



A VISION FOR LASALLE STREET

Principles for a more inviting
and people-centric environment
in the heart of the Loop



INTRODUCTION

A Vision for LaSalle Street reflects 11 community-led principles for the mixed-use evolution of LaSalle Street between the Riverwalk and Jackson Boulevard in the Loop.

The visioning process was co-hosted by the City of Chicago's Departments of Planning & Development (DPD) and Transportation (CDOT) to create a more neighborhood-oriented public realm throughout the corridor.

Along with four potential character areas, the principles focus on the street's public assets, ensuring:



Public spaces are conducive to the area's transition from a monoculture of offices to a dynamic, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-used environment.



Lighting improvements showcase the built environment and integrate technology to make LaSalle a "smart street."



Public realm improvements and programming serve to connect civic and cultural assets like City Hall and the Riverwalk.



Placemaking activations include both short- and long-term attractions.



Sidewalk amenities include new landscaping, public art and other amenities consistent with mixed-use neighborhoods.



The public realm provides easy connections to the grand lobbies and halls within historic corridor buildings.



A Vision for LaSalle Street sets a clear direction for transforming LaSalle's public realm.

This document has been guided by insights and ideas captured during spring and summer 2024 from hundreds of community members and visitors via:

- an online survey (450+ responses)
- a public open house (150+ participants)
- a "Sundays On State" pop-up event (400+ participants)
- input from the 34th and 42nd Aldermanic offices

The team also appreciates the dozens of representatives who shared their perspectives, which shaped this vision, including:

- building owners
- asset managers
- built environment experts
- civic organizations
- members of the Mayor's Youth Commission

How else is the City of Chicago supporting downtown's revitalization?

Mixed-Income Housing for All

The City of Chicago is supporting five adaptive reuse projects along the corridor that are repurposing more than 1.6 million square feet of vacant space as 1,423 mixed-income apartments and ancillary amenities, including neighborhood-serving retail. Representing more than \$750 million in total investments as of November 2024, the projects are moving forward through \$250 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance that is ensuring 30% of the new units will be affordable for families earning an average of 60% of the area median income.

Cultural and Dining Enhancements

Up to \$5 million in City grants are supporting the expansion and upgrades of restaurants and business throughout the corridor. Provided through DPD's Small Business Improvement Fund, the grants include up to \$250,000 each for five restaurant expansions and a new museum in the Board of Trade building. Each project will cater to visitors, workers and residents, with more grant awards anticipated.

**“...COME AND SHOW
ME ANOTHER CITY
WITH LIFTED HEAD
SINGING SO PROUD
TO BE ALIVE AND
COARSE AND STRONG
AND CUNNING...”**

Chicago, Carl Sandberg, 1914

Chicago is a city founded on energy, endeavor, innovation, bold behavior and hard work — the "Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler," the Rebuilder, the River Reverser, the Creator of the Skyscraper. In the words of the poet Carl Sandburg, "City of the Big Shoulders."

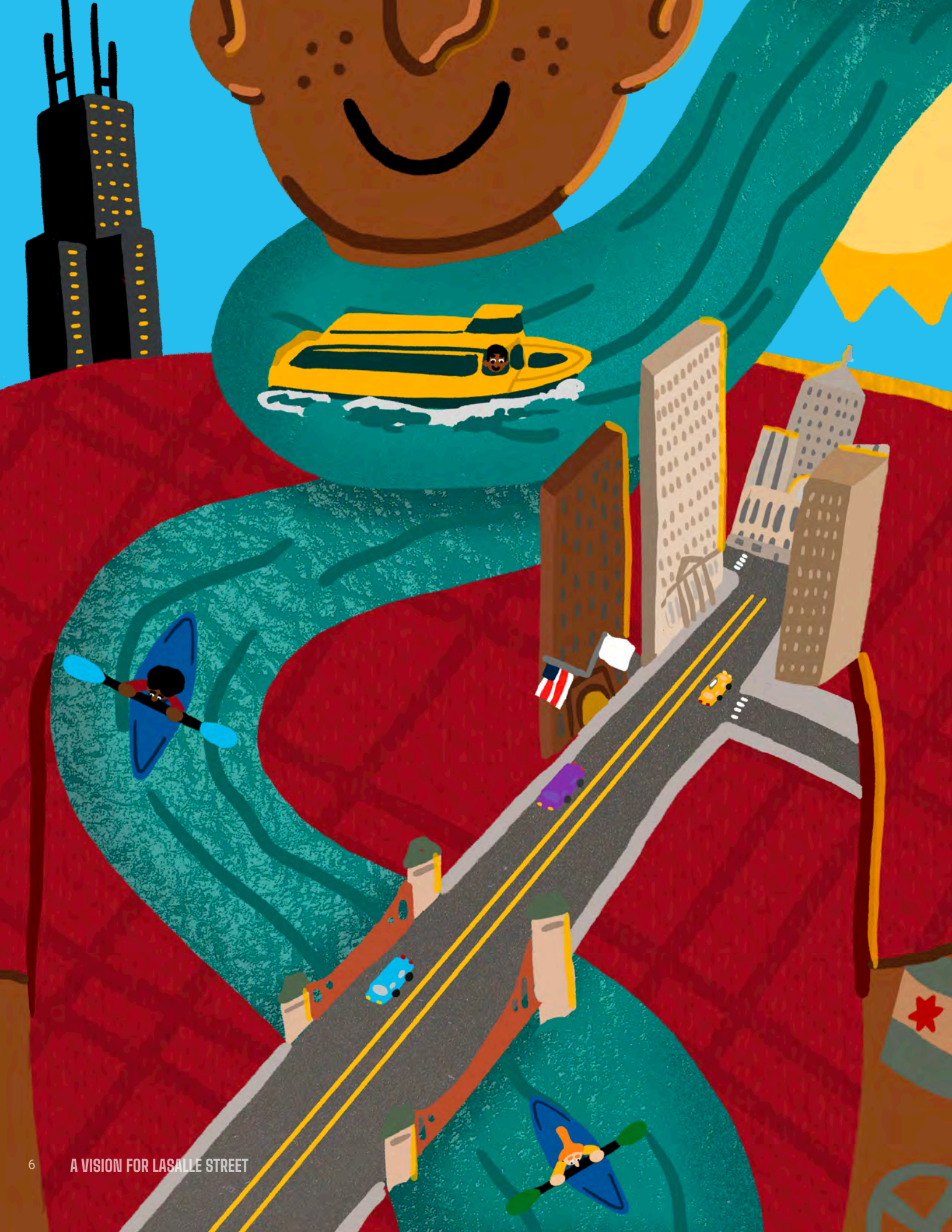
Nowhere is Carl Sandberg's Chicago more evident than on LaSalle Street—"The Canyon," culminating in the Chicago Board of Trade and lined by The Rookery, The Field Building, 190 South LaSalle, Northern Trust and City Hall.

Because LaSalle Street is a historic symbol of Chicago's resilience and optimism, reimagining it—helping it to respond to the pressures of the pandemic and the consequent changes in office working habits—can be the catalyst of widespread renewal and progress.

LaSalle Street can be made into a destination that invites Chicagoans and visitors to discover it once again as a place accessible to a variety of incomes, backgrounds and ages.

A place that is authentic to the character of the street and the Loop: energetic, relevant and prominent. Office, residential, commercial, civic, educational, leisure and cultural uses can be stitched together across an active, open and accessible street experience.

The City of Chicago presents this vision and strategy, shaped by the community's diverse voices, to increase footfall, energy and relevance. *A Vision for LaSalle Street* is anchored by a set of Place Principles: commitments which focus actions and emphasize shared ambitions. LaSalle Street's enduring, evolving legacy is being prepared for a mix of new uses in the heart of the Loop.





PRINCIPLE 1

WHAT'S GOOD FOR LASALLE IS GOOD FOR CHICAGO

LaSalle Street is the center of the Loop and the seat of City and County government.

A thriving LaSalle Street can support a thriving Loop—encouraging workers, residents, locals and tourists to live, work, visit and stay here. A civic hub showing the best of the city, the Loop is one of the great symbols of and the economic engine for Chicago.





PRINCIPLE 2

IN WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

LaSalle Street is an architectural expression of Chicago's history, success and growth.

It is also a place of the future, of change and renewal. It must accommodate new ideas, technologies, thinking, users and possibilities. Public art and programming can celebrate its history while feeling more modern, vibrant and welcoming to all. LaSalle Street can be a platform for new ideas, approaches and thinking—leading the way as this city has done so many times before.







PRINCIPLE 3

BUSY-NESS IS OUR BUSINESS

LaSalle Street has always been a place of business.

However, today's working patterns look different than the work weeks of the past. LaSalle Street must evolve to serve the public in more and different ways. The goal is to revive the hustle and bustle—to fill the streets, lobbies, restaurants and cafés—bringing the footfalls and energy that local businesses need to survive.



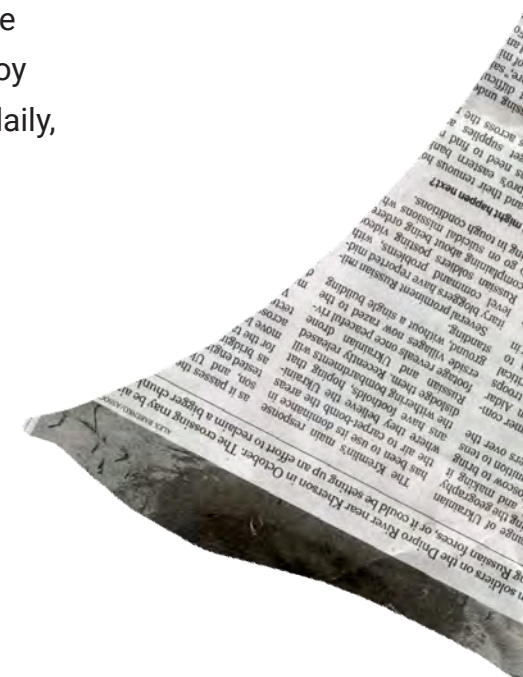


PRINCIPLE 4

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

The route to achieving new vibrancy on LaSalle Street is bringing new users to enjoy its energy.

A big part of this strategy is converting buildings to increase residential accommodations. The Loop is already considered one of the best downtowns to live in and the more it feels like a neighborhood means more people can enjoy living here—increasing the street's vibrancy daily, weekly and throughout the year.





PRINCIPLE 5

BIG C, SMALL C, "CHICAGO C"

Culture is a vital element of LaSalle Street.

The "Big C" cultures of Art, Architecture and Performance, and the "small c" culture of the everyday help create the events and places that bring society together. Seen through the lens of the "Chicago C," the city's culture reflects its special character, history, diversity and excitement.







PRINCIPLE 6

BEYOND 9-5, IT'S LIT

LaSalle Street needs post-workday vitality.

The corridor's historic role as a financial center contributes to its current inactivity after dark, long after markets and banks close. As an evolving neighborhood, it is essential that a nighttime economy underpins its future growth, attracting new users and residents while retaining existing users and businesses. Nighttime programming and creative lighting can bring more life to the corridor and help to address perceived safety issues.





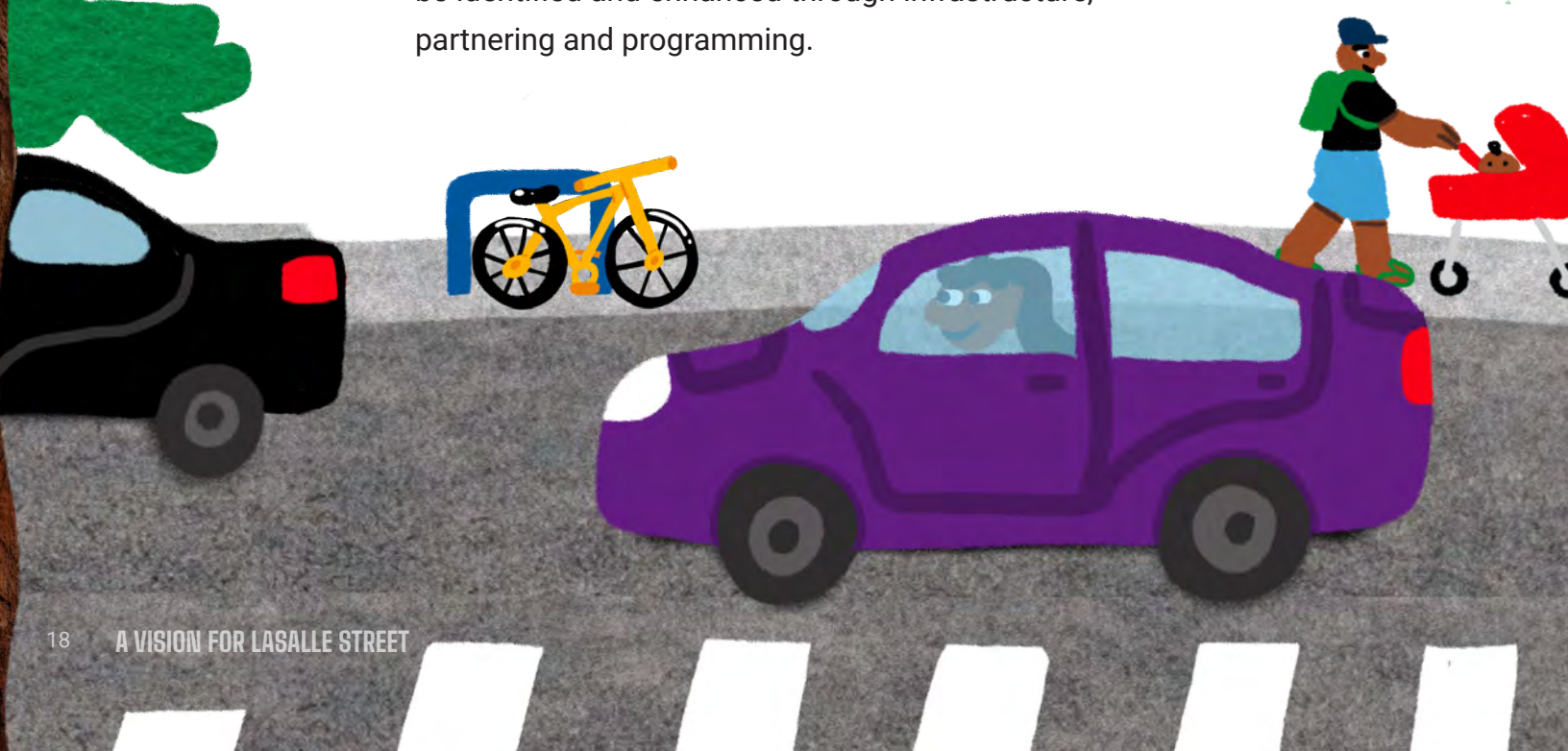


PRINCIPLE 7

A CONNECTED CONNECTOR

LaSalle Street is a nexus that derives its greatness from being located in the historic heart of the city.

Replete with public transport options and pedestrian connectivity, LaSalle Street provides access for all to workplaces, tourist destinations, parks, plazas, cultural institutions, businesses and other unique attractions. These connections should continue to be identified and enhanced through infrastructure, partnering and programming.







PRINCIPLE 8

EQUITABLE ACCESS

As a symbol of the City, LaSalle Street must welcome users of all types, celebrating the diversity of Chicago's neighborhoods, residents, visitors and workers.

Diverse and affordable programming, the approach to accessibility and openness must be considered. The affordable housing provision should be supported with affordable amenities.





PRINCIPLE 9

RETHINK THE ROADWAY

LaSalle Street is a key component in the City's transportation network.

There is an opportunity to make the roadway more attractive to all users. The street experience should prioritize people, transit access, the public realm and programming.



PRINCIPLE 10

OUTDOOR SPACES AND PEOPLE PLACES

LaSalle Street's famous verticality can be imposing, but also inviting.

Outdoor investments should aim to naturalize outdoor plazas with trees and gardens where possible, along with fixtures that encourage people to sit, communicate and engage with each other and the urban ambience.

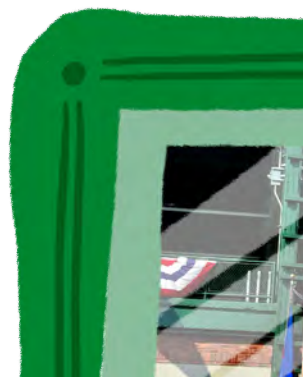
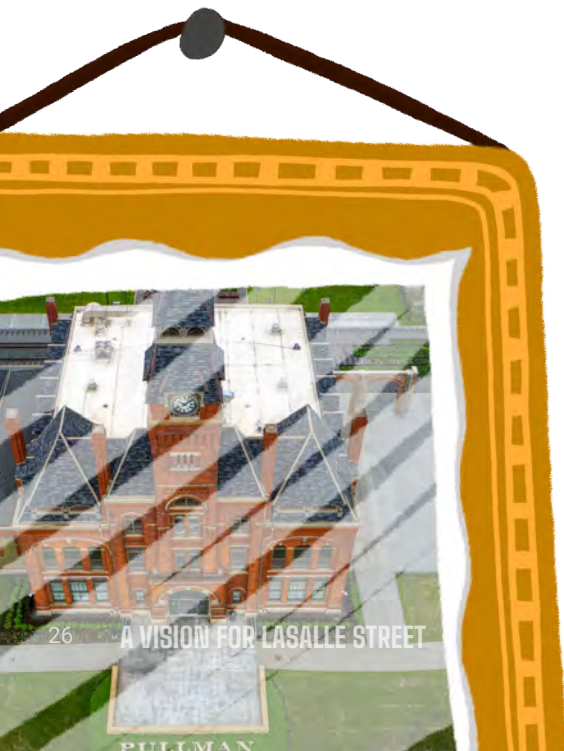


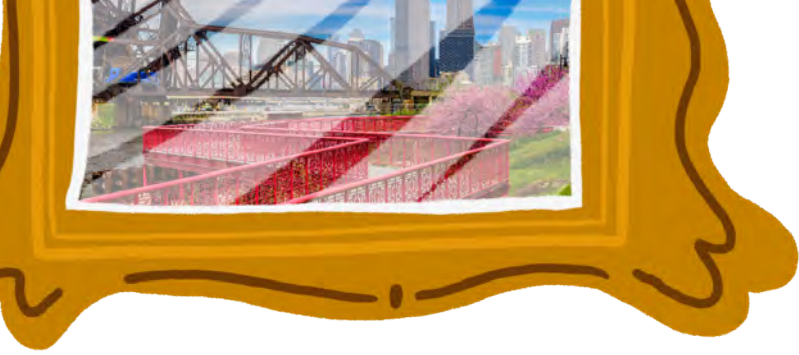
PRINCIPLE 11

COMPLEMENT, NOT COMPETE

LaSalle Street's connectivity and accessibility should be amplified and leveraged.

Given the corridor's proximity to other downtown thoroughfares, ongoing public and private investments will contribute to the revitalization of the entire Loop, including stores, restaurants, offices, theaters, hotels, schools and medical offices.





CHARACTER ZONES

The 11 principles for the corridor growth can be enhanced through projects that emphasize and reflect LaSalle Street's most enduring physical attributes and characteristics. Identified through public feedback, at least four themes can reinforce the sense of place for visitors, workers and residents at key nodes, street frontages and alleys.

Water Meets Land

For residents returning home, workers leaving downtown or visitors enjoying the Riverwalk, the corridor's northern boundary provides opportunities to linger, reflect and appreciate one of the world's most urban panoramas.

Outdoor dining and cafés, passive seating areas and sidewalk furniture should be strategically configured to maximize views in multiple directions for a variety of users.

Pulse of the City

As Chicago's civic heart, LaSalle Street should welcome people who visit City, County and State offices for various forms of permits, licenses, reservations, approvals and general assistance.

For both frequent or infrequent visitors, LaSalle Street's government-oriented destinations should be complimented by an array of ancillary amenities that make visits to the Loop both productive and personally rewarding.

Loveable, Livable, Lively LaSalle

LaSalle Street's neighborhood center, functional core and commercial heart at the center of the Loop supports all users.

Community amenities such as pharmacies, groceries, bars, childcare and co-working spaces, active alleys and intimate plazas are located here.

Iconic LaSalle

The corridor's canyon-like ambience is most prevalent near its southern end, where the eastern and western street walls narrow and the Board of Trade building provides a dramatic terminus to the street and sidewalks.

As a prominent setting for special events and movies, the area should be considered for additional near- and long-term improvements that leverage its unique, one-of-a kind setting. Historic buildings can be reimagined for new indoor uses such as classrooms, workshops, studios, sports courts, restaurants, theaters and immersive experiences.



W WACKER DR.

W LAKE ST.

W WASHINGTON ST.

W MADISON ST.

W MONROE ST.

W ADAMS ST.

LASALLE STREET

S WELLS ST.

N CLARK ST.

SUMMARY

Eleven community-led principles for the mixed-used evolution of LaSalle Street between the Riverwalk and Jackson Boulevard.

PRINCIPLE 1

What's good for LaSalle is good for Chicago

A thriving LaSalle Street can support a thriving Loop—encouraging workers, residents, locals, and tourists to live, work, visit and stay here.

PRINCIPLE 2

In with the old, in with the new

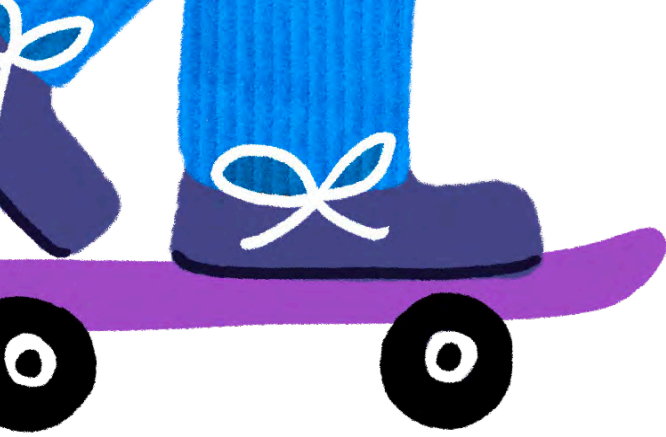
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A place to call home

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Big C, Small c, “Chicago C”

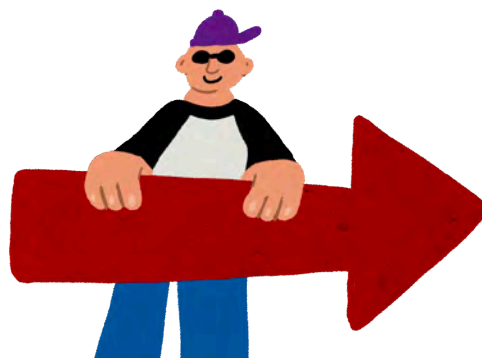
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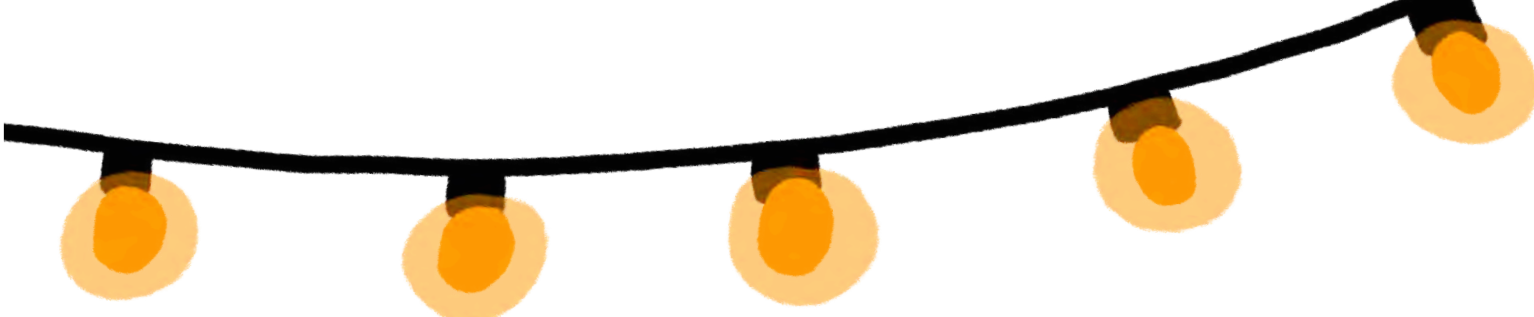


PRINCIPLE 6

Beyond 9-5, it’s lit

The corridor’s historic role as a financial center contributes to its current inactivity after dark, long after markets and banks close. As an evolving neighborhood, it is essential that a nighttime economy underpins its future growth, attracting new users and residents while retaining existing users and businesses. Nighttime programming and creative lighting can bring more life to the corridor and help to address perceived safety issues.





PRINCIPLE 7

A connected connector

Replete with public transport options and pedestrian connectivity, LaSalle Street provides access for all to workplaces, tourist destinations, parks, plazas, cultural institutions, businesses, and other unique attractions. These connections should continue to be identified and enhanced through infrastructure, partnering and programming.

PRINCIPLE 8

Equitable access

LaSalle Street must welcome users of all types, celebrating the diversity of Chicago's neighborhoods, residents, visitors and workers.

PRINCIPLE 9

Rethink the roadway

While transit access is a huge amenity, there's also an opportunity to make the roadway more attractive to all users. The street experience should prioritize people, transit access, the public realm and programming.





PRINCIPLE 11

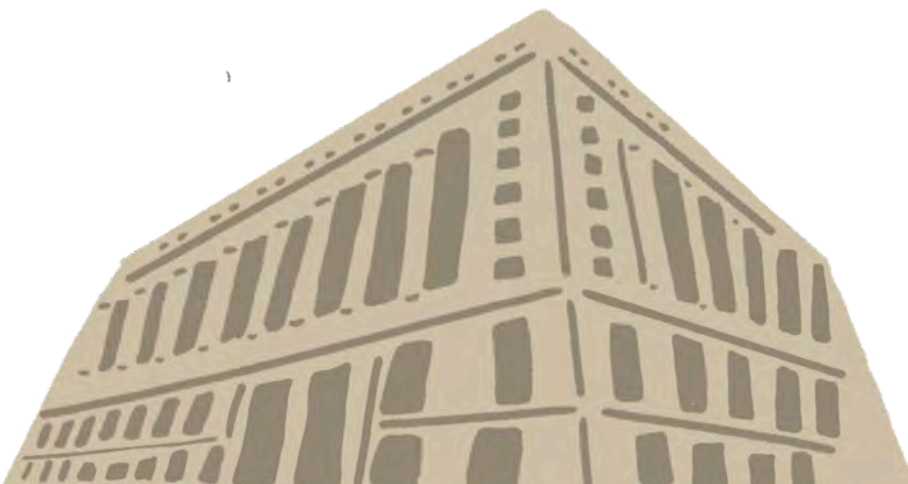
Complement, not compete

LaSalle Street's connectivity and accessibility should be amplified and leveraged.

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Outdoor spaces and people places

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WHAT NEXT?



While developing visioning principles for LaSalle Street, the City of Chicago initiated an engineering assessment of the corridor's physical and structural conditions.

The assessment's completion in 2025 will further inform the City's goals for a safe, inviting and innovative public realm that reflects the community's vision for corridor growth.



Acknowledgements

A Vision for LaSalle Street is an initiative of the City of Chicago's Departments of Planning and Development (DPD) and Transportation (CDOT), with assistance from AECOM, All Together, Blue Daring, Hugh Lighting Design, KOO and MurrayTwohig.

A Vision for LaSalle Street is a series of guiding principles for Chicago's LaSalle Street Visioning initiative.

LaSalle Street Visioning is a collaboration between the City of Chicago's Departments of Planning and Development (DPD) and Transportation (CDOT) to set a new direction for the publicly accessible parts of LaSalle Street between the Chicago Riverwalk and Jackson Boulevard.

Learn more and get involved:
chicago.gov/LaSalleStreet

