The Central Planning Area

Area Overview

Chicago’s Central Area is bounded by Division Street on the north, Lake Michigan on the east, the Stevenson Expressway on the south, and by N Halsted Street and the Kennedy/Dan Ryan Expressway on the west. It consists primarily of eight neighborhoods—Chinatown, Grant Park, the Loop, Museum Campus, Near South Side, River North, Streeterville and portions of the West Loop. The Central Area is covered by nine wards: 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 11th, 25th, 27th, 28th, 34th, and 42nd. Although among the smallest areas geographically, the Central Area currently has the fastest growing population, the highest use of commercial space and continues to be the economic driver for the Chicago region.

Source: City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development

4,325
CPS students residing

28
rail stops

36
open spaces

Source: City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development
History and Context

The Central Area’s seven community areas developed as early trading posts, and residences grew around the three branches of the Chicago River. Transportation has always been the driving force behind Chicago’s development; when the first canal and railroad opened in the 1800s, Chicago became the transportation hub of the country. During this period, much of the Central Area’s land was filled with rail tracks that converged at the edges of the commercial core. Commerce continued to grow, and between 1837 to 1871, Chicago’s population grew from around 4,000 to nearly 300,000.

After the 1871 Chicago Fire, the city reconstructed what was previously all wooden infrastructure. Builders and architects developed new “fireproof” building materials, construction techniques, and architectural styles, leading to taller buildings supported by steel frames and the world’s first skyscraper: the Home Life Insurance building of 1885.

While many examples of this late 1800s building period survive today on State Street and Wabash Ave, Chicago’s central business district has experienced successive waves of new development. The 20th century brought the expansion of commercial areas north of the river, most notably N Michigan Ave, which was branded as the “Magnificent Mile” in the 1940s.

With the rising use of automobiles, plans for Chicago’s primary highways were completed in 1940, and various expressways opened in the 1950s and 1960s. They all converged at the Central Area, forming new borders on the area’s south and west sides.

In the 1960s, the Central Area’s rail tracks were abandoned as automobile and interstate truck use increased. Businesses began moving outside the city center, requiring a plan for Chicago’s downtown revitalization.

During the past 40-plus years, the city’s vision to make the Central Area more residential has made the downtown area vibrant again. Well-known residential developments, such as Printers Row, Lakeshore East, Dearborn Park, New Chinatown Square, and Central Station, occupy former manufacturing buildings and rail yards.

Today, the Central Area continues to improve, as historic buildings are restored and converted to new uses. Revitalized theaters, retail areas, tourist attractions, and modern skyscrapers dot the Central Area’s urban landscape. Navy Pier and Millennium Park – which replaced the Central Area’s sprawling rail yards – represent two of the city’s top tourist attractions.

The Near North includes university campuses representing some of Chicagoland’s key research institutions, including DePaul, Loyola, and Northwestern. The Streeterville neighborhood is home to a major medical district focused around Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Although the portion of the Near West Side east of the I-94 expressway is primarily a commercial area, there has been extensive residential, retail, and restaurant development in the West Loop in the past decade. Meanwhile, the Near South is one of the fastest growing residential areas of the city, with new large-scale residential developments like Dearborn Park and Central Station occupying former rail yards.

Table Central-1: Planning area neighborhood assets; Source: City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>CTA Stops</th>
<th>Metra Stations</th>
<th>Libraries</th>
<th>Hospitals</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armour Square</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loop</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Near North Side</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Near South Side</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Near West Side</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
School Facility Overview

11 Public Schools | 1,314,694 Total campus square footage*
5 Elementary Schools | 1,750 Charter
6 High Schools

1975 Average Campus Year Built*

Enrollment by Governance

Elementary

- District: 3,214
- Charter: 34%
- Contract: 66%

High School

- District: 3,405

* Data calculated from CPS owned and leased campuses

1, 2 Elementary and high school counts include all CPS schools regardless of governance.

Figure Central-2: Elementary school boundaries
Figure Central-3: High school boundaries; Source: Chicago

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Utilization

The area average utilization for elementary schools in CPS-owned or leased facilities is approximately 61 percent and the area average utilization for high schools is 111 percent. There are 2 schools with enrollment levels below 70 percent.

![Choice In 5,622](image1)
![Choice Out 1,356](image2)
![Reside & Attend 2,803](image3)

Source: Chicago Public Schools

Figure Central-4: Campus utilization ("Adjusted Utilization2"); Source: Chicago Public Schools Space Use Standards. Computation excludes charter and contract schools as sole occupants in CPS owned/leased or non-CPS facilities.

![Elementary Utilization](image4)
![High School Utilization](image5)

Figure Central-5: School count by utilization range; Source: Chicago Public Schools

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The Central Planning Area
Current Facility Deficiencies

The figure below depicts the significance of need for each building system for campuses within Central. This data was collected as part of the 2021-2022 facility condition assessment and represents all need identified. This distribution is not weighted or otherwise adjusted based on impact to the buildings or occupants.

Future Facilities Priorities

Future improvement plans could include the following.

Condition Improvement Priorities

- Address exterior building envelope condition improvements for structural integrity
- Continue mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) upgrades to more energy efficient systems
- Invest in district initiatives such as ADA accessibility for equitable access
- Address additional needs including finishes (flooring, paint, and ceilings), energy-efficient lighting upgrades, and other facility upgrades

Capital Projects Since 2013

Capital Projects Cost

$85M

Facility Upgrades

Upgrades including finishes (paint, finishes, ceilings), lighting upgrades and other classroom upgrades. These upgrades will enhance the learning environment while also increasing the building energy efficiency.

Immediate

Critical systems facility needs such as building envelope (windows, roofs, masonry) and mechanical heating and cooling systems over next 5 years based on the 2021-22 facility condition assessments. These upgrades will result in energy efficient buildings with enhanced indoor air quality.

Long Term

Critical systems facility needs such as building envelope (windows, roofs, masonry) and mechanical heating and cooling systems from 6 to 10 years based on the 2021-22 facility condition assessments. These upgrades will result in energy efficient buildings with enhanced indoor air quality.

ADA Accessibility

Accessibility needs to make a campus accessible based on the 2021-22 facility Condition assessments. These upgrades will provide equitable access for all.

Figure Central-6: Current facility deficiencies by system; Source: Chicago Public Schools. Data calculated from CPS owned and leased campuses.
### The Central School Needs* Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Immediate</th>
<th>Long Term</th>
<th>Facility Upgrades</th>
<th>ADA Accessibility</th>
<th>Total (in Millions)</th>
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<td>GRAHAM HS</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>$8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAINES</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
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<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>$56.9</td>
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<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
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<td>OGDEN ES</td>
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<td>●</td>
<td></td>
<td>$7.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAYTON HS</td>
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<tr>
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<td>●</td>
<td>$4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH LOOP</td>
<td></td>
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<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>$20.4</td>
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*Critical facility needs are based on the 2021-22 assessment data. Costs are high level and based on unit costs and historical cost information.
## The Central Planning Area Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Boundary</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Co-Location</th>
<th>Total Attending SY 2021-22</th>
<th>Total Attending SY 2022-23</th>
<th>Change in Total Attending</th>
<th>Ideal Capacity*</th>
<th>Utilization*</th>
<th>Adjusted Utilization*</th>
<th>Utilization Status*</th>
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<tr>
<td>GRAHAM HS</td>
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<td>District</td>
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<td>239</td>
<td>▲ 34</td>
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<td>527</td>
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<td>690</td>
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<td>85%</td>
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<td>1936</td>
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<td>866</td>
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<td>101%</td>
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<td>272</td>
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<td>795</td>
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<td>43%</td>
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*Computations for ideal capacity, utilization, adjusted utilization, and utilization status excludes charter and contract schools as sole occupants in CPS owned/leased facilities, non-CPS facilities, or CPS Specialty Schools.

Source: Chicago Public Schools, based on Fall 2022 data.