



Comprehensive Summary Montrose-Wilson-Lawrence Community Meeting #1

A community meeting regarding the Montrose Avenue-Wilson Avenue-Lawrence Avenue (MWL) corridor within the North Lake Shore Drive project area was held October 17th, 2018 at the Larry McKeon Student Services Building at Truman College. The meeting ran from 6 to 8 p.m. and was open to the general public.

As attendees entered the meeting, they were assigned to one of four breakout groups and given small packets of colored dots for use during the breakout session. (All attendees were given an equal number of dots). From 6 to 6:30 p.m., attendees were able to examine several exhibits displayed around the room on crash types/locations and the projected average daily traffic volume of major roads in the MWL corridor under the 2040 No Build scenario. At 6:30 pm, a PowerPoint presentation was provided in advance of the breakout group discussion. The presentation summarized the team's progress to date, reviewed some of the feedback already received concerning the MWL corridor, and examined the existing conditions (transit service, traffic volumes, and safety issues) within the MWL area. It was also explained that this meeting—the first in a series of three—was a “listening session” intended to give community members the opportunity to provide their feedback on the needs of the corridor. This feedback will be used in part to develop potential alternatives for the corridor, which will be discussed at the second meeting. The third meeting will review the evaluation results for each of the alternatives and present a recommended design to be carried forward. During the presentation, attendees provided several comments and questions on topics such as: the causes of traffic crashes; the project's public involvement process; and the need for park access.

Following the presentation, attendees participated in a dot exercise at their assigned breakout group tables, each of which had an aerial map of the MWL area. Using the colored dots previously provided, attendees identified the locations of critical safety issues, transit needs, congestion hotspots, and places in need of improved park access. Attendees could submit more detailed feedback using sticky notes and comment forms were also available. Project team members were available at each table to answer questions and discuss any issues with attendees.

In total, there were 41 attendees. Ten written comment forms were received.

Elected Officials in attendance:

- Alderman James Cappleman (46th Ward)
- Matthew Trewartha, Representative of Alderman James Cappleman (46th Ward)

The following Project Study Group (PSG) agencies were represented: IDOT, CDOT.

Feedback and Comments Received

The following analysis includes feedback received from the interactive breakout group exercise, as well as oral discussion and written comment forms.

During the breakout group exercise, attendees were asked to place color-coded dots on exhibit maps of the Montrose-Wilson-Lawrence area, with each dot color representing a different issue (for example, a red dot represented a “Critical Safety Issue”). In total, 263 dots were placed on across all four maps. The breakdown of the dots is below. As can be seen, the “Need for Improved Park Access” and “Critical Safety Issue” categories appeared most frequently and in similar numbers. In turn, a nearly equal number of “Congestion Hotspots” and “Transit Needs” were identified by participants. This indicates that that park access and safety were the two most important issues to participants, followed by congestion and transit concerns.

90 – Need for Improved Park Access (Blue)

84 – Critical Safety Issue (Red)

45 – Congestion Hotspot (Orange)

44 – Transit Needs (Yellow)

Montrose Avenue

-More dots were placed near the Montrose Avenue junction than at any other location, indicating that it is the most problematic of the three junctions within the corridor.

-Montrose was frequently identified as a location in need of improved park access through both dots and written comments. Several comments also indicated that there was a need for wider bicycle and pedestrian access at this location.

-Safety issues were identified on both east and west sides of the Montrose Avenue junction, though the eastern side, where the Lakefront Trail crosses Montrose at grade, was identified as the most dangerous location based on the number of dots.

-There were numerous comments received regarding safety at the Montrose junction. One attendee remarked that it was difficult to turn at the junction due to parked cars. Another stated that some of the crashes in the area south of Montrose were due to bad weather, claiming that the roadway collects rain and creates hazardous conditions for vehicles.

-The west side of the Montrose junction, where Montrose intersects with Inner Drive and the southbound NLSL lane, was identified as a congestion hotspot by a handful of attendees.

-Several participants identified Montrose as a location in need of improved transit access.

Wilson Avenue

-Several comments were received in support of retaining entrance and exit ramps at Wilson. One of the main reasons given was that any changes to access could affect operations at Weiss Hospital. Some attendees also stated that removing Wilson access outright would have an

impact on economic activity within the Wilson corridor. For example, one attendee mentioned that his business suffered a 15-20 percent decrease in revenue when access to Wilson was restricted during a recent construction project. Another commenter noted that the Chicago Market co-op would be open near the Wilson Red Line stop next year and changes to Wilson could impact its business.

-A small number of comments were received expressing support for closing the Wilson Avenue ramps to improve safety, especially bicycle and pedestrian safety. One participant stated that it was not necessary for all junctions to have ramps in all four directions.

Lawrence Avenue

-The Lawrence Avenue junction was identified as an area in need of improved transit access by numerous participants. West of Marine Drive on Lawrence and the southbound Lawrence entrance ramp were the most prominent locations noted by participants.

-A small number of participants stated that the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure near the Lawrence junction could be improved. Specifically, a participant suggested that a bicycle lane or sidewalk be added west of Lawrence/Marine Drive to accommodate a bottleneck of bicycle and automobile traffic.

Park Access

-The Montrose Avenue junction was the location most commonly identified as in need of improved park access, followed by the Lawrence Avenue junction, and the Wilson Avenue junction. The area between Montrose and Wilson, as well as Ainslie Street and Argyle Street north of Lawrence, were also identified.

-At least one participant urged the project team to beautify any new or existing underpasses, and consider any safety concerns that could arise in them.

Transit

-A roughly equal number of "Transit Needs" dots were placed at the Montrose and Lawrence junctions, while no transit dots were placed at the Wilson junction.

-A small number of comments were received in support of creating dedicated space for buses on North Lake Shore Drive, though opinions were mixed as to whether existing pavement should be converted to dedicated transit space or if additional pavement should be added.

-One participant suggested buses that currently idle within the park could be used to transport riders to different locations within the park, especially Simonds Drive.

Congestion

-Congestion hotspots were identified at a number of different locations within the Montrose-Wilson-Lawrence corridor, including at all four legs of the Wilson Avenue junction, Wilson west of NLS, all four legs of the Lawrence Avenue junction, and NLS itself. A handful of

participants also noted congestion issues on Montrose Avenue east of NLSD, especially near the Montrose Harbor parking lot.

Lakefront Trail

-Locations where the trail crosses either Montrose, Wilson or Lawrence at grade were identified as the sites of critical safety issues. The at-grade crossings were named the most important safety concern in the area for people walking and biking. Several participants requested that signalization or bridges be used to improve the safety of trail users in these areas.

-A small number of participants did not approve of routing the Lakefront Trail around Cricket Hill and preferred a direct route west of the hill.

Public Involvement

-One participant requested the project team or Alderman's office perform additional outreach to the residents of the many high-rise apartment buildings in the project area.