

# A CENTURY OF CHICAGO'S CROSTOWN CORRIDOR<sup>1</sup>:

From Daniel Burnham's City Beautiful to Richard M. Daley's Global City

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## INTRODUCTION

This working paper explores a history of transportation politics in the urban periphery through a case study of Chicago's "Crosstown Corridor"<sup>2</sup>. The Crosstown Corridor follows a 22-mile circumferential route centered on freight railroad right-of-ways owned by the Belt Railway of Chicago. Between 6-9 miles from the Loop, the Crosstown Corridor parallels Cicero Avenue on the city's western municipal boundary from Lawrence Avenue (4800N) to 6700 South, where it curves past Midway Airport to parallel 75<sup>th</sup> Street east, eventually connecting with the Dan Ryan Expressway (I-94) between 75<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Street (map 1). Juxtaposed against Chicago's "glorious lakefront façade" (stretching north to the city limits and increasingly encroaching into the South Loop), the Crosstown Corridor constitutes a "L"-shaped section of with what Abu-Lughod (1999) provocatively conceives of as the "backstage city". Yet despite its physical and symbolic marginalization relative to the Loop, the Corridor has been central in numerous plans to relieve congestion in the center-city and address the need for the circumferential transportation infrastructure within the urban region: most notoriously Richard J. Daley's controversial, never-built "Crosstown Expressway" (I-494).

A version of the Crosstown Expressway has been a component of City plans since Burnham and Bennett forwarded the concept of a circulator expressway in 1909's *Plan of Chicago*, and the Crosstown Corridor, as a potential transportation thoroughfare, has received continued interest from planners, politicians and business groups. Yet despite this interest, none of the numerous proposals for transportation infrastructural development has made it off the drawing board. The elder Mayor Daley's failure to break ground on the Crosstown Expressway – one of his few defeats during 21-years in office (Biles, 1995) – is the closest Chicagoans have come to an upgraded north-south transportation corridor west of downtown.

Popular understandings of the demise of the Crosstown Expressway focus on the significance of neighborhood-based community resistance opposing the Mayor and a shift in public opinion away from expressway construction during the 1960s and 1970s. This paper, however – through analyzing the divergent, evolving logics, requirements and politics of transportation within the Chicago region – argues for a more nuanced reading of the production of urban space in the Crosstown Corridor grounded in the dialectical relations between "exchange-" and "use-value" oriented development, and urban "centrality" and "peripheralization". (The lack of) infrastructural development along the Corridor (and subsequently, the city's other transportation priorities and objectives) must be understood, I argue, as the overdetermined product of shifts in the regulation and organization of the global economy; Chicago's changing socio-economic geography; evolving patterns of urbanization; shifting policy frameworks (at a number of scales); and the city's volatile political culture.

Such a re-reading, seeking to assert the "co-evolution" of the city (as a social and spatial entity) and its infrastructural networks within broader socioeconomic trends, is both timely and necessary (McFarlane and Rutherford, 2008; Young and Keil, 2009). The passage

of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – signed into law by President Barack Obama on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and including a \$51.2 billion provision for transportation related infrastructure – has brought such public works investment to the forefront of public and political consciousness; and forwarded cities as key sites for economic recovery. Within Chicago, the prospect of federal “stimulus” money, combined with possible future funding from a successful bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, has inspired ambitious plans to re-imagine the city-region’s transportation network<sup>3</sup> (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2009; Hilkevitch, 2009). It is thus pertinent to examine critically the role of transportation infrastructures in the city, not only in terms of how they stimulate economic activity, but more so, to understand how they may produce a more socially just city.

## ANALYZING URBANIZATION AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURES

Several key theoretical debates influence the perspective adopted in this analysis. In order to contextualize the key themes highlighted, this section briefly discusses: (1) the theory and production of urban space; (2) the significance of a historical-materialist theory of technology and social change; and (3) new urban morphologies emerging in the contemporary metropolis beyond the central city.

### *The production of space*

(City) space, and (urban) spatial processes are highly complex and interrelated, converging in constant dialectical tension between: (1) the *absolute* – space as a thing in itself with an existence independent of matter; (2) the *relative* – space as the relationships between objects which exist only in so far as they relate to each other; and (3) the *relational* – space as space which exists only insofar as it contains and represents within itself relationships to other objects (Harvey, 1973, p. 13). These conceptions of space are not ontologically separate, but analytically distinct (if dialectically intertwined) epistemological vantage points. Applying this theory of urban space to transportation infrastructures indicates that such amenities are not only manifest physical features in the urban landscape; they serve to connect (and disconnect) particular places (and therefore social groups), and internalize the dominant ideologies and social relations of historically specific societies (Harvey, 2006).

Far from the mere objective container in which society exists, urban-metropolitan space – and urban infrastructures – are actively *produced* in specific historical and material conjunctures (Lefebvre, 1991). The manner in which the multi spaces of the city are produced illuminates the varying power relations underlying their production: whether they be abstractly produced by planners, urbanists and bureaucrats (expressing dominant groups’ ideology onto space); produced via conceived representations of space (e.g. maps or artwork); or produced cognitively through the experience of the qualitative spaces of everyday life. Acts of spatial production are not static, but reflect a continual process (Marx, 1991, p. 953); expressing the dialectics of continual production and reproduction, creation and destruction, crystallization and metamorphosis, and are therefore material, subjective, and ideological (Berman, 1982; Lefebvre, 2003).

### *A historical-materialist theory of technology and social change*

Developing from the idea that urban space is *produced*, I draw from Marx’s assertion that “technology reveals the active relation of man to nature, the direct process of the production of his life, and thereby it also lays bare the process of the production of the social relations of his life, and the mental conceptions that flow from those relations” (Marx, 1976, p. 493). This argument suggests that technology (and the development of technological infrastructures such as transportation networks) are dialectically related to our spatial conceptions and understanding of the city, and the social relations which constitute its material and discursive

forms. Historically evolving social relations produce new spatial conceptions and uses for technologies, whilst technology dialectically acts to transform these social relations and their spatialities. The crystallization of urban space and infrastructural networks is therefore more than the simple result of a causal technological progression (see figure 1). Rather than one transportation mode supplanting another (i.e. private automobiles usurping public streetcars), such technologies are “merely one part of an evolving socioeconomic totality” (Sawers, 1984, p. 223).

Consequently, the planning and production of transportation infrastructures, as Graham and Marvin suggest, are “essentially political decisions” and cannot be viewed as “technical, engineered systems existing somehow separate from society, which operate to ‘impact’ on society” (2001, p. 105). Governance and politics therefore play a crucial role in the historical development of urban transportation, and possible futures for the contemporary metropolis (Keil and Young, 2008; Sawers, 1984). Through adopting a historical-materialist approach – developing an understanding of the production of the city from the “actual, given relations of life” – contemporary social and spatial forms are argued to only emerge from within pre-existing material relations (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 105; Marx, 1976, p. 494). A dialectical material reading of urban space (in this paper, the Crosstown Corridor), enables the production of a comprehensive historiography of urban form, urbanization, and evolving constellations of urban power relations which shape the progress potential of the city.

### *The evolving urban periphery*

The dialectical inter-relations between social relations, advances in technology and the production of space, lead to different urban spaces becoming prioritized and valorized: “centered” (or de-prioritized and de-valorized: “peripheralized”) at under specific historical junctures (Lefebvre, 1996). Presently, many current academic and popular discourses predominantly focus upon the urban core as sites of economic development, “urbane” lifestyles, and social struggles: whether critically or not (e.g. Florida, 2008; Madigan, 2004; Slater, 2006; Wilson, 2007). As such, many proposed transportation developments concentrate on serving these spaces and (privileged) inhabitants (such as Chicago’s Central Area Plan).

However, such a “one-sided love for historical city” (Sieverts, 2003, p. 17) serves to both overlook contemporary urbanization processes – and urban lives being lived – outside the glittering office ad condo towers of downtown, and the relational processes linking centre and periphery within the metropolis as a “totality” (Fiedler and Addie, 2008). Contemporary processes of urbanization; the development of “in-between” city spaces (Sieverts, 2003; Young and Keil, 2009); sprawling “post-metropolis” (Soja, 2000) and the “splintering” of urban infrastructures that provide services and connect spaces (Graham and Marvin, 2001), reflect new, varying urban landscapes<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, looking beyond the “glamour zones” of the urban core suggests “the city that we think we see is a city which, in reality does not exist anymore” (Keil and Ronnenberger, 1994, p. 139). The realities of planning and providing services and (transportation) infrastructure in these spaces requires a critical understanding, both of their production, and evolving requirements: significantly when juxtaposed to the “place making effects of centralized rail-based transportation infrastructure in the industrial city” (Young and Keil, 2009, p. 11). In part, this paper seeks to complement and develop this understanding.

Drawing on these perspectives, in the following, I present a history of the politics of transportation in the Crosstown Corridor. The research in this working paper is based on extensive archival research<sup>5</sup> of governmental and planning documents, and the records of community groups; discourse analysis of Chicago newspaper articles; and interviews with

local government officials, transportation and planning agencies and community and non-profit organizations in the Chicago region. I then assess the key processes shaping the “co-evolution” of transportation networks and the discursive and material city, and conclude by commenting upon the prospects for future transportation development in Richard M. Daley’s “Global Chicago”.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHICAGO’S EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM, 1909-1960

### *Dreams of the City Beautiful*

Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett’s 1909 *Plan of Chicago* served as the genesis for the systematic planning of Chicago’s expressway system in two significant ways. Firstly, the “Burnham Plan” established an iconic vision of broad thoroughfares connecting the urban fabric of the city, and radial highways spatially integrating the wider region from Kenosha, Wisconsin to Michigan City, Indiana. Secondly, in 1910, City Council and Chicago Mayor Fred Busse authorized the establishment of the Chicago Plan Commission as a non-governmental booster group to facilitate and oversee the implementation of the 1909 Plan.

For Burnham and Bennett, it “needed no argument” to illustrate the importance of connecting outlying suburban towns with each other and the city in order to increase intra-regional communication and to materially reduce the costs of agricultural production and distribution for the region’s economy. Within the city, drawing inspiration most closely from Haussmann’s Second Empire Paris, the Burnham Plan’s system of avenues – and centerpiece mall, Congress Street – not only lubricated economic activity in the urban core, but also offered an aesthetic imagining of Chicago that sought to place the Midwest Metropolis on the pantheon of great world cities (see Harvey, 2003). In the decades following the publication of the Burnham Plan the rationales for highway construction in Chicago – namely (1) the reduction of congestion; (2) costs savings from increasing the circulation speed of commodities; and (3) forwarding Chicago’s position as transportation hub of the nation – remained largely constant.

Fidelity to the Burnham Plan’s proposed highway system, however, did not last long, even within the Chicago Plan Commission. By the spring of 1928, Edward Bennett – acting as consultant to the Plan Commission – was fighting a losing battle with the Committee for West Side Street Improvements to maintain Congress Street as “the axis of Chicago”. In forwarding a more pragmatic model of city planning, Albert Sprague, Committee Chair decried the position of Congress Street in the Plan of Chicago as “a mere incident of a grandiose architectural composition” whose rationale for existence had “[ceased] to exist” (c.f. Taylor, 1929, p. 6). Against Bennett’s lobbying for a singular Congress Street superhighway, the Committee supported the proposal for three West Side superhighways aligned along (1) Illinois-Austin-Kinzie; (2) Monroe; and (3) Polk as argued by Chief Engineer, Hugh E. Young in order to more adequately accommodate western city and suburban traffic.

That Chicago did not develop this three-pronged West Side superhighway system was the result of two key factors affecting the city at different scales. Firstly, the onset of the Great Depression brought construction activity to a grinding halt (see Abu-Lughod, 1999; Hirsch, 1998). Surplus capital circulating for investment in the built environment froze across the board and taxes levied for highways dropped precipitously: the highways share of real estate tax collected in Cook County dropped from \$4,800,000 in 1929 to \$750,000 by 1933, not returning to pre-Depression levels until 1952<sup>6</sup> (Engineering Board of Review, 1956).

Secondly, in part reacting to Chicago’s decline during the Great Depression and the possibilities offered by the New Deal and Public Works Administration, the grandiose vision

of the Burnham Plan was receiving a revival in public and political interest. A City Council proposal to widen Congress Street as a central thoroughfare garnered enthusiastic support from civic organizations and property owners along the route. The *Chicago Daily News* (1935) declared the reassertion of the *Plan of Chicago*'s Congress Street proposal "should be hailed with satisfaction by citizens who have witnessed regretfully the gradual fading of that splendid conception, in which possibilities of Chicago as a greater and lovelier city were so admirably developed" – whilst suggesting alternative plans carried "the aroma of special interests and political sponsorship".

The Great Depression and America's entrance into the Second World War served to deprive of both the capital and labor required to begin construction of the Chicago region's highway infrastructure. This historical conjuncture marked the end of a distinct phase of planning for the Chicago region. With Lake Shore Drive the only element of the Burnham Plan's highway network completed, Chicago emerged into the post-war era with a renewed sense of optimism. The wartime economic and production boom (providing an albeit temporal antidote to the decline under the Depression, see Abu-Lughod, 1999), the technological advances in (wartime) production, and possibilities of expanded domestic consumption had Chicago thinking big about its position as the transportation hub of the nation.

#### *Realizing Chicago's highway network*

Plans for post-war highway construction in the Chicago region began to take shape during wartime. In 1939, the Chicago Plan Commission was restructured as a department of municipal government and with City looking to develop a comprehensive citywide plan, the decision was made to re-examine all existing highway plans for Chicago. On 18<sup>th</sup> November 1943, the Chicago Plan Commission approved plans and recommendations for the initial stage of an expressway system for Chicago. The proposed system of highways gave full recognition to the Comprehensive Superhighway System approved by Chicago City Council on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1940, essentially amending the City's previous plans.

The (restructured) Chicago Plan Commission viewed expressways as the future of Chicago in terms of: (1) removing dangerous traffic from within city neighborhoods; (2) providing an infrastructure for the swift and safe transportation of commodities flowing through the city; and (3) placing Chicago at the heart of a nationwide network of interstate highways (Chicago Plan Commission, 1943). The 1943 plan advocated for the construction of ten major expressways for Chicago, establishing a pattern closely resembling the present-day system (but including a crosstown route aligned predominantly along California Avenue as the tenth expressway).

Postwar growth in the Chicago region soon made the implementation of the highway plan essential. The Fordist mode of accumulation – premised upon mass production and consumption, both of consumer goods and urban environments made accessible by increases in auto ownership (Brenner, 2004; Jessop, 2000) – facilitated the rapid expansion of the urban region, particularly in Chicago's suburbs, and a modal transfer from rail to truck freight transportation served to overwhelm the existing system of roads. The City broke ground on its highway network in the immediate postwar period, first constructing approach routes in open areas surrounding the urban core, connecting to both the city itself and the state's toll-way system of bypasses for northeastern Illinois. With the opening of sections of Interstate-94 along the Calumet Expressway (now the Bishop Ford Freeway) in 1950, the Chicago region entered into a decade of massive expressway expansion.

Whilst the municipal government played an active role in planning highways for Chicago and the surrounding area, the state government provided the most comprehensive view of the financing for the initial stages of expressway construction. As the legal overseer of the state's highway system, the Illinois Division of Highways received the major portion of the highway user's taxes (motor fuel tax, registration fees etc) which they then distributed for highway projects throughout the state and to local governments for approved projects. In this regard, the distinctive relationships shaping Illinois politics – with frequent compromises made between the City of Chicago and Cook Counties democratic political machines and the “Downstate” Republican machine dominant in the rest of the state (Simpson, 2001) – provided the context in which financing for expressway infrastructure for northeastern Illinois was secured.

Whilst the pattern of Chicago expressway system was laid out and construction well underway by the mid-1950s – including a singular west side expressway along the Congress Street alignment – two political events served to intensify both construction activity and, significantly, capital expenditure on Chicago superhighway system. In April 1955, Richard J. Daley took office as mayor of Chicago and enacted a policy framework of large-scale public works construction (akin that pursued by Robert Moses in New York); casting Daley as a “builder mayor”. Daley's cementing of the Democratic City and County machines provided an almost “imperial” power to pursue his vision for Chicago whilst his political connections and clout in Springfield and Washington D.C. proved pivotal in securing funds for infrastructure development in Chicago from the state and federal governments (Cohen and Taylor, 2001).

Daley's rise to the pinnacle of Chicago politics coincided with the passing in 1956 of the Federal-Aid Highways Act. Through this bill, the federal government took on (up to) 90% of the financial burden of freeway construction; ostensibly as a component of the United States Cold War defensive plan, but serving to integrated national space, opening new markets and space economies for Fordist accumulation; particularly for automobiles and auto-related consumption. Between 1957 and 1959, local government resources, combined with those of the federal and state governments to result in total expenditures of \$787million for highway purposes in Cook and Du Page counties. Through 31<sup>st</sup> December 1960, expenditure on highway and toll-way infrastructure in the Chicago metropolitan area reached \$969,991,000 with three of the 12 major expressways – the South (Dan Ryan), Southwest (Stevenson), and Moline Expressways – still under construction (Chicago Area Transportation Study, 1962). From the 1943 proposals, a crosstown expressway was the only route yet to break ground.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF THE CROSTOWN EXPRESSWAY, 1963-1979

### *The “need” for a Crosstown Expressway*

The concept of a Crosstown Expressway for Chicago had long been an integral component of the City's master plans. Indeed, the idea of a vast circumferential boulevard which would “divert from the center traffic not having its objective point in the central area”, thus relieving radial routes to Chicago's urban core was vital to Burnham and Bennett's highway plans (1909, p. 91). Since the Second World War, such a roadway was included in the City's comprehensive superhighway plan, the Chicago Area Study Plan and the City Department of Development and Planning's 1965 Policies Plan. Further, a crosstown route was included as a central component of the initial Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS, the northeastern Illinois Metropolitan Planning Organization) long-range regional transportation plan for 1980. However, it was not until 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 1963 that the Illinois Division of Highways, Cook

County Highway Department and the City of Chicago created the Crosstown Expressway Task Force “to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed [crosstown] expressway in the study corridor in sufficient detail so that the need for an expressway could not be challenged” (Pikarsky, 1973 [1966]).

That the Crosstown Expressway was de-prioritized behind the construction of Chicago’s radial highways illustrates the primary importance of connecting the city to a wider, nation-wide network. Certainly, the federal funding made available through the 1956 Highways Act, and the rationale behind the Act (ostensibly to integrate national space for defense purposes), played a significant role in stimulating this pattern of transportation infrastructure development. However, the radial pattern of (urban) expressways in northeastern Illinois further served to: (1) maintain Chicago’s dominant position as the transportation, logistics and (albeit declining) manufacturing centre of the Midwest; and (2) preserved the vibrancy of the Loop, as comparable Midwest urban cores, such as Detroit and Cleveland, were losing a much greater share of businesses to the suburbs.

The Crosstown Task Force, and consulting agglomerate “Crosstown Associates”<sup>7</sup> initially articulated the purported “need” for a crosstown expressway within a diverging discourse than had been used support the construction of Chicago’s other urban expressways. In contrast to the rationale deployed to justify the Federal-Aid Highways Act, as a circulator route, the Crosstown Expressway was to serve an alternative purpose to the radial highways (both connecting, and providing relief for these roadways) but was still to function as an integral component of the wider system. In addition to removing dangerous, congesting traffic from city neighborhoods, particular stress was placed on the utility of a crosstown route for the trucking industry which had began a spatial shift from undersized, crowded facilities in the Loop to larger, more modern yards in the suburbs and along Cicero Avenue and the newly opened Southwest (Stevenson) Expressway (Lovell, 1977). City planners advocating for the Crosstown Expressway further sought legitimacy from the Burnham Plan: references to the *Plan of Chicago* formed a frequent trope in the City’s planning proposals:

“A crosstown expressway has been part of city plans for Chicago since the preparation of the Burnham Plan in 1909... Proper operation of the expressway service for Chicago has been considered dependent on the addition of a crosstown or by-pass route which intersects its existing radial routes” (Transport Advisory Group, 1965, p. 7).

The grandiose City Beautiful visions laid out in the *Plan of Chicago* however, were greatly removed from the actual conditions of Chicago in the 1950s and ‘60s. Opposed to the Burnham Plan’s romanticized imagery, quantitative statistical analyses were deployed to select to route’s alignment. Initial studies considered three main possibilities for the Crosstown route: an eastern corridor near Western Avenue, which was discarded as an area of surplus roadway capacity; a western corridor in the vicinity of Harlem Avenue, which was considered too close to the existing Illinois Tollway I-294; and a central corridor focused upon Cicero Avenue. The Task Force subsequently selected the central Cicero corridor as it provided the optimal intersection with the Kennedy/Edens expressways, was equidistant from the Tollway and near Loop I-90/94 (thus constituting a corridor of roadway deficiency), and provided good access to the industrial districts along the Ship and Sanitary Canal/Southwest expressway (Crosstown Expressway Task Force, 1964).

#### *A new kind of urban expressway*

Under the leadership of Milton Pikarsky, Chicago’s Commissioner for Public Works (a loyal Daley supporter and later Chair of both the Chicago Transit Authority and Regional Transportation Authority) the planning strategy for the Crosstown Expressway began in very

much the same manner as Chicago's late 1940s/1950s expressways. Elite City engineers and planners formulated route specifications and statistically derived "need". However, the city's experience with urban expressway construction during the post-war period engendered a pronounced public resentment against such projects. The city in which the Crosstown was to be embedded was a different city than the one that emerged in the immediate post-war period: to paraphrase Lefebvre, it was not the same city, nor the same people (1996, p. 68).

Local newspaper reports held the construction of Chicago's urban expressways between 1945-62 as second only to the Great Fire of Chicago in "devastating" the city through displacement; property destruction; and tax increases. In contrast to the modernist dreams of movement and efficiency in the city, Chicago's actually existing expressways led Mayor Daley to conclude they had failed to meet their objectives, asserting that the City would have to "take a new look" at the question of future expressway routes in Chicago. As such, he vocally opposed planned expansion of the California Avenue roadway, saying "it would tear up some of the finest homes in the city". However, Daley remained supportive of an expressway connecting O'Hare and Midway airports: the Crosstown route (c.f. Ross, 1962).

Attempting to rethink the modern urban expressway and minimize the uprooting of communities, on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 1965, Daley's Transportation Advisory Group recommended the construction of the Crosstown Expressway, designed to incorporate significant stretches of elevated road over the Belt Railroad right-of-way. The City, with support from several key state officials, argued that an elevated route would not de-beautify, devalue or destroy the neighborhoods through which the Crosstown would pass – against opposition from the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects who derided the notion of a "stilt-way".

Persistent concerns continued to linger over the impact of an elevated expressway. After an 8<sup>th</sup> April 1966 meeting with community groups along the proposed route – all opposing the plan and calling, instead, for investment in mass transit – the Chicago Plan Commission's Expressway Subcommittee announced it was to recommend to the Plan Commission a reduction in the height and proportion of the elevated sections of the route. However, two weeks later, the Subcommittee approved the design of the Crosstown along the Belt Railway with substantial elevated (from Edens/Kennedy to Cermak Avenue), embanked and depressed sections leading to accusation of "double talk" and that highway engineers, not planning professionals, dominated urban planning in Chicago.

No new decisions were made regarding the Crosstown until 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1967 when the federal government proposed the Crosstown not be elevated at all, but planned as a new kind of expressway: a "total development concept" integrating mass transit, high rise apartment buildings, commercial and industrial zones and green spaces within the overall expressway concept. Mayor Daley enthusiastically embraced the idea, stating on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1967 that the "total development" Crosstown would be "the most modern and beautiful expressway in the nation". Not only would this development be the first of its kind in the United States, but would be at the heart of the continuation of the "greatest building boom in Chicago's history" (c.f. Chicago Tribune, 1967).

Several factors converged through 1967 however, to delay any groundbreaking on the Crosstown. At the federal level, a shortage of funds undermined the financing of the Crosstown whilst in Springfield, the State Public Works Commissioner opposed the suggestion that plans be revised in line with a "total development" model. Pikarsky and the City however, moved ahead with a study of a new expressway, aligned parallel to Cicero Avenue.



By the time the Crosstown had been re-imagined as a “total development concept”, the expressway emerged as the testing ground for a new kind of urban expressway, one that centered upon neighborhood integration, rather than regional development:

“The Crosstown project has national significance as a test of the proposition that we can have modern transportation in American cities with advantages for local neighborhoods as well as metropolitan areas” (Crosstown Executive Board, 1972, p. 3).

From the initial proposals for an elevated “stilt-way” to minimize community displacement, by 1972, the Crosstown – following Cicero Avenue from Edens/Kennedy to Midway Airport, before trending east to Dan Ryan along 75<sup>th</sup> Street – incorporated plans for commercial and industrial development; bus rapid transit operating on exclusive lanes in the expressways median; and schools located on decks bridging the roadway<sup>8</sup>. Within this planning framework, the Crosstown Expressway was forward as primarily serving traffic beginning or ending within a mile and a half of the proposed route and as such was not strictly a bypass for long distance and suburban traffic (although it was also to perform this function). This strategy garnered (qualified) support from organization such as the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council as well as residents in the predominantly affluent southwest neighborhoods and suburbs who welcomed the prospect of a smoother drive along the Cicero Avenue corridor.

#### *Contesting the Crosstown Expressway*

Whilst residents in the southwest had long vocally supported the Crosstown – The Transit Advisory Group cited a Southwest News Herald survey placing support at 80% (1965, p. 11) – the Crosstown Expressway remained dogged by community opposition, concerned the negative effects of urban expressway construction would be repeated through their neighborhoods. Into the 1970s, several anti-Crosstown groups would coalesce and play a significant role in the battle over the Expressway’s (failed) development.

Milton Pikarsky was well aware of the trauma urban expressways had caused city communities, but insisted constructing the Crosstown Expressway was in “the best interests of the citizens of Chicago”. He drew a slightly more sensitive analogy to Robert Moses’ “meat axe”, suggesting the process of building an expressway through densely populated urban areas was more akin to surgery: “Even though the operation is necessary to save the life of the community, it may cause extreme temporary discomfort, localized inflammation, and can leave a lasting scar.” Whilst reluctant to use the “painfully graphic” analogy, Pikarsky was aware of its power – and the backlash from early expressway construction – from an early stage in the planning process: “The very subject of relocation is literally loaded with the stuff emotions are made of, and once emotions take over, it may become well nigh impossible to re-assert the control of reason. Therefore, a sound public relations program is essential” (1973 [1966]).

Throughout 1965-75, this public relations strategy centered upon: (1) numerous public engagements and speeches given by Pikarsky to an audience including public works officials, engineers, academics, students and, to a certain extent, community groups; and (2) public hearings on the development of plans for the Crosstown. Crosstown Associates and representatives from the City of Chicago, for example, held 24 meetings in the Loop and South Side neighborhoods regarding Section IV (Midway-Skyway) of the proposed Crosstown Expressway between 16<sup>th</sup> April 1969 and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1969<sup>9</sup>. From these meetings, Crosstown Associates stressed that several recommendations forwarded by the public – focused on relatively minor alignment modifications and community development matters

which were widely compatible with the existing plans for Section IV – were incorporated into future plans (Chicago Defender, 1969; Crosstown Associates, 1969).

Yet despite these minor concessions, community involvement in Crosstown Expressway planning was minimal and development remained a decidedly top-down process. Public meetings offered the most direct access to City planning officials and as such, turned heated as local citizens vented their anger and concerns. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1970, Pikarsky addressed such a community meeting concerning Section IV of the proposed expressway at the Civic Opera House in Downtown Chicago. His opening comments framed the importance of the east-west leg of the Crosstown in terms of the overall roadway through a three-fold argument forwarding that “the expressway is a solution to basic community needs”. Firstly, the Crosstown would relieve the Downtown expressways, functioning as a bypass for the existing expressway system. Secondly, as “more than a bypass... and more than an expressway”, the Crosstown was to provide a “comprehensive transportation solution”, integrating infrastructure for local residents and commercial and industrial traffic originating in the corridor. Finally, the Crosstown was to “provide a new axis for community development... improving the relationship between the urban highway and community” (Crosstown Executive Board, 1970, pp. 23-31).

After the opening addresses by Pikarsky, Crosstown Associates and a statement read on behalf of Mayor Richard J. Daley, the floor opened to the public at large. 160 testimonials were heard in all, the majority from private citizens (68) and community groups (50), with official tallies placing support at 45% for, 51% against and 4% uncommitted. These totals, however, factored in letters and statements directed to the Crosstown Executive Board that predominantly supported constructing the expressway (73% for, 25% against, 2% uncommitted). Testimony delivered in person, as a reflection of the limited opportunity to public oppose the Crosstown plans presented a vastly different picture with 70% of speakers, and 95% of public statements against the expressway. The audience, vastly against the Crosstown often drowned out those advocating for the expressway with loud boos and heckling<sup>10</sup>. In contrast, those speaking against the Crosstown were greeted with rapturous applause; particularly when articulating the chasm between City planners, engineers and “machine” politicians who’s “upper-middle class perspective” developed in “the suburbs... high-rise apartments... [and] in very convenient locations” betrayed a lack of understanding of the rhythms of everyday life prevalent in local communities (Father Francis X. Lawlor, a prominent (yet "militant") community organizer, c.f. Crosstown Executive Board, 1970, p. 216).

The most frequent issues raised at the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1970 public meeting coalesced around five broad themes which would characterize community opposition the Crosstown Expressway: (1) the social and physical destruction of the local community; (2) environmental concerns surrounding increasing levels of pollution and crystallizing around the lightning rod issue of schools being placed on air rights decks over the expressway; (3) the lack of citizen involvement in the planning process, including calls for more public participation, greater access to technical data, and greater accountability of both those charged with planning, and City, state and federal officials; (4) the lack of adequate plans for accommodating displaced residents in terms of housing and employment; and (5) the negative impact on marginalized social groups, including the elderly, the poor (although it should be noted Section IV contained a significant number of homeowners who faced displacement), and racial discrimination. The South Side’s African-American community suffered from red-lining, discrimination in obtaining mortgage financing and feared a racialized demographic transition in their neighborhoods (see Grimshaw, 1995; Hirsch, 1998).

Citizens, community groups and church organizations articulated issues of race and racial discrimination at public meetings and in campaigns against the Crosstown: in stark juxtaposition to official planning documents (that hardly, if ever, touched on such issues). During this period, Chicago pursued a segregationist public housing program concentrating the African-American community in ghettos on the South and West sides (Grimshaw, 1995; Hirsch, 1998; Wilson, 1990). Placed within this context, the east-west leg of the Crosstown (Section IV) was set to displace residents in the predominantly Black neighborhoods of Englewood, West Englewood, Gresham, Grand Crossing and Woodlawn (Anthony, 1970b). Chicago's "Black newspaper", the *Chicago Defender*, reported community groups in these areas viewed the Crosstown as "a detriment to the black community" (Anthony, 1970a) and raised concerns not only about the "black removal" displacement residents (Lacey, 1971), but also the impact of the Expressway on employment opportunities in Black areas along the Crosstown route. Industrial firms emigrating from Chicago's Black communities cost approximately 7,000 jobs between 1969 and 1971 (Chicago Defender, 1973) leaving a paradox whereby remaining companies required improved factory and infrastructural facilities, but the construction of the Crosstown would likely lead to employers in the Corridor being displaced and unlikely to return (Chicago Defender, 1974). Whilst Blacks feared displacement and poor relocation options (both regarding housing and neighborhood facilities such as schools and parks), elements of Chicago's White community were portrayed as fearing (and in large part *actually* feared) that the Crosstown Expressway would facilitate the expansion the city's Black Belt (stimulating "white flight" to the suburbs), but at the same time, also viewed the road as a possible barrier to this expansion (Killian, 1975).

Given the degree of racial segregation in the City of Chicago, and the utilization of highway construction to enforce such racial divides<sup>11</sup>, race played a prominent, if not primary role in the struggle over the Crosstown. However, instead of devolving into a purely racial conflict between Chicago's Black and White communities or government officials, Anti-Crosstown groups were able to effectively mobilize across racial and ethnic divisions in Chicago, bridging fissures which had historically played a major role in limiting grassroots and working class political movements in the city (see Abu-Lughod, 1999; Squires et al., 1987).

Through the early-mid 1970s, the most influential of the anti-Crosstown groups was *Citizen's Action Program* (CAP). Formed in 1969 as *Campaign Against Pollution*, CAP soon expanded its agenda from issues of environmental justice to develop a broad, city-wide coalition bringing attention to citizen's concerns over education, taxation, redlining and the Crosstown Expressway, changing names in Fall 1971<sup>12</sup>. Under co-chairs Paul Booth, a founder of Students for a Democratic Society and active labor organizer; Reverend Len Dubi, a South Side Catholic pastor; and group president Mary Lou Wolff, CAP adapted Saul Alinsky's model of church-based "neighborhood self-defense" organization to form a "metropolitan self-defense organization" based on common issues, not common geography (Paul Booth, c.f. Negronia, 1972). This approach proved vital in coalition formation across the city's racial and ethnic divides, mobilizing communities around issue-based politics.

CAP was not the first anti-Crosstown group, and James Kelly (director of the *Anti-Crosstown Action Committee*) denounced them as "johnny-come-lately's" who's controversial, antagonistic methods alienated people who might have otherwise supported their cause (c.f. Byrne, 1972). Yet despite Kelly's concerns, CAP was able to mobilize hundreds, sometimes thousands of citizens to march the city streets to City Hall, flood public hearings on the Crosstown Expressway and conducting an extensive door-to-door "education drive" on the impacts of the expressway on local neighborhoods.

CAP's aggressive and confrontational political actions left them marginalized from City political circles – Pikarsky refused to meet with them and was thusly characterized as “Milton the Duck” in CAP public materials – but they effectively achieved three significant ends: firstly, they increased the visibility of the anti-Crosstown campaign. This visibility extended from headline grabbing (near physical) altercations with City politicians to attracting support and visits from prominent state and federal politicians. Secondly, investigative work by CAP researchers illuminated issues of: (1) rising costs associated with the expressway (particular emerging from the “total development concept”); (2) displacement (and the lack of plans to accommodate this in the City's Crosstown plans) which had been marginal in public discourse; and (3) alleged land-banking in “secret trusts” along the corridor by high profile City politicians and businessmen including First Ward Committeeman John D'Arco and real estate developer Harry Chaddick (CAP Anti-Crosstown Coalition, 1972b, 1973). Thirdly, they played a large role in turning the Crosstown Expressway into a pivotal political issue during the 1972 local, state and federal elections.

As part of their “education drive”, in the build up to the 1972 elections CAP distributed a list detailing the position on the Crosstown Expressway of all the candidates on the slate<sup>13</sup>. The key election battle was for the seat of Illinois governor. Incumbent Republican Richard Ogilvie, a vocal supporter of the Crosstown (forming a powerful City-state political bloc with Mayor Daley in pushing the expressway), squared off against Dan Walker, an independent Democratic candidate who clashed with the Daley's Chicago Democratic machine and opposed the Crosstown.

In his previous term, Ogilvie had successfully amended the state constitution (which, amongst other things, increased the political voice of Chicago's predominantly Republican suburbs, thus breaking the previous balance between City and “Downstate” political machines) but also introduced the state's first income tax, which proved unpopular with the electorate. In a close race, Walker defeated Ogilvie 51% to 49%. NBC reported that the “education drive” of CAP's Anti-Crosstown Coalition could have swayed 30,000-40,000 votes, thus playing a deciding role in the neck-and-neck Governor's race. Len Dubi and Mary Lou Wolff, on hearing the election result, stated “Today's effort may be remembered as the beginning of the end of ‘politics as usual’ in Chicago” (CAP Anti-Crosstown Coalition, 1972a). On 25<sup>th</sup> March, Governor Walker appeared at the 1973 CAP annual convention<sup>14</sup> declaring to an ecstatic audience:

“I have a very simple message for you. The Crosstown Expressway will not be built, no matter what other may say, or hint, or hope. I have a responsibility, however, to insure that the federal money earmarked for that project is saved for Illinois, to be used for public transportation systems, or for needed or useful highways... I call on all property owners in the Crosstown Corridor, and all local public officials to carry on their affairs on the assumption – the true assumption – that the Crosstown Expressway will not be built. I repeat – the Crosstown Expressway will not be built” (Walker, 1973).

Walker's election, however, did not mark the end of the Crosstown Expressway, just as it did not mark the end of politics “Chicago style”. However, the personal and political enmity between Daley and Walker became a significant roadblock for any attempt to move the Crosstown forward through the 1970s.

*Not dead yet*

No matter how many times Governor Walker “buried” the Crosstown Expressway, its specter continued to haunt political debates and planning proposals. The continued debate over the Expressway was in large part an attempt to understand and address the changing social and

economic geography of the Chicago region. Expansive capital and white flight from the city fuelled widespread suburbanization and Chicago acutely felt the negative impacts of industrial and commercial relocation to the suburbs and a shrinking economy struggling under the weight of systemic stagflation (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982).

Chicago's decline as a pre-eminently industrial, manufacturing metropolis was becoming apparent as the economic boom of the wartime and immediate post-war period subsided. The problematic trend was evident by the mid-1970s: Chicago's cramped urban conditions and antiquated facilities led a significant number of companies to relocate both to the nearby suburbs and further afield to California and the southwest "Gunbelt" (Markusen et al., 1991). From a peak of 668,000 manufacturing jobs in the city, Chicago's industrial employment had declined 59% to 277,000 by 1982. Whilst total manufacturing employment in the six-county Chicago area declined from 853,000 in 1947 to 745,000 in 1982, with the city's share of this labor market dropping from 78% to 37% in the face of competition from suburban Cook County and the five collar counties (Squires et al., 1987, pp. 25-29).

That Chicago's experience of industrial decline was so much more severe as compared to the region as a whole (as the suburbs boomed at the city's expense), presented a two-fold problem for the city. Firstly, how to attract and retain manufacturing jobs within the city limits (thus providing valuable tax dollars to municipal coffers); and secondly, how to get Chicagoans to the jobs relocating in suburban Cook and the collar counties. This was of primary concern in the Crosstown Corridor, an area containing a large proportion of Chicago's industrial activity – particular along Cicero Avenue between Fullerton and the Eisenhower Expressway and adjacent to the Stevenson Expressway. This included concentrations of intermodal and trucking terminals for companies who had favored Chicago as a national transportation hub and the City saw the Crosstown as a vital infrastructural improvement to maintain the presence of the trucking industry (Crosstown Associates, 1971; Lovell, 1977).

Crosstown advocates thus framed the Expressway as an employment generator – both in terms of construction jobs and as vital to developing an expanded industrial belt in Chicago – and an infrastructural connector between the workers of the city and growing employment centers in the suburbs; particularly for the low-income and marginalized residents of the South Side. Contrary to the new governor's statements, Milton Pikarsky declared that the Crosstown Expressway was still very much alive (Chicago Tribune, 1973a).

Not only was the Crosstown still alive, it was receiving support from a broad coalition of interest groups within the city. "Big Labor" looked at the potential construction of the expressway as a means to stem the flow of jobs out of the City. In early 1973, the United Auto Workers (UAW) threw their support behind the Crosstown; Robert Johnston, Director of UAW's Chicago region, claimed the expressway would promote "industrial expansion" and "open up jobs in adjacent high unemployment areas". Furthermore, Johnston suggested that the Crosstown, would generate \$2.7billion in new jobs, business expansion and other benefits whilst integrating rapid mass transit in its median would proved access to industrial jobs for Chicagoan without access to automobiles (c.f. Chicago Tribune, 1973b). The Chicago Federation of Labor also called on municipal and state officials to build the Crosstown (Herman, 1975).

In a *Chicago Tribune* article strongly advocating the Crosstown Expressway, Michael Killian (1975) argued that Daley's carrying the Crosstown Corridor in April 1975's mayoral election was evidence of going support for the Expressway. In addition to support from "Big Labor", Killian suggested that the Crosstown was supported by both White and Black communities. For Whites in the Corridor, federal relocation assistance offered the possibility

to flee Black encroachment in their neighborhoods whilst the Expressway was to serve as a “natural barrier” to “further black expansion”. Blacks, Killian suggested, would also welcome the Expressway “despite these racial overtones” as they would receive a share of the jobs created and benefit from improvements in traffic flow on the South Side – despite evidence of strong Black resistance to the Crosstown in the South and West Sides (Anthony, 1970a).

*Global economic shifts, personal political battles and a change in federal priorities*

As the Crosstown Expressway internalized the racial, social and class tensions of a declining industrial city during the civil rights era, the struggle over the roadway also brought national and global-scale macro-economic processes to roost in the Midwest Metropolis. 1973 marked a distinct turning point for the proposed Crosstown Expressway. That year, the federal government amended the 1956 Federal-Aid Highways Act, enabling monies earmarked for expressway construction to be transferrable to other modes of ground transportation, significantly mass transit. The federal level amendments proved a vital political tool for community groups and those opposing the Crosstown to lobby for the diverting of funds for the Crosstown Expressway to other, non-highway based projects, in conjuncture with the runaway budgeted construction costs for the Crosstown. The attempt to create a “total development concept” expressway had introduced a massive increase in required capital expenditure from 1965’s initially proposed \$300,000,000 expressway<sup>15</sup> (Transport Advisory Group, 1965). By 1972, preliminary cost estimates for integrating public transportation alone reached \$97,190,000 (Crosstown Associates, 1972, p. 19) whilst overall costs ballooned to in excess of \$1billion.

“Total development” designs, however, only in part account for the Crosstown Expressway’s rapidly rising costs. American postwar growth had been premised upon the high mass production and consumption of Fordist accumulation (grounded in the Bretton Woods agreement and exports to the restructuring and rebuilding economies of Europe and Japan). The Oil Crisis of 1973, and the internationalisation of the economy as countries (e.g. (West) Germany and Japan) regained productivity and competitiveness after the Second World War, triggered a generalized crisis of Fordist accumulation as economic stagnation, inflation and crises of over-production developed into a systemic crisis that existing national economic Keynesian management could not mend (Jessop, 2000; Peck, 2002; Saad-Filho, 2007). To a large degree, these macro-economic trends had caused Chicago’s industrial decline and out-sourcing of manufacturing jobs: now, high inflation drove up the real price of Crosstown Expressway construction. Adjusting for inflation alone, 1965’s basic \$300,000,000 Crosstown Expressway cost \$512,380,950 in 1975.

Furthermore, the Oil Crisis itself triggered fears of excessive gas costs for an auto-dependent American society, raised the prominence of environmental concerns about urban pollution and a greater interest in pursuing mass transit options. Still, the federal government was to cover up to 90% of the massive Crosstown Expressway price tag: dubbed mile-for-mile “the most expensive road in history” by CAP. Yet the monumental sum for expressway construction, combined with growing dissatisfaction with urban expressways and environmental concerns over the “energy crisis” produced the powerful discursive trope utilized by anti-expressway groups and planners to challenge the Crosstown and call for new solutions to America’s (urban) transportation problems<sup>16</sup>.

These macro-economic and social changes stimulated a shift in the “need,” perception and use-value of the Crosstown Expressway that was to form the context for a personal political battle between Mayor Daley and Governor Walker: a battle that would prove costly for both men’s political standing. Through the early-mid 1970s, Daley and Walker’s antagonistic relationship increasingly left its mark on Chicago’s transportation infrastructure

and governance. Whilst they successfully presided over the creation of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in 1973, they clashed repeatedly during 1973-75 over Daley's nominations to the Board of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) (with nominees' position on the Crosstown a central concern). Between 1974 and 1976, the two would square off over their competing visions for transportation development in the theatre of Chicago and Illinois politics.

In May 1974, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) unveiled alternative plans for a two-lane truck highway to be built along sections of the Crosstown route, a plan supported by Governor Walker. The overall "needs" of the Cicero Corridor presented in IDOT's *New Transportation Solutions for Chicago* (1974) remained similar to those used to justify the "need" for a north-south expressway:

"Essentially, two major deficiencies stand out. First and foremost, there is a lack of adequate street access and transit service to surrounding neighborhoods and industrial centers and secondly, there is an urgent need for improved north-south access for both freight and passenger transport" (Illinois Department of Transportation, 1974, p. 11).

The report, however, suggested that the Crosstown failed to meet the actual requirements of Chicago trucking and actually displacing approximately 60% of trucking terminals in the Corridor who were seen as unlikely to relocate in the West Side. As a counter-proposal to "traditional highway thinking", IDOT focused on a community-approach that would minimize displacement and lessen the environmental impact whilst addressing the legitimate transportation needs of Chicago. Through diverting monies assigned to the Crosstown Expressway through the Federal-Aid Highways Act, IDOT proposed funding a five-pronged alternative<sup>17</sup> (focusing on roadway improvements to Cicero Avenue and truck-ways) to an Expressway, extending rapid transit to O'Hare and the Stevenson Expressway, replacing the elevated Loop structure with a subway and distributor system, and improving comfort and safety on the system.

Daley submitted his own revised plans for the Crosstown Expressway to the State on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1974 (see map 2). His revision, with elements of the "total development concept" increasingly priced out, offered an apparent compromise, cutting Section I (from Kennedy to Eisenhower) from the plans, thus avoiding the area of highest residential, commercial and industrial displacement, and turned the east-west leg south to connect with I-57 east of Western Avenue. Later, when asked about the notion of IDOT's exclusive truck-ways, Daley would scoff: "Government is in the business of building expressways for people, not trucking companies" (c.f. Chicago Tribune, 1975).

Entering the 1975 state legislative session, the Mayor, frustrated at the Governor's blocking the Crosstown Expressway, would test his influence in Springfield as a controversial, Daley-backed bill, was to go before the state legislature; a bill that would give Chicago the authority to bill the Crosstown Expressway without the approval of the state. Daley faced opposition from state Republicans and suburbanites, but also a growing body of independents and Downstate Democrats and Walker-backers, influenced by fears constructing the Crosstown would divert transportation funding from downstate. This coalition of groups from broad political persuasions, for the first time in years, stymied Daley clout in Springfield with his "minions in the legislature... 'getting murdered' on key votes" despite huge Democratic majorities (Elmer, 1975a).

The inability of state Democrats to muster the numbers to pass key bills due to the fractures between Daley- and Walker-backers left both leaders "losers" as the legislative session wound down; neither able to round-up the requisite votes. Walker's own \$4.5

Accelerated Building Program failed to pass, whilst Daley's floor leaders in the Illinois House of Representative decided not to introduce the Crosstown bill at all to avoid an embarrassing defeat on roll-call (Elmer, 1975b). The impasse between Daley (who insisted on constructing the Crosstown as an eight-lane highway) and Walker (who advocated improvements along Cicero Avenue and a two-lane truck route between the Dan Ryan and Stevenson Expressways) not only curtailed their personal agendas, but left federal monies for expressway building through the Federal-Aid Highways Act precariously in the balance. President Ford threatened the potential \$1.5billion federal share of the Crosstown Expressway's estimated budget by proposing the prioritization of rural gaps in the interstate network over urban gaps, such as the Crosstown, and further suggested money earmarked for the project would not be there forever. Daley, when asked if Ford's plan would mean the end of the Crosstown chuckled: "Oh, he can't do that" (c.f. McCarron, 1975).

As the 1976 state gubernatorial election approached, the Mayor turned his attention to usurping Governor Walker. Daley's political organization pressed Illinois Secretary of State Michael Howlett to run against Walker in the Democratic primary. Walker, an independent Democrat, could not match the weight of the Daley machine and (to the Mayor's delight) Howlett swept all 50 Chicago wards. Allegations of corruption against Howlett, (in large part coming from the defeated Walker) weakened his position and Republican James Thompson comprehensively defeated him in the general election.

Daley's personal triumph over Walker proved something of a pyretic victory. Although he vanquished his opponent, the 1976 election revealed the growing cracks in Daley's political bloc, largely surrounding the position of Chicago's Black community. Again, the Crosstown issue highlighted this transition in Chicago politics. Howlett had supported Daley's 1974 revised version of the Crosstown, which included a potential re-routing of the southern leg of the Expressway through several Black neighborhoods along the "California Variant". Although he defeated Walker throughout the City, it was in the predominantly Black South and West Side wards that Walker had his strongest showing. The independence of Chicago Black voters was cause enough for the *Chicago Tribune* to suggest the Black vote was no longer "deliverable" (Mehler, 1976). Thompson pounced on this apparent shift and the "insensitive" road plan. Attempting to stir the resentment of the Black community, Thompson further asserted Howlett forwarded his Crosstown plans:

Because he is afraid of people who live north of Congress Street and he can't take the heat. And that is because he thinks people who live south of Congress Street in Chicago will march to the polls and vote Democrat no matter what... [Howlett's plan was conceived from] his wanting to please the roadway construction industry and knowing that he had the black vote in his pocket anyway (c.f. Griffin, 1976).

These racial fissures in Chicago's Democratic machine would not reach their breaking point until the run up to Harold Washington's election as Chicago's first Black mayor in 1983 (and the turbulent years of "Council Wars" which followed), but they did illuminate cracks in the veneer of old-style City politics and Daley's power base (see Abu-Lughod, 1999; Grimshaw, 1995; Simpson, 2001; Squires et al., 1987).

*After Richard J.*

Richard J. Daley died from a heart attack in his office on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1976. Despite his achievements as a "builder mayor", Daley never saw ground broken on the Crosstown Expressway. The man who stepped into his shoes, Michael Bilandic, presided over a fracturing City political machine, and whilst initially receiving a popular mandate after Daley's death, lacked his predecessor's personal charisma and political



clout to press his own agenda (Simpson, 2001). Although his brief time in office was difficult, Bilandic managed to reach a pact with Governor Thompson on the “Burnham Corridor” – the southern leg of the Crosstown Expressway – ending a 15 year battle between City and state.

Thompson had opposed the original Crosstown but stated all other options were open to negotiation, particular regarding the central importance of a “strong, diversified and unified transportation system” for a “*healthy* and competitive business environment” (Thompson, 1977). At a joint press conference on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1977, Thompson and Bilandic agreed to start discussions that would make funds available for the south leg of the Crosstown Expressway (coincidentally along the same alignment Thompson had protested with South Side Blacks during the 1976 election) and a Franklin Street subway to replace the elevated Loop structure. The Burnham Corridor was to serve as the backbone for a southwest industrial / economic development corridor. Yet whilst both Thompson and Bilandic were lauded as “winners” in the deal, the reality of the situation placed numerous obstacles in the way of groundbreaking. President Carter had committed to cutting energy consumption, placing support from the federal Department of Transportation in question; federal, municipal and state officials needed to agree on a precise route; and then the plans would be required to pass long and detailed environmental and impact studies – and citizen opposition of the kind that had been a constant thorn in the side of the Crosstown Expressway (Ziamba, 1977).

Democratic challenger Jane Byrne swept Bilandic from City Hall in the 1979 mayoral election, taking office on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1979. Only three months later, she reached a deal with Governor Thompson to scrap the Crosstown/Burnham Corridor and Franklin Street subway plans developed under Bilandic. In lieu, they intended to divert the c.\$2billion in federal funds earmarked for these projects to mass transit aid for the beleaguered RTA and other pressing roadway improvements throughout the city and suburbs. Initial reports suggested suburbs in the six-county northeastern Illinois area would receive 69% of Crosstown monies and critics questioned whether the complicated arrangement would work (Egler and Ciccone, 1979; Young, 1979). The final deal, however, split the funds 50-50 between City and suburbs and the diversion of funds passed, effectively burying any lasting remnants of Crosstown Expressway envisioned by Richard J. Daley.

For long-time opponents of the Crosstown Expressway, the Byrne-Thompson deal was a bittersweet victory. Former CAP leaders expressed a feeling of vindication; Reverend Len Dubi pointed the accuracy of CAP’s warning regarding the 1970s energy crisis and need for investment in mass transit over the construction of another urban expressway whilst Joseph Crutchfield, one time CAP Treasurer expressed relief that “they finally made the right decision”. James Kelly of the Anti-Crosstown Action Committee, however, touched on the lasting legacy of the battle over the Crosstown: “for years [residents have] complained about ripped up streets and alleys, and for years they’ve been told no repairs could be made because the Crosstown was coming” (c.f. Hirsley, 1979). Indeed, whilst there was plenty of talk about investing in the Corridor, little material improvements were actually made. The 1972 warnings of Hal Foust of from pro-Expressway group *Citizens Crosstown Committee* indicated the problem that has come to characterize development in the Crosstown Corridor since 1979:

“There may never again be a federal fund available for Crosstown, for completing the Chicago expressway system, for saving lives, for creating 13,000 new jobs, for easing traffic in the 1,500 daily trips on our incomplete system, and *for rehabilitating Midtown*” (c.f. Joyce, 1972 emphasis added).

Citizens in Crosstown Corridor, both pro and against the Expressway, sought investment in the marginalized urban space, seeking great connectivity to the wider city and region, and improving living conditions beyond the showpiece Loop, but that investment never arrived.

The Byrne and Thompson's deal freed at total of \$1.916 billion earmarked for the Crosstown Corridor to aid to the struggling regional mass transit system and other pressing transportation infrastructure projects. Between 1977 and 1982, federal escalator-interest on this money swelled the Crosstown largesse to \$2.577 billion. Within the City, where 67% of the municipal share of re-allocated dollars were spent on mass transit (as opposed to only 8% in the suburbs), the deal laid the groundwork for expansion projects for the CTA in areas that had substandard existing service (Crimmins, 1994).

Significantly, these monies funding the extension of rapid transit to O'Hare International Airport in 1984 and a southwest CTA rapid transit line to Midway airport, opened in 1993<sup>18</sup>. These extensions connected the urban core to the Chicago's airport hubs by rapid transit but did little to improve the spatial and social marginalization of vast sections of the West and South Sides. The prioritization of the airport links projects over, for example, extending the Dan Ryan CTA line south to 130<sup>th</sup> Street, further suggests a distinct shift in Chicago's transportation priorities; how the city wanted to see itself; and the image it presented of itself on the global stage. These transformations have been aggressively pursued by Mayor Richard M. Daley, as discussed in the following (see Bennett, 2006).

#### ALTERNATIVES FOR THE GLOBAL CITY, 1989-2009

##### *Corridor Resurrection: The Mid-City Transitway*

Three months after Richard M. Daley defeated Alderman Timothy Evans and Edward Vrdolyak in Chicago's 1989 mayoral election, the City released a preliminary overview for possible transit development in the Crosstown Corridor (City of Chicago, 1989). With the demise of the Crosstown Expressway, the north-south arterial streets on the West Side of Chicago remained problematically overcrowded, and, due to a lack of ongoing improvement in the shadow of the possible expressway, were in a state of disrepair. In 1989, Cicero Avenue carried a higher volume of traffic than any other Chicago arterial street whilst Pulaski Road and Harlem Avenue both had section where average daily traffic loads exceeded 40,000 vehicles (City of Chicago, 1989). With Richard M. Daley's ascension to the mayoralty, interest in infrastructure development in the Crosstown Corridor reignited, but with solutions grounded in a new understanding of Chicago as a post-industrial metropolis.

In the initial paper, the City sought to outline the reasons for proceeding with a feasibility study on the concept of a rapid transit line that would extend south from the Jefferson Park CTA station, along the right-of-way of the Belt Line Railroad (paralleling Cicero Avenue) before turning westward at Midway along a 75<sup>th</sup> Street alignment. Finally, the transit line would drop south, east of Western Avenue, connecting with the Dan Ryan Expressway at 87<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed alignment closely followed that of the Crosstown Expressway, yet a shift to a transit based solution to the traffic congestion in the Corridor illustrated a (partial) shift in approach to Chicago's transportation issues.

The rationale for a Mid-City Transitway was five-fold; framed, once more, with reference to the legacy of Burnham's plans for a circulator system at the City limits (1989, pp. 8-10). Firstly, the region's twenty-year transportation plan was being updated for the target year 2010. Through this planning process, public transit proposals were reviewed, with a screening committee selecting transit improvement projects for the City and suburbs for detailed evaluation. The performance of the Mid-City Transitway in CATS modeling tests on ridership, cost, and social and environmental impact indicated there was a demand for the line

in an under-served area of the metropolitan area. Secondly, the City stressed an attempt to “strike a balance” between Downtown and the City’s neighborhoods in terms of infrastructure improvements. Whilst the Transitway would serve as a feeder line to radial transit networks, thus providing access to the Loop and central Business District, the primary function was serve the neighborhoods adjacent to the proposed line. Thirdly, a Transitway would connect City residents to the employment centers along the Mid-City corridor and wider region. This particularly emphasized access to jobs in the industrial zones to the south and commercial centers (such as the Ford City mall), whilst also seeking to improve access for residents in the West and Southwest to the growing employment hubs surrounding O’Hare Airport. Fourthly, the plan looked to connect the recently revitalized Midway Airport with O’Hare. The Transitway would provide fast and frequent service for passengers requiring a transfer between the airports, but would also, in conjuncture with expansion plans being considered at the time, enable the Southwest airfield to relieve some on the congestion experienced at O’Hare. Finally, the plan explored the possibilities of private sector involvement. Extending rapid transit (either extending the southwest CTA line or through the Mid-City proposal) had the current owner of the Ford City mall interested in joint development opportunities with the City. Plans suggested negotiating with developers (such as the group who were constructing the Chatham Ridge mall at 87<sup>th</sup> and Dan Ryan) for land acquisitions “or some other contribution” in return for a connection to the new transit line (ibid, p. 10).

Coinciding with the City’s renewed interest in transportation investment in the Cicero Corridor, the CATS included a “Cicero Avenue O’Hare/Ryan Interline Connector” as a priority project (along with a Downtown circulator and south lakefront line) in their 2010 regional transportation plan (1990)<sup>19</sup>. CATS viewed the line as of great benefit to both Chicago’s airport infrastructure and those residents along the corridor making north-south journeys ill served by the existing expressway and radial transit network and placed an estimated cost of \$565million on constructing the line (ibid., p. 34). By the late 1990s, the Mid-City Transitway continued to feature as a central element in CATS’s regional transportation plans (1997). Both 2010 and 2020 plans projected a Mid-City transit line would receive highest ridership patronage amongst other future heavy rapid transit extensions on the Red, Yellow and Orange lines and as such, the Transitway was suggested as an excellent candidate for federal funding.

Eugene Ryan, deputy director of CATS, called on community groups that might benefit the Transitway to lobby the City to fund further studies on the Mid-City Transitway. He projected the line would serve approximately 236,000 riders along the corridor, stimulating economic development along the route, but cautioned: “Realistically, the chances of this project dying are greater than it succeeding... Any project [the size of the Mid-City] is going to require a push” (c.f. Fornek, 1992). Through this period, however, little progress was made in moving the Transitway project forward. In part, this reflected the CTA’s focus on maintaining and upgrading the existing heavy rail transit infrastructure in the city from the mid-1990s to early 2000s; although monies from the Crosstown Expressway’s cancellation had enabled the construction of the Southwest (Orange) elevated line to Midway airport. Due to their antiquated and dilapidated structures and stations, the CTA embarked on an extensive rehabilitation of the Lake-Englewood-Jackson Park<sup>20</sup> (Green) and Douglas Park (Blue) elevated lines. The Ravenswood (Brown) line also underwent a program of renovation to increase capacity on the high-demand line through the City’s booming near north and northwest sides.

It was not until 2002 when Mayor Richard M. Daley commissioned a second round of feasibility studies that the Mid-City project regained any momentum. Whilst the City had

previously floated the idea of heavy rapid transit in the Corridor, the 2002 feasibility studies embraced a plethora of possible alternatives for transportation improvements in Chicago's West Side. These included developing an elevated line utilizing existing Union-Pacific and Chicago Beltway Railroad right-of-ways adjacent to Cicero Avenue; a bus rapid transit roadway; a truck-exclusive roadway (to relieve congestion on the Kennedy and Dan Ryan Expressways); or combination of transit and truck freight infrastructure. In addition to the feasibility studies, the City moved to acquire land rights along the Corridor, despite not expecting to break ground for another decade. The exact nature and alignment of the possible development, however, remained under evaluation: Luann Hamilton, Director of Transportation Planning at CDOT asserting,

“It's too early to say whether the improvement in the corridor will be rail or bus or some hybrid, but it definitely will not be a Crosstown Expressway for automobiles... The transportation needs of 30 years ago are not the same as today's need to mitigate congestion and free up north-south arterial streets” (c.f. Hilkevitch, 2002).

The concept of rapid transit through the Crosstown Corridor received a largely positive welcome in the media, and politicians whose districts would benefit the congestion relief provided by improved transit in the southwest. However, the costs associated with constructing an heavy rapid transit line (whether elevated or utilizing existing freight rail corridors) – placed in excess of \$1 billion by 1997 – led the CTA and several other political leaders to offer limited support.

#### *Transportation priorities in Richard M. Daley's Chicago*

Whilst developing transit and freight facilities in the Crosstown Corridor was a popular idea, at least on paper, it remained low on the City and CTA's overall list of transportation investments and funding projects. Despite feasibility study reports commissioned by the City indicating a potential ridership of 90,000-95,000 riders per day (Chicago Tribune, 2005), Mayor Daley continued to prioritize the extension of the Orange, Red and Yellow CTA lines, and the creation of a downtown “Circle Line”. The Circle Line, or a version of a downtown circulator system, has been a prominent feature of plans for the central business district since the 1960s, particularly as a replacement of the elevated Loop system. Previous circulator plans included connecting Chicago's commuter rail stations and providing heavy mass transit service for the Gold Coast. The latest plans – “composed of new strategic links to Chicago's rapid transit system that will allow more direct connections between rapid transit and commuter rail lines serving the region's core... located in a ring about two to three miles from the Chicago Central Business District” (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2008, p. 131) – focus on bus rapid transit or heavy transit to connect South Loop/Bridgeport, West Loop/UIC and the Magnificent Mile to the CBD.

At the regional level, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP<sup>21</sup>) 2030 transportation plan downgraded the Mid-City Transitway from a “priority project” (as it had been in the 2010 and 2020 CATS plans) to a future “corridor recommendation” (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2008, pp. 213-215). The need for a Transitway remains focused on improving north-south transport in the west of the city, integrating the region's existing radial transit network of buses, elevated lines and commuter rail, and increasing the connectivity of Chicago's airports to the rest of the city. Furthermore, CMAP emphasizes the benefits of economic, industrial and neighborhood development – particularly for new development in the vicinity of proposed stations – that the Mid-City Transitway would bring (ibid., p. 214). However, with a lack of identified funds, the Mid-City remains a long-term project in CMAP's regional transportation plan and as such, it has fallen behind the Circle Line and Express Airport Train connecting Midway and O'Hare (via Downtown) as new

capital projects. Despite the renewed interest in 2002, the Mid-City Transitway has also fallen in the City's list of transportation priorities. The City's Department of Transportation still suggests the Mid-City Transitway would be "an important part of Chicago's transportation network" with "potential for strong ridership" but stresses; "the Mid-City is just a long-range concept... part of a long-range regional plan to address transportation needs" (Chicago Department of Transportation, 2009).

Currently, both the City and CMAP view the Mid-City Transitway as an important component of Chicago's future transportation infrastructure, yet not a pressing priority. The route however, echoing the battle between Richard J. Daley and Dan Walker in the 1970s, still has the cache and emotional resonance to turn into a political lightning rod.

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007, Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, Michael Madigan, called on the House to revive plans for the Crosstown Expressway. His proposal, which, for many commentators came unexpectedly, was to develop the roadway as part of the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority, thus creating a toll-way – in comparison to Richard J. Daley's proposed freeway. As a toll road, funds generated through toll charges on the route would offset the costs associated with constructing a new Crosstown Expressway.

Madigan – who was unaware of the City's ongoing Mid-City Transitway studies – did not run the proposal past the Illinois Tollway Authority, IDOT, Governor Blagojevich, or Mayor Daley, but rather sought to get "the idea into the mix" before the upcoming state legislative session (Hilkevitch and Washburn, 2007). Ostensibly, the goal of a renewed Crosstown Expressway would be to relieve congestion along the Dan Ryan and I-90/94 as they pass by downtown: said Madigan spokesman Steve Brown: "What we're trying to accomplish is the building of a road that would make massive improvements in traffic congestion throughout the Chicago metropolitan area" (c.f. McKinney and Speilman, 2007).

Madigan's proposal received a mixed reaction. Politicians in Springfield treated the re-emergence of Crosstown Expressway talk with surprise and suspicion; a spokesman for Republican House Minority Leader Tom Cross stating, "We believe there's a message being sent here, but we're not sure who it's being directed toward" (c.f. McKinney and Speilman, 2007). Newspaper editorials and op-ed columns were not so ambiguous, immediately rallying in opposition. Headlines called for an end to talk of a Crosstown Expressway "for good" (Norquist and Grimshaw, 2007). Reporters asserted that an expressway was an anachronistic solution to the city's twenty-first century traffic problems (Daily Southtown, 2007) and suggested the rationale for the proposal was more about political contracting favors than offering a practical plan to relieve congestion on Chicago's existing expressway network (Byrne, 2007; Schwartz, 2007). In op-ed pieces, citizens and community groups expressed concerns about neighborhood destruction, pollution and poor allocation of transportation funds.

However, despite the outcry at the prospect of Crosstown bulldozers descending on the West Side neighborhoods that stood in opposition to Richard J. Daley decades earlier, the Crosstown proposal did receive some sympathy. Some residents embraced the possible economic benefits expressway construction would bring to the Corridor (Grossman and Huppke, 2007) whilst lane closures along the Dan Ryan (due to highway renovations between 2006-2007) led *Chicago Tribune* transportation report Jon Hilkevitch (2006) to question the positive impact the Crosstown would have had on traffic congestion in the twenty-first century.

Perhaps the most positive welcome for renewed talk of the Crosstown Expressway, though, came from the Mayor's office. Daley's initial response, on 21<sup>st</sup> February, was to

suggest a new Crosstown along the lines of Madigan's Tollway was "something to think about" in order to address the "truck traffic choking economic development in the region". However, the next day he had turned the explosion of interest in the Crosstown Corridor to his own advantage by re-asserting his vision of a two-lane truck only freeway with a mass transit line integrated along its median (Hilkevitch and Washburn, 2007).

Indeed, three weeks prior to Madigan forwarding his Crosstown Tollway proposal to an unsuspecting Springfield, Daley had stressed the importance of the Cicero Corridor in relation to Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid. On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2007, Daley suggested the Games would be the "impetus" behind the development of a north-south transit line along the Mid-City alignment, eyeing the federal funds that would be attracted to the city should the IOC select Chicago for the Summer Games. In contrast to the decline in priority of the Mid-City Transitway in City and CMAP plans, Daley argued:

[Killing the Crosstown] was the worst thing that ever happened to this city... The Olympics will give us an impetus [to build] public transportation we don't have. Get on the Dan Ryan and look at how many people are driving north... We need a north and south line... We're going to propose that anyway, but we think it helps us if we get the Olympics (c.f. Speilman, 2007).

After Madigan brought back the negative association of the struggle over the original Crosstown Expressway, Daley's truck-only freeway and combined mass transit line had a rhetorical foil to play against. For Daley, a truck-only right-of-way; "[is] a great idea. Yes. It was a great idea in the '70s. That was the best time to build it". As such, infrastructural investment in the Cicero Corridor was necessary to address "what's wrong with the city" – the failure to move people along a north-south access outside of Downtown, whether by automobile or transit (c.f. Speilman and McKinney, 2007). Daley went on to assert that mass transit was a vital component of any plans for a Crosstown/Mid-City route.

Daley's position and statements on the Crosstown Corridor in February 2007 highlight two important issues surrounding transportation priorities in Richard M.'s Chicago. Firstly, Daley tied the idea of developing the Mid-City Transitway and truck route into Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid and discursive (and material) construction of "Global Chicago". This serves to: (1) suggest that a successful Olympic bid would lead to investment throughout the city, thus galvanizing support behind the bid; and (2) point to the importance of infrastructural development and investment to Chicago's position as a global city. The Mid-City corridor therefore sits, rhetorically, at the center of Chicago's desired pattern of urbanization (Clark et al., 2002; Madigan, 2004; for a critique, see Wilson and Sternberg, 2009). However, the reality of its de-prioritization placed it behind other projects deemed more important to this model of development – such as the Circle Line and Airport Express to downtown. Secondly, in light of Daley's response to Madigan's perceived outlandish call to revive an urban expressway through the Cicero-75<sup>th</sup> Street Corridors, the Mayor's plans appear a more viable (if more expensive) alternative to the mass displacement associated with the Crosstown Expressway. Certainly reports on transportation infrastructure in the Crosstown Corridor, whilst expressing concerns over both plans, favored the Mayor's proposal over Madigan's (Daily Southtown, 2007). As such, Daley secured not only a political victory over the state legislature, but also a victory for his particular imaging of Chicago as a "global city".

## SHAPING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE URBAN PERIPHERY

What can the history of planning and politics in the Crosstown Corridor tell us about transportation infrastructure in the American city? What lessons can we identify for the

possible future for Chicago? In the following, I briefly outline some key relationships, concepts and trends. This preliminary discussion centers on two dialectical relationships. Firstly, that between the “use-value” of the city and “exchange-value” related urban development; and secondly, that between the urban “center” and “periphery”: not just in terms of absolute space (the Loop as the urban core of Chicago and Crosstown Corridor as hinterland), but the relative interconnections between city spaces and the social relations they internalize. The discussion begins to illuminate several distinct continuities and ruptures between the politics and planning of transportation infrastructures moving from the Crosstown Expressway era to that of the Mid-City Transitway (see table 1, also Filion, 1999). These suggest that whilst the use- and exchange values prioritized in Chicago, and their spatial expressions, are socially constructed and historically contingent, certain key underlying imperatives remain constant in the physical and conceptual construction of the Crosstown Corridor.

*“Use-values” and “exchange-values”*

[The] *City and urban reality are related to use value. Exchange value and the generalization of commodities by industrialization tend to destroy it by subordinating the city and urban reality* which are refuges of use value, the origins of a virtual predominance and revalorization of use (Lefebvre, 1996, pp. 67-68 original emphasis).

The “use-value” of urban space (or, for example, a transportation infrastructure), refers to the practical, objective qualities of a particular development that are only revealed in their consumption. In contrast, the “exchange-value” refers to urban developments that serve to facilitate (as a component of the “development of the forces of production”) or realize the accumulation of capital (Harvey, 2007, p. 377). For Lefebvre, within urban systems, actions are exercised over particular conflicts “between use value and exchange value, between mobilization of wealth (in silver and in money) and unproductive investment in the city, between accumulation of capital and its squandering” (1996, p. 68). Under predominantly capitalist social relations, the city is constituted through the dialectical contradictions of urbanism (the use-value of the city as a *thing*), and urbanization (the city as *process* for the realization of surplus value through facilitating the mobilization of exchange-value) (Merrifield, 2002). As Lefebvre suggests, the necessities of exchange-value tend to subordinate the production of the city for particular use-values.

This relationship, I argue, is central to understanding of the history of transportation development in the Crosstown Corridor. The key rationale for the development of an expressway in the Corridor (or a truck-only roadway or mass transit route), which has remained constant throughout a century of planning, has been to facilitate the accumulation of capital. Burnham and Bennett’s plan for the Chicago region’s highway infrastructure focused on integrating space, increasing the (relative) interconnection between the Midwest’s sites of agricultural production and the city, as center of the valorization and distribution of these commodities (see Cronon, 1991). Within this framework, the purpose of a Crosstown Expressway, as a circumferential boulevard to “divert from the center traffic not having its objective point in the central area”, was to relieve congestion thus enabling an increase in the circulation of commodities and reducing the time needed to realize a profit on commodities from their production to arrival on the market. This logic remains evident throughout the numerous iterations of expressway development through the 1950s-1970s, particularly regarding the close discursive relationship between the needs of the Crosstown and the needs of Chicago’s logistics and trucking industry.

The rationale of the Mid-City Transitway also, in part, reflects the need to reduce congestion of Chicago’s existing expressway network (through getting more motorists to use

public transit) in order to increase the flow of truck freight through the city; “you have to eliminate trucks” Richard M. Daley asserted, “Trucks is the major issue” (c.f. Speilman and McKinney, 2007). That Michael Madigan could forward the idea of the Crosstown Expressway in 2007 is indicative of the continued problem of congestion clogging the flow of commodities through the city<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, the Mid-City Transitway proposal not only offers the possibility of congestion relief on Chicago’s expressways, but opens up the city’s airports as focal points for industrial, commercial, logistics and (certain) service industries (e.g. hotels, conference centers with their associated armies of low-wage service employees). The proposed transit alignment extends the labor market watersheds for these sites, which characterize the new economic geography of “post-industrial” Chicago, as well as the booming I-90 corridor towards Schaumburg and I-88 corridor through Naperville and Aurora: all with the cache of “green,” environmentally friendly transit.

Whilst not the only rationale for the development of improved north-south movement west of the Loop – and certainly several other logics have been influentially forwarded – the imperatives to increase the profitability of the urban landscape fundamentally defines transportation and urban planning in the Crosstown Corridor. This becomes evident when deconstructing the community opposition popularly credited with defeating the Crosstown Expressway. Community-based resistance groups, such as CAP and the Anti-Crosstown Action Committee focused their opposition to the Crosstown Expressway through promoting the use-value of the neighborhoods the roadway was to have cut destroyed. The neighborhood institutions and community infrastructures in place along the Crosstown route were as significant as the physical landscape which would be destroyed. In this regard, the production of urban space through the everyday practices of the Crosstown Corridor’s citizens became locked in a struggle with the production of the abstract, planned space of the City’s planners and engineers.

The use-value requirements of the Crosstown Expressway, and alternative visions for transportation infrastructure in the Corridor were considered, rhetorically at least, from the outset of Crosstown Associates’ research, but as the struggle over the route developed, through the “total development concept” expressway, the requirements of local residents became taken into account more seriously. The implementation of the “total development concept” approach to the Crosstown Expressway can be seen as an attempt to boost the use-value of the expressway for local communities; in addition to providing significant scope for the realization of profit by key landholders, developers and political interests (albeit in the form of a top-down, technocrat mode of planning and ideological modernism). Yet the costs of these elements, combined with the stagflation of the 1970s, served to swell the budget of the proposed expressway to the point where the “profitability” of the investment became questionable. As the exchange-value potential embodied in the Crosstown Expressway declined, so did the realistic possibility of developing infrastructural improvements focused on improving the everyday lives of Crosstown Corridor communities.

Mayor Richard J. Daley wanted to build the Crosstown Expressway, but for the benefits that it would bring the city in terms of economic development rather than the improvements garnered by the local community – despite the rhetoric he often used when discussing the project. Without the expressway in place, the West Side of the city was a poor potential site for investments in the built environment which constituted a vital component of the central city from the 1980s (such as witnessed with the gentrification of the Near North Side). As such, the Crosstown Corridor has remained in a position of spatial and social marginalization, despite the continued development of plans for the Corridor, evidenced by a lack of any subsequent significant investment in the area.



### *“Centers” and “peripheries”*

The struggle between competing use- and exchange-values is expressed in spatial terms throughout both the city and wider metropolitan region; an expression which can be usefully read through shifting notions of “centralization” and “peripheralization”. Broadly, we can see a tension between the centrality of the Crosstown Corridor within the abstract plans of the City and State and the continued marginalization of the Corridor in terms of material interconnections with the rest of the city and region, and its poor position in funding prioritization. This discontinuity is an expression of the manner in which the space of the Crosstown Corridor is understood. Plans for infrastructural development laid out in the *Plan of Chicago*, Crosstown Expressway (despite Pikarsky’s rhetoric suggesting otherwise) and Mid-City Transitway all frame the Corridor as a transportation thoroughfare: a space to be traversed rather than inhabited.

The radial nature of Chicago’s transportation networks significantly influenced the continued vitality of the Loop and central business district, but it failed to comprehensively integrate the city’s urban fabric along other axes. Thus, whilst the Crosstown Corridor became central to the abstract plans of the City and state – largely due to the influence of the trucking and logistics industries – the Corridor, as a lived space for its residents, remained a marginal concern. Relationally, the spaces of the Crosstown Corridor continue to embody to shifting relationship of use and exchange, although it is important to note that these are both socially constructed and historically variable. Whilst community activists managed to prevent the Crosstown Expressway plowing through their neighborhoods, it did not stop the continued peripheralization of the Corridor within both the city and the wider region. Without the required infrastructural investment, industrial and logistical activity increasingly migrated to the suburbs, where greater expanses on land were available to accommodate the increasing scale and growing technological advancements of industrial and freight activity significantly lower rents and taxes (Cidell, 2008).

This is reflected in relationship between Chicago’s socio-economic geography, urban morphology and the global economy. Whilst Burnham and Bennett’s plan for a crosstown route was preemptive – based on the particular planning designs and visions, subsequent plans for transportation infrastructure in the Crosstown Corridor have been of a more reactionary nature. For Richard J. Daley’s Chicago, The Crosstown Expressway offered the possibility of maintaining the city’s manufacturing and industrial base, upgrading the antiquated infrastructure and built environment of the early industrial metropolis. Yet shifts in the global space economy; the internationalization of the division of labor and the decline of Fordist mass production in the United States (Beauregard, 1993; Bluestone and Harrison, 1982) presented a fundamental transformation in the Chicago’s socioeconomic relations that Richard J. Daley, despite his political clout, could not reverse.

Through the 1970s, as the industrial centrality of the Crosstown Corridor waned so did the centrality of development plans for the Corridor within the City’s planning priorities. It was not until the Chicago’s airports became vital for the city’s “new economy”, moving away from manufacturing to service and FIRE industries, that the Crosstown Corridor developed a significant alternative purpose to freight movement and congestion relief (Abu-Lughod, 2000; Moberg, 2006; Testa, 2004). The concerted effort to develop Chicago as a central hub for the American passenger and freight airline industry served to redefine the city’s spatial relations, establishing O’Hare (and to a lesser degree, Midway) as central points in the metropolis. Within Richard M. Daley’s “Global Chicago”, O’Hare International Airport has emerged as an employment center rivaling the Loop. Furthermore, it serves as a key connection to the global economy for the city’s elites. In this regard, the Crosstown

Corridor offers the possibility to interconnect Chicago's principle airports, O'Hare and Midway, in order to increase the attractiveness of the city as a destination for business and tourism. Yet, with this renewed purpose, the Corridor and proposed Mid-City Transitway remain of secondary significance to linking the airports to the downtown core, reproducing the Corridor's peripheralization.

### *New Crosstown Politics*

Finally, it is worth noting a transition in the operational politics of Chicago between the two Mayor Daleys. Under the regime of Mayor Richard J. Daley, opposition to the Mayor was usually met with either a deaf ear (as can be seen with Pikarsky's refusal to meet with CAP), or hostile confrontation (such as verbal shouting matches between CAP officials and the Mayor or other machine politicians) (Chicago Daily News, 1972; Negrondia, 1972). Some attempts were made to incorporate "peripheral" groups into Richard J. Daley's political bloc, such as Chicago's African-American population, but these cases usually involved allying with ambitious individuals who were expected to play by the machine's rule and strive for the same rewards that had long defined the city's "Where's mine?" political logic (Grimshaw, 1995; Royko, 1972). In contrast, the "new machine" of Richard M. Daley, which crystallized after the reformist period of Harold Washington, is argued to be more inclusive and tolerant of opposition (Bennett, 2006). Yet this inclusion, which Bennett (*ibid*, p54) notes still comes with a level of suppression of race- and ethnicity inflected political conflict through "careful management" and "elite inclusion" has served to depoliticize active contestation with the City.

Neighborhood and issue-related groups are permitted to protest and often brought within City Hall, in contrast to being left outside to shout at its walls. The deployment of vague concepts (such as "sustainability," and "competitiveness" have come to characterize Richard M. Daley's global-city political agenda and with this, a form of urban populism that invokes the imagined community of the "the people" and the imagined space of "the city" overrides significant ideological and constitutive societal differences. As such, Richard M. Daley's Chicago produces a politics which to oppose it, is to be anti-Chicagoan (see Swyngedouw, 2007). This becomes evident, for example, in tying the development of the Mid-City Transitway into Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid: a universalizing rhetoric to construct broad support behind Daley's vision for Global Chicago.

## CONCLUSION

The preliminary analysis presented in this paper has two interconnected objectives. Firstly, through detailing the historical politics producing (abstractly, if not materially) transportation infrastructures in the Crosstown Corridor, the case study points to the complex, overdetermined nature of the urban landscape. In contrast to popular understandings of the failure to break ground on the Crosstown Expressway, I have argued that a complex set of historically specific events converged to provide the conditions for defeating the proposed roadway; a struggle that was embedded with wider political, economic and social transitions effecting Chicago. Secondly, this paper highlights some of the problems in planning transportation amenities in the urban space "in-between" the tradition city-center and the metropolis's sprawling hinterland. These issues surround not only the pragmatic concerns of infrastructural investment in such emerging urban landscapes, but the problematic material and discursive marginalization of these spaces within the strategic prioritization of urban and economic development.

Comprehensive and systemic future development in the Crosstown Corridor appears dependent on one of two propositions. Firstly, the city, state and federal agencies charged

with implementing transportation and urban planning initiatives breaks with the problematic continuation of prioritizing “productive” (for capital accumulation) investments in the physical environment. This is to say shifting from exchange-value orientated infrastructural investment to a promotion of the use-value of the city for all urban inhabitants. Secondly, advocates for Crosstown Corridor improvements forward the importance of such a project to Global Chicago: i.e. asserting the necessity for north-south transportation outside the Loop for the current imagining of Richard M. Daley’s global-city. This strategy involves engaging in a competitive, zero-sum engagement with alternative projects looking for funding and a construction green light.

The Recovery and Reinvestment Act has acted as a catalyst for a reimagining of the transportation possibilities for both the City of Chicago, and the metropolitan area. As the neoliberal articulation of capitalism has fractured under the weight of overt-financialization and de-regulation, we may be witnessing the emergence of a new regulatory and spatialized formation of capitalism. At this juncture, it is necessary to consider the lessons of the past as Chicago and the metropolitan region look to adapt for the twenty-first century. More research is required to identify the mobility and accessibility of the evolving urban space of area such as the Crosstown Corridor, but if we wish to create a progress, accessible and socially just city, engaging with the complex production, governance and everyday experience of these places is a vital step.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This paper is drawn from an on-going, *longue durée* comparative research project exploring the political-economy of transportation infrastructure and governance in the city-regions of Chicago and Toronto. The wider project analyzes the production and functioning of urban transportation networks in two global city-regions to provide both a comparative cross-national historiography of urban space, and an excavation of power relations and political processes in varying national contexts. As such, the paper presented here represents a preliminary analysis of the case study. I gratefully acknowledge the comments and constructive criticism of Roger Keil, Rob Fiedler and Patricia Wood in the development of the ideas forwarded in this paper. All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the author.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the paper, I utilized the term “Crosstown Corridor”, named after the Crosstown Expressway, whose proposed alignment delineates the area under consideration in this paper. The name is not formally associated with the area and I acknowledge (as detailed) that the label has certain negative associations within the City. However, for convenience, I will refer to the area under this moniker.

<sup>3</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2009, the City released a \$15.5billion “Central Area Action Plan” for extensive restructuring of center-city transportation (Hilkevitch, 2009) whilst in the six county northeastern Illinois area, numerous projects are vying for federal dollars (Dorning, 2009). In actuality, federal stimulus money is only likely to have a limited impact on Chicago’s transportation infrastructure. Due to the expense of large-scale infrastructural projects (for example, the four-level “West Loop Transportation Center”, proposed as part of the Central Area Action Plan, is budgeted at \$2billion (Hilkevitch, 2009)), monies allocated to Chicago from the Recovery and Reinvestment Act would only be able to finance a finite number of select projects.

<sup>4</sup> For example, from a position on the urban-rural fringe when planning proposals for circumferential transportation in Chicago were taking shape, the Crosstown Corridor now occupies the space between the revalorizing, gentrifying “creative” urban core and sprawling suburbia. In addition to cutting through ethnically, racially and economically diverse residential neighborhoods, the Crosstown Corridor constitutes an amalgamation of varied landscapes and uses: a municipal airport, industrial and logistics centers, commercial retailing (from large-scale shopping centers and big box retail to strip- and ethnic- mini-malls) and is bisected by railroads, expressways and heavy transit lines radiating from the urban core. Whilst not directly correlating to Young and Keil’s (2009) application of the “in-between city” to a North American context, the Crosstown Corridor’s diverse landscape is offer a broadly comparable urban landscape and morphology to what they refer to as currently “the most dynamic and problematic” form of (sub)urbanization (ibid, p.7).

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<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank the staff of the Chicago Historical Society Research Center, the Government Publications department of the Harold Washington Library, and Special Collections Center at UIC Richard J. Daley Library for their assistance during data collection for this paper, and wider research project.

<sup>6</sup> When adjusted for inflation with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Inflation Calculator" [http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm), \$4,800,000 1929 US dollars equating to \$7,298,250 1952 US dollars.

<sup>7</sup> Crosstown Associates comprised of highway engineers, architects, attorneys, economists, sociologists and urban planners from four influential Chicago firms; Skidmore, Owings and Merrill; C.F. Murphy Associates Inc.; Westernhoff and Novick; and Howard, Needles, Tamman and Bergenhoff, and was disbanded in 1972.

<sup>8</sup> As part of the Crosstown expressway Section IV between Midway and Skyway, potential proposals forwarded the construction of a school on a deck (bridging over the sunken expressway). The football field, gymnasium and cafeteria would be located on the deck. At the time of planning the Stagg education and recreation complex occupied most of the two blocks between Morgan and Aberdeen Streets, from 74<sup>th</sup> to the Belt Railway. The complex included Stagg elementary school, with 13 mobile classrooms and Stagg Stadium. The plan suggested having a play area and school /education facility located over the expressway would not negatively affect children in terms of pollution and noise: "The quality of the air on the play field in within safe levels most of the time. It has been determined that a minimum wind velocity of 1.42 miles per hour during peak hour traffic conditions will limit the carbon monoxide concentration to 30 parts per million (0.003%), a concentration to which a child or adult can be exposed for ten hours without perceptible effects. Studies show that wind velocity in the Chicago area is 4 miles per hour or greater 88% of the time" (Crosstown Associates, 1970, p. 2).

<sup>9</sup> These meetings included, amongst others: residents, civic associations from St Louis-Central Park, Marquette, Harley and Scottsdale homeowners, several associated Block Clubs and the Southwest Community Congress.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the audience repeatedly interrupted Albert Horrell, representing the Rheen Manufacturing Company, who (somewhat grudgingly) appealed to Burnham-esque rhetoric to support the Crosstown: "I know my client... would rather the Crosstown go away and leave us alone [audience response of loud cheers]... However, I am a realist... [but] having in mind the great need for a Crosstown Expressway, so necessary to the progress, development and growth of Chicago, Rheen recognizes that the 'I will' spirit will not permit Chicago's progress to be impeded. I repeat... [audience response of boos]" (Crosstown Executive Board, 1970, p. 206).

<sup>11</sup> Mike Royko, a Pulitzer Prize winning Chicago columnist, alleges the alignment of the Dan Ryan Expressway was shifted in 1956 to reinforce the separation of Mayor Daley's native Bridgeport neighborhood and the "Black Belt" to the east (1972, p. 137). McClendon (2005), however, notes that this might also have been "for the official reasons of "better alignment and traffic distribution," since it eliminated an inelegant four-block jog along 36th Street".

<sup>12</sup> By 1975, only six years after its creation, CAP held its final annual conference. Despite the organization's significant victories, an inflexible metropolitan governance structure, unable to accommodate the autonomy of neighborhood member groups and lack of common, unifying causes (after "victory" over the Crosstown etc.) undermined the alliance (Squires et al., 1987, pp. 141-149). CAP's fragmentation did however establish numerous organizations that continued to fight for citizens' issues and social and environmental justice at municipal and nation scales.

<sup>13</sup> Candidates, from President to district committeemen, were pooled by mail to ascertain their position on the Crosstown. All candidates were told if they failed to respond, or refused to take a stand, they would be listed as for the Crosstown: "it is the considered judgment of the Anti-Crosstown Coalition that any candidate who does not have a position by this time is either trying to duck the issue until after the election, or has been irresponsible by not investigating this crucial matter" (CAP Anti-Crosstown Coalition, 1972c).

<sup>14</sup> Helen Egen Houlihan of Pro-Crosstown group, *Citizens for Crosstown*, was left to declare: "His Excellency, Gov. Daniel Walker, has honored a campaign pledge by refusing to support the Crosstown. While we respect him for keeping his word, we are surprised that he listened to the protest group only. Those of us who are too busy earning a living and raising our children and have a natural distrust for protest groups have not had the opportunity to state our position to the governor... The forgotten citizens of the Southwest Side need the Crosstown Expressway. We have generously paid for the Ryan, Edens, Stevenson, Eisenhower and Kennedy expressways for the convenience of our neighbors. Yet we must continue to drive a nerve-shattering trip along Cicero Ave because of the histrionics and hysteria of a protest group whose only valid argument against the Crosstown is that people will have to sell their homes" (Houlihan, 1973).

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<sup>15</sup> Even this conservative estimate from the 1965 City's Transportation Advisory Group budgeted the Crosstown as the Chicago region's most expensive expressway; \$50,000,000 more than the Northwest (Kennedy) and \$100,000,000 more the Congress (Eisenhower) – when adjusted for inflation [1960-1965]. These calculations were made from using figures from CATS (1962), adjusted with the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Inflation Calculator" [http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).

<sup>16</sup> The inflated cost of the Crosstown did, however, have long term benefits for Chicago region transportation as it increased the federal funds allocated to the Expressway, which would later be reallocated to numerous city and suburban projects.

<sup>17</sup> IDOT alternative to the Crosstown Expressway included: (1) substantial, but not disruptive improvements to Cicero Ave from Kennedy to 95<sup>th</sup> thus increasing capacity and improving traffic flow; (2) improved and expanded bus service to provide for better north-south transit in the Cicero corridor; (3) construction of an exclusive truck way utilizing surplus railroad right-of-ways to service the industries in the Cicero corridor between the Eisenhower and Stevenson, relieving truck congestion on Cicero; (4) construction of an extended bus and emergency vehicle highway from Eisenhower to Dan Ryan and Stony Island expressways using surplus railroad right-of-way; and (5) improving the Beltline railroad which would enable some freight traffic to shift modal transport from truck to train.

<sup>18</sup> Dale Janik, IDOT Bureau Chief for state-wide program planning, who tracked projects funded with Crosstown-transferred monies in the six-county Chicago region developed the following projects as a result of the Expressways termination: "[1] The Southwest Side rapid transit line-nine miles, eight stations and 72 rail cars-linking the Loop and Midway Airport; [2] The O'Hare extension of the Jefferson Park CTA line from Logan Square to O'Hare International Airport-six miles, 10 stations; [3] 16 other CTA rapid transit stations constructed or rehabilitated; [4] Three CTA maintenance facilities built or reconstructed; [5] 125 CTA buses purchased; [6] 16 Metra stations built or reconstructed; [7] Nine bridges for commuter trains repaired or rebuilt; and [8] 13,035 parking spaces created for train commuters. And road work including: [1] 731 miles of highways resurfaced or widened; [2] 145 miles of new or reconditioned highways; [3] 210 bridges rehabbed or replaced; [4] 96 grade crossings for commuter trains improved; and [5] S-curve on Lake Shore Drive straightened between Randolph Street and the Chicago River" (Crimmins, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> CATS's previous 20-year plan (1984) did not include the Mid-City Transitway. Instead future expansion plans focused on either: (1) system extensions (Orange line to Ford City mall, Dan Ryan line to Blue Island, and Yellow line to Old Orchard mall in Skokie); or (2) developing rapid transit infrastructure for the booming growth areas in the central city (the Gold Coast, riverfront and South lakeshore).

<sup>20</sup> As part of these renovations, the CTA realigned the Red and Green line legs of the elevated system, connecting the heavier used Dan Ryan and Howard lines in a north-south route, and the lower ridership Lake Street and Englewood-Jackson Park lines as a west-south route. Despite the rationale of linking higher ridership legs of the El, this realignment spurred community protests and accusations of racism on the part of the City and CTA. The Lake and Englewood-Jackson Park (Green) lines predominantly serve the Black communities on the South and West sides of the city. Several stations were closed and sections of elevated line torn down along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street (although this leg had been unused as a result of previous service cuts) leading Neighborhood Budget Capital Group to protest outside the Mayor's office demanding all stops on the Green Line be restored and accusing the CTA of "locking in" the African-American community (Strausberg, 1996; Washington, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> CMAP was formed in 2005, when CATS, northeastern Illinois's Metropolitan Planning Organization merged with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), thus integrating the region's previously separate metropolitan transportation and land-use planning agencies.

<sup>22</sup> A problem also reflected in the CREATE (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program) projects to relieve the congestion of rail based freight through Chicago's complex, and increasingly antiquated rail corridors (CREATE, 2005).

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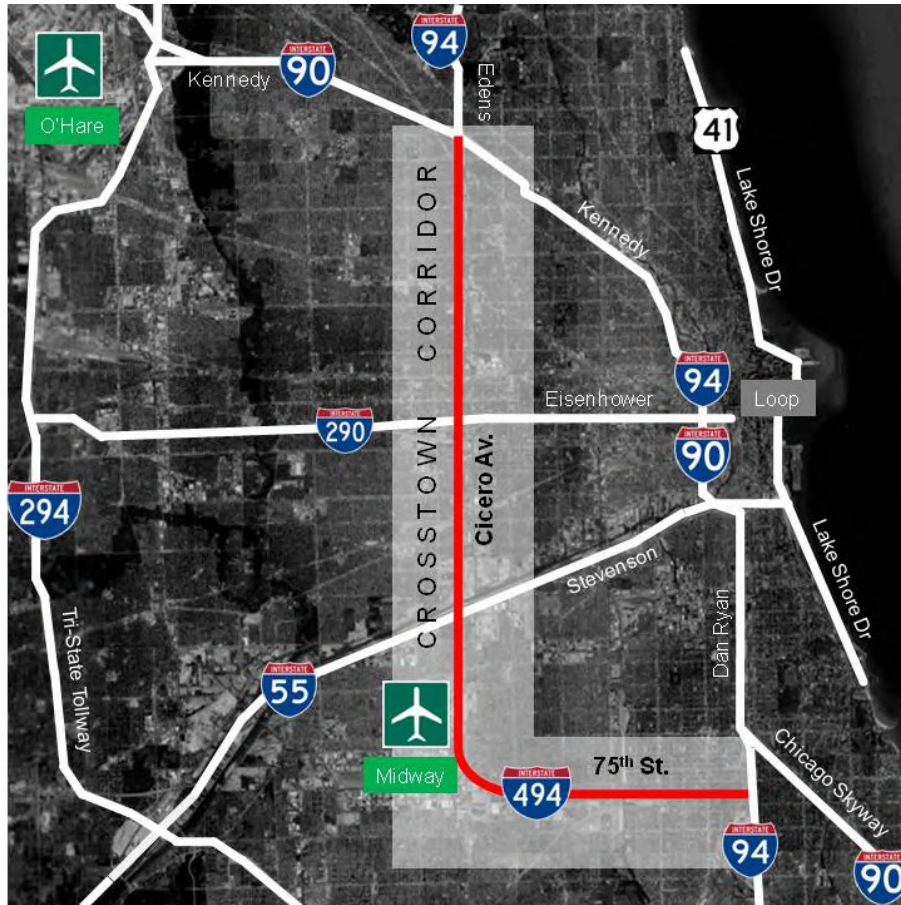
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Map 1: The Crosstown Corridor in context (source: base map from Google Earth)

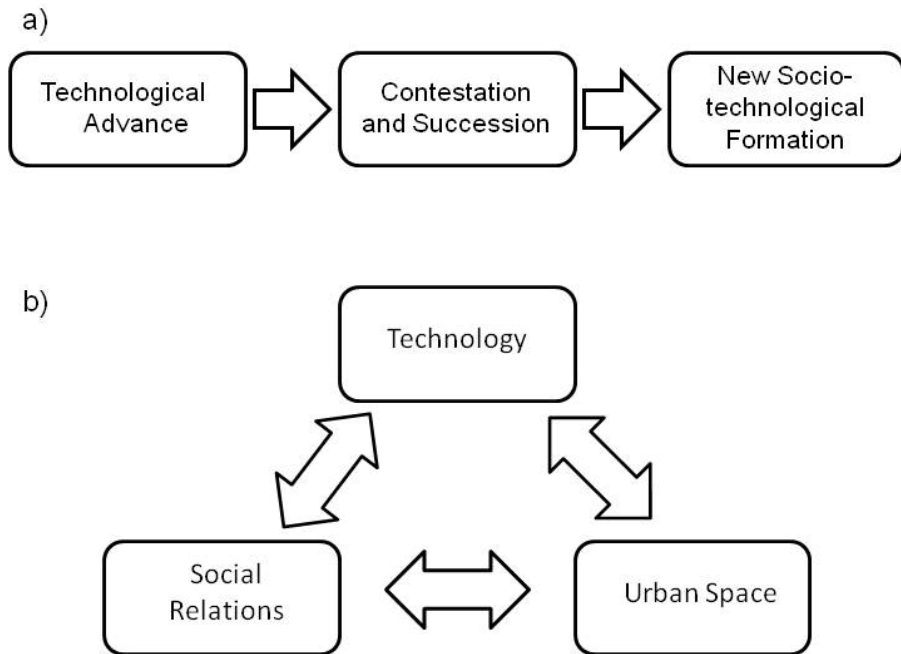
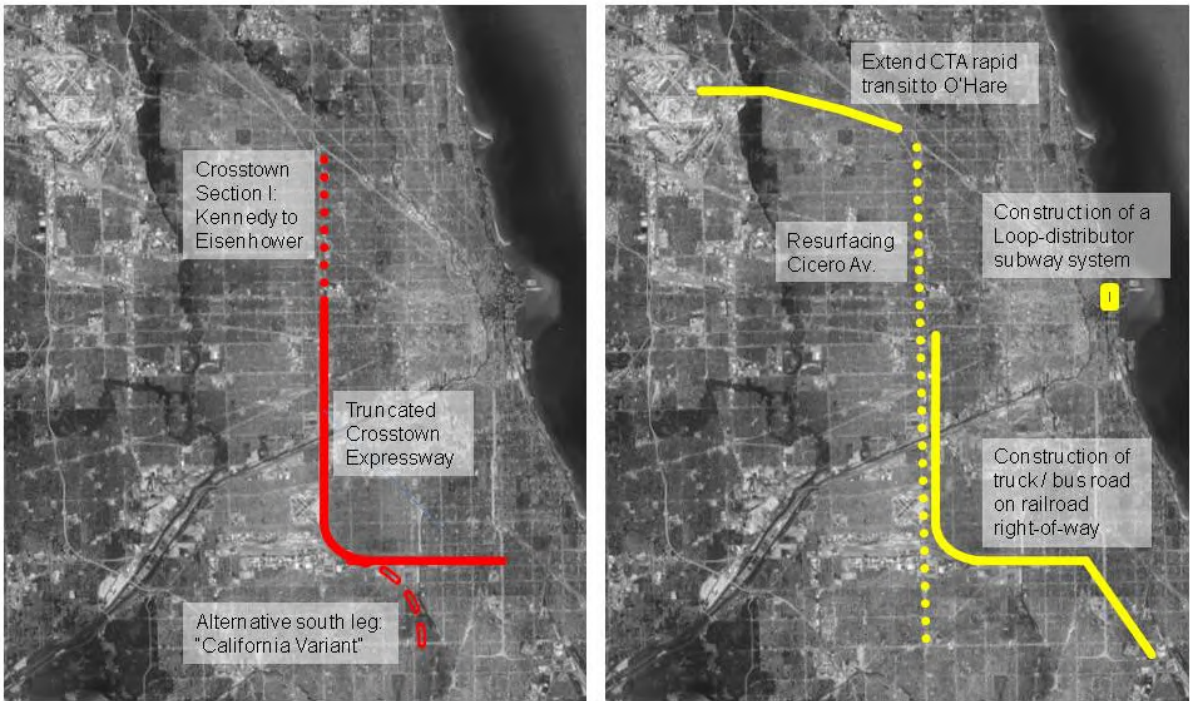


Figure 1: a) Representation of a causal relationship between technology and social change; b) Representation of a dialectical relationship between technology and social change.



Map 2: (left) Richard J. Daley's 1974 proposal for the Crosstown Expressway; (right) The state's alternative plan for transportation development (source: adapted from Gilbert, 1974: base map from Google Earth).

Table 1: Continuation and rupture: old and new plans for transportation infrastructure in the Crosstown Corridor (adapted from Lehrer and Laidley, 2008, p. 799)

	<b>Crosstown Expressway</b>	<b>Mid-City Transitway</b>
Time frame of dominance	1950s-1970s	1990s-2000s
City political climate	Initial dominance by Richard J. Daley’s City Democratic machine, weakened in later years and under Bilandic	Strong mayoral dominance by Richard M. Daley
Initiated by	City, County and State government	City government
Costs	Massive capital expenditure	Varying levels of expenditure
Financed by	City, State, Federal state	City, State, Federal state, some private involvement possible
Focus	Unitary, mobility (subsequently integrating neighborhood development)	Connectivity, flexibility
Ideology	Modern progress, “total development concept”	Global mobility, “competitiveness”, “neoliberal urbanism”
Development discourses	Inward	Outward
Characterization of public interest	Democratization of urban space, “a new kind of expressway development”	The appearance of democratizing public space through large-scale improvements intended primarily to catalyze, and thus ensure a return on, private investment
Resistance	High	Low
Criticism	Social impact, environmental impact, cost over-runs	Relatively absent, but some concerns over costs
Reasons for lack of development	Local resistance, personal political conflicts, inflation, restructuring of the space economy	Prioritization of other projects, financial limitations, continued peripheralization relative to the urban core