

## Chicago Streets (nonfiction)

Chicago has hundreds of miles of streets. Each one of them has a history. That history includes how the street started—at some time someone decided where it should be. Then construction workers created the street. Someone gave it a name, sometimes a name that is a number, sometimes a name that celebrates a person. When you see a street you are looking at work people did in the past. You are looking at work people do today to keep it clean and safe.

The first worker to make a street is a planner. The planner begins the project with a map of the city that shows all the streets that were built. The planner looks at information about where people live and decides where new streets will go. Planners design the street with a map, showing the route it will enable people to take. In your neighborhood, there are probably no new streets. But some time in the past a planner decided where those streets would be. The planner decided how long they would be and how wide they would be.

After the initial design, then workers build the street. That is a big construction job requiring many workers and great machines. Workers use construction equipment to dig the street bed. That is the bottom of the street. It has to be even, it must be straight. They use a map to show where to dig, then they draw lines on the ground to indicate where the street will be. They use tools to measure and check that the street is in the right place. It needs to be as long and wide as the plan. Then they break the ground with heavy construction equipment, they dig out the bed, and after that, they put in the concrete for the street. They measure that, too, to make sure it is thick enough to hold up all the cars and trucks that will drive on it. It takes a while for the concrete to dry. Then they put the surface, the top on the street. All this takes a lot of people, especially if it is a long street.

There are workers who decide where to put stop signs and stop lights. Those signs are next. Then the street is ready to use.

After that, there is more work to do. The streets have to be kept clean, and that takes workers who come with street sweepers, big machines that may come once a week to clean the street. Before they do, other workers put up signs. Those signs tell people not to park on the street on the day they will clean it.

In winter Chicago is cold, and often there is much snow and ice. Some workers come in winter to clean the streets after a snowstorm. They may work all night if there is a big storm. They start by clearing the big streets. Then they clear the smaller ones. It can be a very big job if there is a really big snowstorm.

After winter, there are potholes in Chicago streets. Those are holes in the street because of the snow and ice. So workers come to fill them in.

So Chicago streets are a lot of work. The work does not end after the street is built. That is just the beginning.

What are three main ideas in this reading?

List them next to the paragraphs where you find the information that supports them.