilities

Access could include accessible ramps, boat launches, fishing piers, overlooks, and more. Allow for water taxi access.



Expanded Seating Areas*

Opportunities for river-focused active and passive recreation, enhance views to the river



Recreational Areas

Playgrounds, sports fields, water features, splash pads, climbing walls, and other traditional and universally-design recreational amenities.

*Imagery is courtesy of the Rivers Edge Ideas Lab, and is for conceptual purposes only. Imagery illustrates how menu items may be applied to sites along the river corridor.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Menu of Unique Improvements: Connectivity



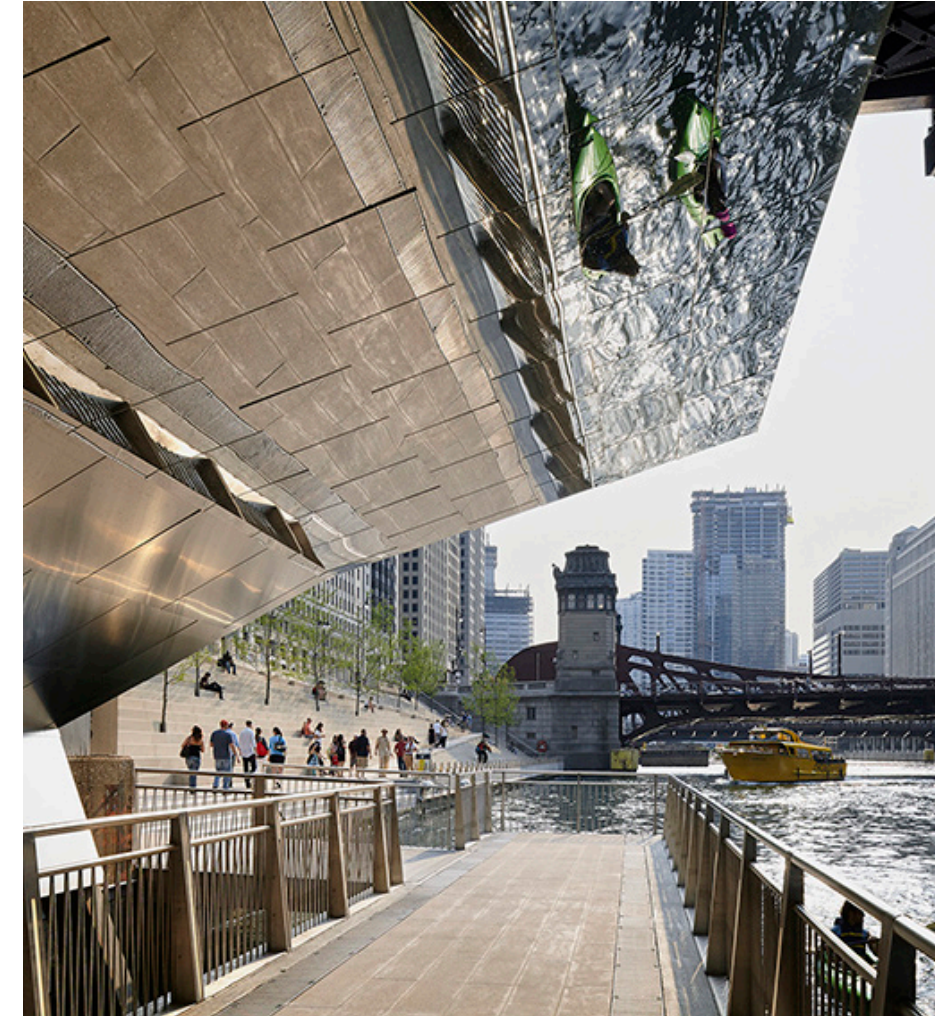
Public Art & Lighting*

Incorporate sculpture, painting, murals, and other public art to create destinations and add interest along the river



Cantilevered & Floating Walkways

Cantilevered walkways that connect the Riverwalk along buildings, or floating walkways and boardwalks that integrate the Riverwalk into natural systems.



Under-bridge Riverwalk Connection

Create a continuous riverwalk path that connects properties on both sides of bridges.

*Imagery is courtesy of the Rivers Edge Ideas Lab, and is for conceptual purposes only. Imagery illustrates how menu items may be applied to sites along the river corridor.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

When do Chicago River Guidelines Apply?

Design guidelines intend to generally balance the interaction of elements of the built environment. In this case, design guidelines are based on principles and prescriptive.

When do Design Guidelines apply?

- Planned Development projects within 100' of River.
- City riverfront projects and city-assisted riverfront projects.
- *Any new construction or improvements within 30 ft of the Chicago River.*

Possible change, under review:

- Except for river dependent uses and residential structures containing 3 or fewer dwelling units and structures that are accessory or additions thereto (178-0509-A-1), *substantial rehabilitation of an existing building will require that a connected riverwalk path, river overlook, or one amenity menu item be provided:*

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

River-Dependent Uses & Critical Service Infrastructure

River dependent uses are those uses or activities that can be carried out only on, in, or adjacent to a waterway because the use requires access to the waterway and which, therefore, cannot be located inland, including:

- Bulk material operations that ship or receive materials by barge
- Marinas
- Recreational and commercial boating facilities
- Waterfront dock and port facilities
- Navigation aids, basins, and channels
- Bridge abutments
- Recreational parks and open spaces
- Other uses that require waterborne transportation or the river as a source of water

2005 Guidelines:

- **Existing river dependent uses.** Existing river dependent uses are appropriate uses that should remain.
- **New river dependent uses.** New river dependent uses are appropriate uses that should be accommodated. Such new uses should, to the degree possible, impact the riverbank and urban greenway as little as possible and should accommodate an alignment for a potential multi-use trail
- **Multi-use trail alignment.** The alignment for a proposed or potential multi-use trail should be located on the land side of river dependent uses, rather than adjacent to the river, to avoid circulation, safety, and security conflicts or other unacceptable conditions.
- **Landscaping and screening.** Landscaping and screening is required for portions of the river frontage not in active use for loading of off-loading materials.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

River-Dependent Uses & Critical Service Infrastructure

Proposed Update:

River-Dependent Uses and Critical Services Guidelines:

Provide 30' min. setback for any associated buildings (i.e. bulk material piles, marina, park fieldhouse, office, etc.).

Provide riverfront access, amenities, and / or open spaces where possible in consultation with DPD and the community.

Critical Services are those uses or activities associated with providing critical services to surrounding residents, including, but not limited to:

- Utility Service Providers (e.g. ComEd)
- Transportation-Related Services (e.g. CTA, Metra, Amtrak, etc.)
- Municipal Services (e.g. Fire Department, Police Department, etc.)
- Municipal Agencies (e.g. MWRD, etc.)

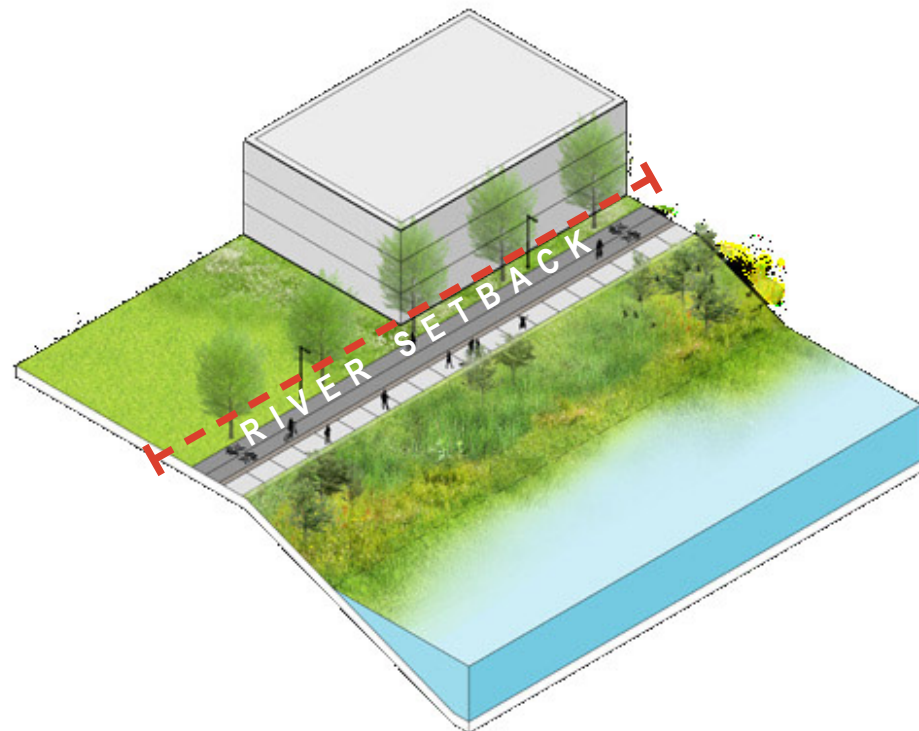
Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Rehabilitation Project

Proposed Update:

For rehabilitation project, allow one small revenue-generating structure within the 30' setback under certain conditions:

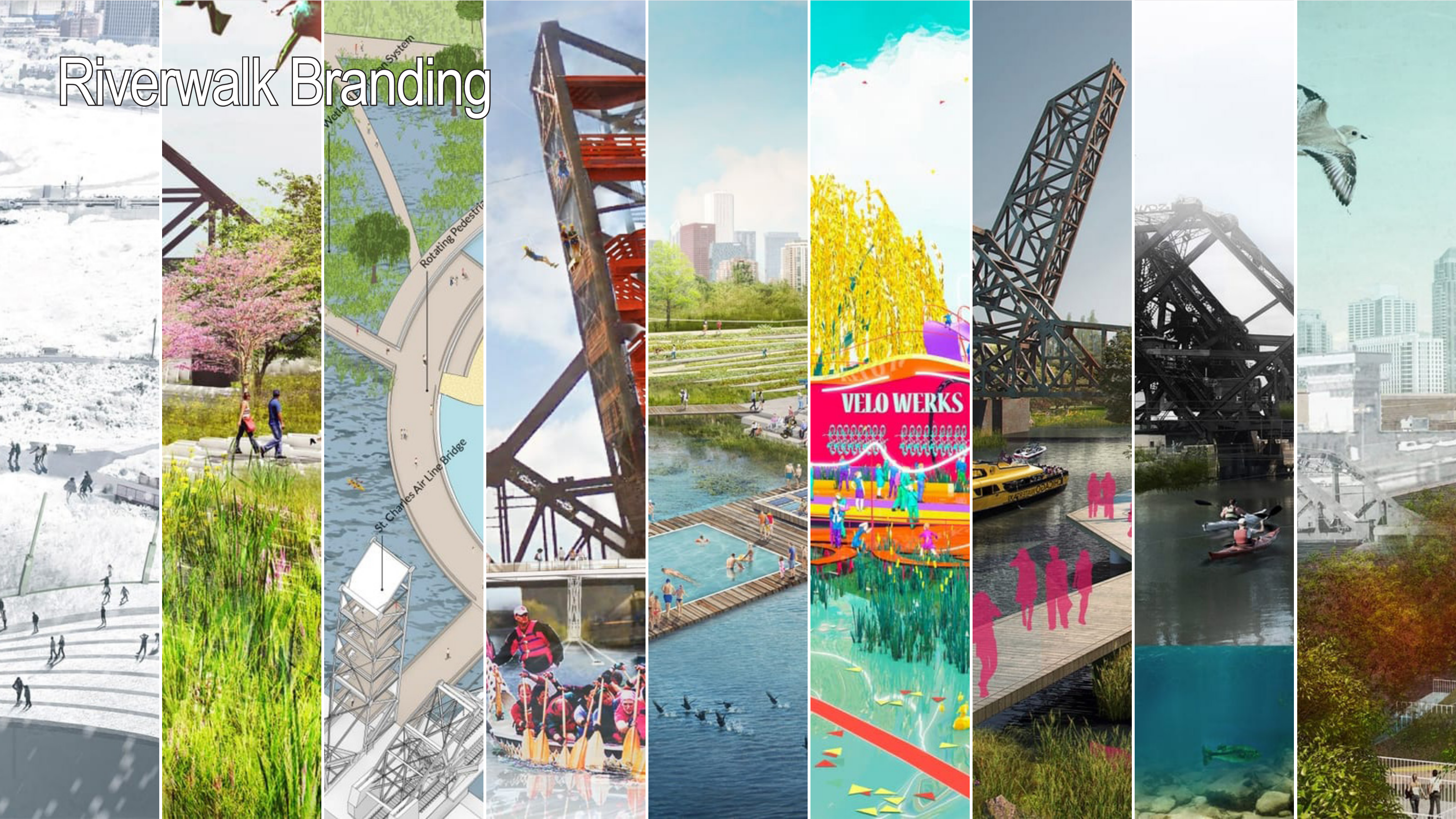
- Must retain min. riverwalk path clearances;
- Must be part of a significant riverfront improvement project that includes increased setback area or riverfront park/plaza (mitigation ratio of 2.5 to 1);
- Limit size and allowed uses of structure;
- Structure must be of high-quality materials and design.



Is there any point in time when a pop-up structure as part of a placemaking strategy may need to be within the 30' setback? Consider expanding criteria to include.



Riverwalk Branding



Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Brand Insights

To represent the spirit of the Chicago River, our brand should feel...

Clean

Fresh, Natural

The brand should represent the natural elements with which it is associated, namely water. Further, as we move into the future and the ecology of the river continues to improve, this brand can help to revise the common perception that the Chicago River is unclean.

Timeless

Approachable, Long-lasting

The brand associated with the river will be relevant long into the future and should stand the test of time. It will take into consideration its historical significance as well as its future use, innovation, and connections.

Dynamic

Active, Fun

From kayaking to commuting, the Chicago River is a space of vibrant energy. The brand should feel lively and fun.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Brand Insights

...and take into consideration

It would be great if the branding could also incorporate the characters of the different neighborhoods through which the river passes. The brand should have consistent elements, but also the potential to change over time as neighborhood dynamics and culture shift.

A diverse population of visitors

As the most accessible waterway in an international city, the River's Edge brand should be welcoming and encourage public use to a diversity of end users.

The rivers varied physical landscape and use

The brand should take into account the varied landscapes of the river. While maintaining cohesion is essential, what is appropriate downtown may not be suitable for residential areas.

Chicago's unique aesthetics, values, and personality

The brand must be uniquely representative of Chicago and the role the river plays in the city.

Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Brand Insights

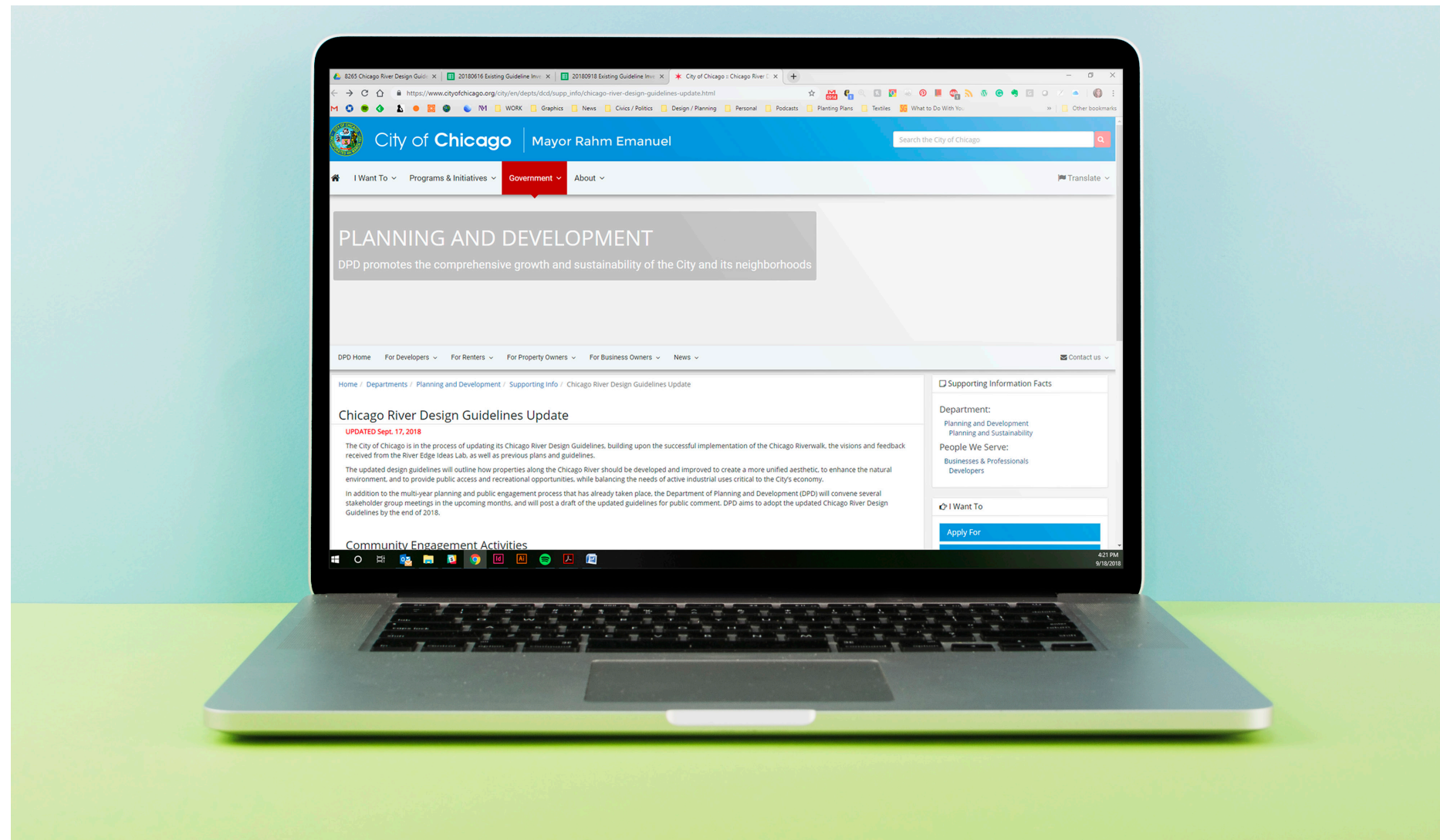
CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

*** CHICAGO ***
RIVERWALK



Chicago River Design Guidelines Update

Feedback



We would love to hear your feedback.

Please visit:

https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/chicago-river-design-guidelines-update.html