



## Citizens for Appropriate Transportation (CAT) Issue Brief

### Eisenhower Transportation Corridor

#### URBAN DESIGN

In his influential book on urban design, Kevin Lynch said the city image has five types of elements.<sup>1</sup> Lynch's underlying premise is urban design should reinforce meaning and integrate the five elements into the whole image.

1. **“Paths** are the channels along which the observer moves,” such as streets, rail transit lines, and sidewalks. The proposed wider bridges will strengthen the paths across the Corridor.
2. **“Edges** are the linear elements not used or considered as paths by the observer.” Edges are “boundaries” or “linear breaks in continuity” such as “shores, railroad cuts, edges of development, walls.” “Edges may be barriers,” or “joined together.” The Eisenhower Expressway and the CTA Blue Line are paths for users and edges for non-users. None of us ride the CSX, so it is an edge.
3. **“Districts** are the medium-to-large sections of the city, ... which the observer mentally enters ‘inside of’ and which are recognizable because of some common identifying character.” “Districts are structured with nodes, defined by edges, penetrated by paths, and sprinkled with landmarks.” Neighborhoods on both sides of the expressway and our historic districts are examples.
4. **“Nodes** are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter...” “They may be primarily junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths, moments of shift from one structure to another.” Some examples are the CTA station entrances/exits, Ascension Church, the Conservatory, Rehm Park, and Barrie Park.
5. **“Landmarks** are another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter them, they are external. They are usually a rather simply defined physical object: building, sign, store, or mountain” ...“typically seen from many angles and distances over the tops of smaller elements, and used as radial references. Some examples are the Willis Tower and the downtown Chicago Skyline, Volvo Car Tower at Harlem and Garfield, the 5/3 Bank at Oak Park Avenue and Harrison with its time / temperature sign, and IDOT’s Traffic Surveillance Building on Harrison.

Because Oak Park’s density is greater than 11,000 people per square mile, there are enough riders to support the CTA’s Blue and Green Lines. More than 70 percent of the riders on the Austin, Oak Park, and Harlem Stations on the Forest Park Blue Line walk to the station. The catchment area for walking to a rail transit station is roughly one-half mile (about a 10-minute walk). The catchment area for those riding a bike or feeder bus service is greater than one-half mile. Adding bike racks and better bus service to the CTA rail stations makes sense.

The Illinois Department of Transportation’s focus is on expressway users, so they treat the expressway as a path, not as an edge. The Village should focus on the corridor edges to protect and enhance our neighborhoods.

Rick Kuner – February 2016     [www.CitizensForAppropriateTransportation.org](http://www.CitizensForAppropriateTransportation.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Lynch, “The Image of the City,” 1960, Pages 46 to 49. Lynch was a native of Chicago, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright, and Professor of City Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The quotes all come from his book (Pages 46 to 49). (emphasis added)