



# APPENDIX F

## History





Discussions about a westbound expressway started as early as the late 1930s.<sup>1</sup> However, it was not until the Federal-Aid Highway Act was signed when construction moved forward.<sup>2</sup> Construction of the Congress Expressway (later to be renamed the Eisenhower) started in 1949 and the first section was opened in Dec 1954, after many delays.<sup>3,4</sup> This expressway represented many firsts for the country, among them is that the CTA Congress Line, which ran along the median of the expressway, was in the original design.<sup>5</sup> The CTA Congress Line opened in 1958, and later became the Forest Park Branch of the Blue Line.<sup>6</sup>

### *Connectivity and Mobility*

The expressway better connected the western suburbs with the Loop, fueling growth of Chicago's suburbs.<sup>7</sup> However, the new CTA Congress Line did not necessarily increase connectivity. The area was already serviced by the Metropolitan West Side Elevated (MET) Railroad and streetcars.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the CTA Congress Line was built to replace the Garfield Park branch of the MET Railroad, which was torn down following the opening of the Congress Line.<sup>9,10</sup> Furthermore, Douglass Park and Garfield Park were connected by boulevards, which has also been disrupted by the I-290, possibly affecting pedestrian and bike connectivity between these parks.

In the Near West Side community was even more connected. The area boasted a MET four-line junction less than two blocks east of the Cook County Hospital, called the Marshfield Station. From this station, riders could travel north to Logan Square, south to Douglass Park, east to Chicago's Loop, or west to Garfield Park.<sup>11</sup> Following the opening of the CTA Congress Line in the I-290 median, these lines were suspended. It was not until the opening of the CTA Pink Line in 2006 that some of the public train connectivity was restored to the area.

### *Displacement and Segregation*

The construction of the Eisenhower served two purposes. In addition to connecting Chicago's Western suburbs to its downtown, it also served as a means through which undesirable neighborhoods could be demolished. Indeed, much of the near west side community, where our IMD study area is located, was redlined by the Home Owner's Loan Corporation in 1940.<sup>12</sup> During that time, the Near West Side community was working class, racially diverse, and comprised of both longtime residents and immigrants due to its proximity to the Loop and nearby manufacturing hubs.<sup>13</sup> Most of the homes in the area were built in the 1880s and many of its residents were renters.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, at the time of planning the Eisenhower, much of the area was labeled as 'blight', and slated for demolition instead of investment.<sup>15,16</sup>

Of the Near West Side community, only the industrial and medical facilities were prioritized. Most notably, Cook County Hospital was constructed in what is now the IMD in the 1870s.<sup>17</sup> The IMD was established a few years prior to the construction of the Congress Expressway, in 1941, as a special use zoning district.<sup>18</sup> Today, the Cook County Hospital is a cornerstone of the IMD and at the center of one of the largest public health systems in the country.<sup>19,20</sup> The IMD has grown to house over 40 hospitals, nonprofits, and research institutions, serving as an important resource for healthcare and jobs.<sup>21</sup>

Further west, the Garfield Park community was a middle class "white collar" neighborhood.<sup>22</sup> However, the area was labeled as "third grade" by the Home Owner's Loan Corporation because it had started to see an influx of Italian immigrants and a degree of "encroachment" of black communities.<sup>23</sup> By the time the Congress expressway construction was underway, the community largely comprised of Irish, German, Italian, and Russian Jews.<sup>24</sup> Following the construction of the Congress Expressway, the Garfield Park area became predominantly black.<sup>25</sup> This population shift was in part driven by the displacement from the Congress Expressway and similar projects across Chicago.<sup>26,27</sup>





Garfield Park's segregation and disinvestment was solidified in the 1960s as the Chicago Housing Authority built public housing structures in the area.<sup>28</sup> Despite this, the community has valuable assets, including Garfield Park itself and the Madison Business District. The latter of which was once a major commercial area in Chicago, but is now marred by closed shops and vacant lots.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://interactive.wbez.org/curiouscity/eisenhower/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.metroplanning.org/news/10042/Want-to-see-how-dramatically-highways-changed-Chicagoland>

<sup>3</sup> <https://interactive.wbez.org/curiouscity/eisenhower/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://eisenhowerexpressway.com/about/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://eisenhowerexpressway.com/about/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://interactive.wttw.com/chicago-by-l/sidetracks/history-1>

<sup>7</sup> <https://interactive.wbez.org/curiouscity/eisenhower/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.chicago-l.org/maps/route/maps/1898met-map.jpg>

<sup>9</sup> <https://interactive.wbez.org/curiouscity/eisenhower/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.chicago-l.org/maps/route/maps/1898met-map.jpg>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.chicago-l.org/maps/route/maps/1898met-map.jpg>

<sup>12</sup> <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/41.922/-87.742&city=chicago-il>

<sup>13</sup> <https://interactive.wttw.com/chicago-by-l/neighborhoods/near-west-side>

<sup>14</sup> <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/41.922/-87.742&city=chicago-il>

<sup>15</sup> <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/41.922/-87.742&city=chicago-il>

<sup>16</sup> <https://interactive.wbez.org/curiouscity/eisenhower/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://cookcountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/CCHHS-Milestones-Combined-Display-6-14.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://medicaldistrict.org/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://cookcountyhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/CCHHS-Milestones-Combined-Display-6-14.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://medicaldistrict.org/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://medicaldistrict.org/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/41.922/-87.742&city=chicago-il>

<sup>23</sup> <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=12/41.922/-87.742&city=chicago-il>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.chipublib.org/fa-east-garfield-park-community-collection/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.chipublib.org/fa-east-garfield-park-community-collection/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://interactive.wbez.org/curiouscity/eisenhower/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.metroplanning.org/news/10042/Want-to-see-how-dramatically-highways-changed-Chicagoland>

<sup>28</sup> <https://interactive.wttw.com/chicago-by-l/neighborhoods/garfield-park>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.propublica.org/events/a-history-of-disinvestment-on-chicagos-west-side>

