

Visualizing the Growth of Main Streets and Town Centers

Principal Investigator: Laxmi Ramasubramanian

Objective: Creation of an interactive document showing the growth of the Northeastern Illinois region. Special emphasis is placed on the region's historic main streets and best practice policy recommendations exhibit how these streets can be adapted to catalyze downtown growth.

Strategy: Using Macromedia Flash, we assembled text, maps, and images depicting four historic main street settlement patterns: pioneer, canal, railroad, and manufacturing. Each of these settlement types appeared at different times in the region's history. The project also showed that regional growth was not solely Chicago-centric. Several of the region's main street communities grew concurrently with the City of Chicago.

The project shows historic growth of the region as well as best-practice examples of how main streets continue to be integrated within the fabric of communities today. Downers Grove, Elgin, and Chicago's 47th street were selected for in-depth analysis. New Lenox, and Schaumburg



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were shown as modern day examples of constructing a main street and the main streets of Evanston and LaGrange were featured as "Evolving Mainstreets."

A 3-D visualization component helps the user see the Northeastern Illinois region from several different perspectives.

Results/Expected Results: GCUDV expanded their visualization capabilities through exploration of Flash as a platform for creating interactive multi-media products

Products: The main product is an interactive CD-ROM intended to be accessible to a wide-range of audiences. The product could be shown to groups with a speaker providing a narrative, or an individual could navigate the project themselves reading text and viewing images.

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Contact Information:

Laxmi Ramasubramanian
Urban Transportation Center
University of Illinois at Chicago
412 South Peoria St, Suite 340
Chicago IL 60607
Telephone: 312 413 1920
Fax: 312 413 0006

Website: <http://www.utc.uic.edu/>
