North DuSable Lake Shore Drive (NDLSD) Phase I Study – Lakeview Community
Meeting #3
FAQs
July 5, 2023

Green Space and Park Impacts

Question: ***How do you balance providing access to the park for cars and buses with the effects of these vehicles, such as emissions, noise and potential conflicts with pedestrians?***

The North DuSable Lake Shore Drive study looks to improve the safety, access, and mobility for all modes of transportation while taking into consideration the needs of Lincoln Park and potential effects to the environment. The study relies on stakeholder feedback, technical analysis, and decision making from the governing agencies to guide the project design. The study will also meet requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which aims to avoid or minimize effects to the environmental to the maximum extent practicable.

Question: ***How many acres of green space in Lakeview will be lost by this project?***

Between Belmont Avenue and Addison Avenue, there is no net change in the green space acreage for the Essential alternative. The other remaining alternatives (Addition, Exchange, Flex, or Double Flex) would result in a loss of 2-3 acres of green space within the same limits.

Question: ***How much of the proposed green space will be usable by pedestrians and other park users?***

All areas within Lincoln Park outside of the Transportation Footprint are considered usable for pedestrians and park users, including recreational features such as the Lakefront Trail and park amenities. The "Transportation Footprint" that is not considered usable park space includes roadway pavement, landscaped medians, grassed clear zones adjacent to the NDLSD roadway, and junction infield areas.

Question: ***How will the project affect the "blue space" provided by Belmont Harbor? How many boat slips will be removed? Do the proposed harbor changes have the support of the Chicago Park District? Have the current boat owners using these slips been consulted?***

At the point of maximum encroachment into the harbor, the green space will be extended between 170' and 210' into the harbor, depending upon the alternative. The harbor will be reconfigured to minimize the loss of boat slips. This will be accomplished by changing the types and sizes of the slip mix,

extending docks into the area of the harbor currently served by mooring cans, and providing breakwater extensions at the harbor inlet to minimize wave action in the harbor. The maximum reduction in boat slips would be 24; all of which are located at the northern reach of the harbor.

Other changes within the harbor include:

- Extending the southern breakwater at the Belmont Harbor mouth to reduce wave action within the harbor
- Relocating and replacing the dog beach at the northern mouth of the harbor
- Improving water quality, which is currently poorly circulated in the northern harbor mouth

We have worked closely with the Chicago Park District and their harbor manager to develop an acceptable reconfiguration plan. Boat owners will be consulted upon development of detailed project design.

Question: How will the park facilities along the west edge of the harbor be affected?

All of the existing park facilities along the western edge of the harbor (comfort station, playground, community garden and dog beach) will be relocated at the same time as the reconfiguration of the park space.

Question: How will the Addison Street junction affect the bird sanctuary and nearby residents?

Lowering mainline NDLSD below grade at Addison Street will substantially reduce traffic noise levels at adjacent properties, within the park near the Bird Sanctuary, and will reduce visual impacts of NDLSD traffic movements. The improvements at the Addison Junction are anticipated to reduce idling, noise and vehicle emissions adjacent to the bird sanctuary and residents.

Question: How will the tennis courts and softball fields be impacted?

The softball fields will be unaffected by the proposed improvement alternatives The tennis courts located both north and south of the softball fields will be shifted further east with no loss in the number of courts.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Question: How will the proposed design address pedestrian and bicyclist access to the lakefront?

The Lakeview Area proposed improvements were designed with a 'pedestrian first' approach and will create safer pedestrian and bike access to the lakefront with the addition of new high-visibility crosswalks and ramps that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, new or modernized traffic signals with updated pedestrian timings, separated off-street/protected bike lanes, and pedestrian refuge islands at crossings. Where practicable, rather than shared-use access paths, some facilities will have separate lanes for pedestrians and bicycles. Off street bike lanes are proposed along Belmont east of Sheridan, and also along Inner Drive between Aldine and Belmont. These off-street bike

facilities will provide dedicated 12ft wide two-way bike lanes that are physically separated and protected from vehicles and pedestrians with concrete curbs and grass parkways that include street trees. Similarly, bike access towards the lakefront was considered in alignment with the Streets for Cycling 2020 Plan and existing neighborhood routes, Aldine Avenue and Roscoe Street. The new proposed signal at Inner Drive and Aldine Avenue creates a protected traffic signal phase for pedestrians and cyclists to access the shared use underpass at Roscoe, and the off-street bike lanes that connect to Belmont and the lakefront.

Question: What specific changes are proposed to lakefront access at Diversey Parkway, Barry Avenue, Belmont Avenue, Roscoe Street, and Addison Street?

At Diversey Parkway, the sidewalk along the north side of the Diversey Harbor inlet will be widened to create a shared-use path. To eliminate past flooding problems, the elevations of the walkways on both sides of the inlet will be raised to assure that they are above the maximum design lake water level.

The NDLSD pedestrian underpass at Barry Avenue is proposed to be widened to provide separate paths for bicycles and pedestrians. At the same time, the vertical clearance within the tunnel would be increased and lighting will be improved. The Lakefront Trail bike path would also be grade-separated from the lakefront access facility to reduce bicyclist and pedestrian conflicts. Similar design features are proposed at Belmont Avenue with separate pedestrian and bike access paths along Belmont and a Lakefront Trail bike path overpass.

The Roscoe Street underpass is proposed to be widened (though without separate bike and pedestrian paths) and the vertical clearance increased. A modern pump station will be installed to prevent flooding of the underpass during large storm events.

The existing pedestrian underpass at Waveland Avenue is proposed to be relocated to an at-grade lakefront access along the extension of Addison Street where a section of NDLSD will be lowered.

Question: Why is the LFT not being designed wider for side-by-side riding or passing lanes?

The Park District does not want to widen the bike path to provide additional width for passing lanes or for unencumbered side-by-side riding to limit the amount of pavement in Lincoln Park as well as to discourage high speed bicycle travel on the path. A wide bike path with limited friction from other riders would encourage high speed travel by some users, causing a reduction in safety on the Lakefront Trail. The Lakefront Trail proposed improvements will improve mobility and safety by grade-separating the bike path from all lakefront access facilities.

Question: Can an on-street bike lane be added along Inner Drive?

The Inner Drive has been designed to be forward compatible with a variety of different configurations in the future, including potential bus-only lanes and/or on-street bike lanes. Future uses of the Inner Drive are still to be determined.

As currently proposed, an off-street shared-use path is proposed along the east side of the Inner Drive for pedestrian and bicyclist use.

Addison

Questions: ***The proposed improvements change the CTA 152 bus turnaround location from Inner Drive and West Sheridan Road to the park. Have you considered the environmental impacts of a bus idling in the park? What will the impacts be to the Waveland parking lot, the softball field, Bird Sanctuary, and potential conflicts with cars? What measures are going to be made available to increase security if the 152 bus turn around will be located off of Addison? Can you clarify how the buses will enter and exit the turnaround location?***

Based on comments received at the April 20, 2023 Lakeview Community Meeting, the proposed CTA 152 bus turnaround from Addison Street in the golf course parking lot will not be implemented. Concept plans will be modified in the future to reflect this change.

Question: ***Will there be meetings to discuss the traffic signal being proposed at the Addison and Pine Grove intersection?***

The traffic signal being proposed at the Addison and Pine Grove intersection is an independent improvement by CDOT that is being closely coordinated with the NDLSD project. Any meetings related to the signal will be coordinated between the City of Chicago and the alderman.

The proposed signal is compatible with the NDLSD alternatives since it will create gaps in traffic along Addison that will help cars entering and exiting parking garages along the north and south sides of the street.

Question: ***The proposed improvements show NDLSD access along Inner Drive and at Addison. Why are they needed at both locations? How will parking garage access be affected by those who live on Addison and Inner Drive near Addison with the proposed improvements?***

Belmont Avenue is the most congested junction and highest crash location within the 7-mile NDLSD project limits. Spreading out the travel demand that exists at Belmont Avenue by adding ramps along Inner Drive and at Addison will substantially reduce traffic backups and delays on both Belmont Avenue and the Inner Drive, as well as on NDLSD itself. Improving traffic flow on the arterial streets will reduce the incentive for drivers to use local neighborhood streets as cut-through routes to try and save travel time. As a result, it is expected that traffic volumes on some local streets will be reduced.

The bus stop at Belmont Avenue is also one of the highest boarding/alighting locations for CTA users in the CTA system. Relocating the southbound exit and entrance ramps from Belmont Avenue to Inner Drive will improve bus operations at the Belmont bus stop by removing vehicles conflicts that are weaving and turning at the same location. Direct access to and from the Outer Drive to/from Aldine will be prohibited.

Maximum eastbound vehicle queue lengths at the Addison/Inner Drive intersection in the morning peak hour are forecasted to extend approximately 350 feet on Addison Street. These queues would also be cleared every traffic signal cycle, providing gaps for residents to access these driveways during peak travel periods.

Information and exhibits presented at the Lakeview Community Meeting can be found on the project website at www.northdusablelakeshoredrive.org.

Aldine

Question: ***How do you propose that moving vans and other long vehicles be accommodated on Inner Drive and when there is not a light to stop cars coming off the southbound off ramp?***

The Inner Drive has been designed to be compatible with a variety of different configurations in the future, including potential bus-only lanes and/or on-street bike lanes. Future uses of the Inner Drive are still to be determined. The pavement width proposed for northbound Inner Drive between Melrose Street and Aldine Avenue will be wide enough to support one left-hand travel lane and one curb lane. The curb lane in this area could be used for short term parking, deliveries or maintenance vehicles. The NDLSD ramp intersection at Aldine Avenue will be traffic signal controlled.

Speeding and Noise

Question: ***Cars constantly speed well over the current 40 MPH limit. What will the speed limit be for the redesign, and what infrastructure will be used to ensure that limit is followed?***

The NDLSD project does not propose any changes to the 40 mph posted speed limits on the Drive. We are aware that speeding occurs along NDLSD. The most effective means of controlling speeds is through vigorous speed enforcement. However, the existing design of the Outer Drive makes speed enforcement both difficult and hazardous, as there are limited locations where speeds can be safely monitored and few locations to pull an offending driver over outside a live traffic lane.

The proposed improvements include emergency pull-off bays that are long enough and frequent enough to allow law enforcement to monitor speeds, accelerate safely into traffic, then decelerate safely into a bay down the road when pulling someone over.

The NDLSD team will continue to look for options to reduce speeding and that are forward compatible with electronic or photo enforcement, in the event that the current state law which prevents its use is changed.

Question: ***It looks like traffic will increase on Inner Lake Shore drive, should residents expect more noise pollution due to this project?***

Roadway noise levels are determined by factors that include traffic volumes, vehicle speeds and distance between the noise source and sensitive receptors. Increasing the separation between the Inner and Outer Drives combined with depressing the Outer Drive at Addison Street below grade will result in decreased traffic noise levels for many sensitive receptors between Belmont and Irving Park.

The proposed access changes to NDLSD between Belmont and Addison will dramatically reduce traffic backups and delays on both Belmont Avenue and the Inner Drive. Improving traffic flow on the arterial streets will reduce the incentive for drivers to use local neighborhood streets to try and save travel time.

As a result of these improvements, it is expected that traffic volumes on portions of the Inner Drive as well as some local streets will be reduced. In fact, traffic volumes on Inner Drive are forecasted to decrease south of Addison under all of the proposed alternatives with the proposed new access at that location.

Purpose & Need

Question: ***Is it a goal of the study group to increase/decrease/maintain auto traffic? Why isn't there a greater emphasis placed on transit?***

To address the issues that exist throughout the corridor, the project team met with the project Task Force and community members in 2013 and 2014 to develop and refine the study's Purpose and Need Statement. This agreed upon statement defines the study's goals, against which all improvement alternatives are measured. The primary goals that were established for the NDLSD project are to improve safety for all users, improve mobility for all users, address infrastructure deficiencies, and improve access and circulation throughout the corridor. This does not imply that any mode including cycling, walking, transit or autos is more emphasized than any other mode, but rather that all users are important.

Question: ***If your Purpose and Need was developed at the beginning of the study (2014). Is it outdated? Does it need to be reconsidered?***

The Purpose and Need was developed early in the project to establish guiding principles for the NDLSD project study. The Purpose and Need was informed by technical analyses and extensive feedback from project stakeholders. The Purpose and Need for the study includes:

- Improving safety for all users
- Improving mobility for all users
- Addressing infrastructure deficiencies, and
- Improving access and circulation for all users

The Purpose and Need also guides the alternatives development process for the study; alternatives must demonstrate the ability to address the Purpose and Need while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts.

It should be noted that NDLSD currently serves all users, including people walking, people biking, transit users and auto users, and will continue to do so in the future. It is also important to note that many of the project needs are not directly related to traffic forecasts, including the need to provide safety improvements, shoreline protection and infrastructure improvements, and access and circulation improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Community Engagement

Question: ***How can stakeholders be involved with the NDLSD project? Where can information on stakeholder meetings be found?***

Public engagement is a critical component of the NDLSD project. There are a variety of ways any member of the public can stay informed on the project, including:

- Visiting the project website: www.northdusablelakeshoredrive.org
- Subscribing to our project email (info@ndlsd.org) for newsletters and project updates
- Following the project's Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn pages
- Attending community or public meetings

The NDLSD project has also established Task Force members to provide input and guidance on the project at key points of the study process. You can read more about the NDLSD Task Force here: https://northdusablelakeshoredrive.org/pdf/NDLSD_Task%20Force%20Handout_Spring%202022.pdf

Periodically, the NDLSD team meets with communities to discuss specific topics related to portions of the NDLSD project. The most recent community meeting took place in Lakeview at the request of the area aldermen in April 2023. All community meeting materials are posted to the project website for review: https://northdusablelakeshoredrive.org/additional_community_engagement.html

Upon request, the NDLSD team also will meet with stakeholder groups or associations to discuss the project and specific interests related to the NDLSD project. To date, over 70 meetings have been held with stakeholder groups.

Parking

Question: ***What parking impacts will occur as a result of the improvements? Why is Recreational Drive proposed for removal? What are plans for replacement parking?***

Minimal parking impacts will occur with the proposed design. An overall goal of the NDLSD project is to minimize impacts to parking and, when possible, replace impacted parking in kind. Parking along Recreation Drive will be eliminated and replaced at the Belmont Harbor parking lot and the golf course parking lot.

Inner Drive Design

Question: ***Why is the Inner Drive being widened?***

One of the changes proposed along Inner Drive is to provide turning lanes in the northbound direction for local traffic to remove those vehicles from through traffic movements. This improves safety by reducing the potential for rear-end collisions in the through lanes as well as improving the visibility of left turners to opposing traffic, reducing the potential for left turn crashes. The proposed median serves several functions in the concept design:

- Provides proper spacing and lane alignment for the proposed turn lanes
- Provides a refuge area for pedestrians who enter the crosswalk late and do not finish crossing in the allotted clearance time.
- Acts to calm and slow traffic by making the street visually more narrow and compact to drivers, making them more cautious.

It should also be noted that the design shown in the renderings for Inner Drive is conceptual and is not the final proposed design for that roadway.

CTA's Role

Question: ***What is the CTA's role and perspective in this group?***

The Chicago Transit Authority is consulted as a member of the Project Study Group which also includes Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Chicago Park District and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). CTA does not have jurisdiction over roadway design. Throughout the course of the project study, CTA has been a strong advocate for enhancing transit facilities in the corridor in order to substantially improve the transit experience through better access and faster and more reliable bus service, while also minimizing impacts on the park.

Shoreline Protection Measures

Question: ***How do the differing plans also differ in their Shoreline protection measures? What are the shoreline protection measures?***

Shoreline protection is proposed to prevent overtopping waves from reaching the Outer Drive and at least one of the Lakefront Trail paths. All alternatives propose similar shoreline protection measures. Shoreline protection techniques are used to safeguard shoreline facilities from strong waves during large storm events. A variety of techniques can be employed, such as seawalls or revetments, beaches, offshore breakwaters or shoals, and submerged stone benches.

The shoreline protection concepts developed for NDLSD employ a combination of these techniques. The concepts are designed to minimize the amount of lake fill that would be required, to preserve important sight lines from the urban edge and the Outer Drive, and to assure that critical infrastructure is protected from large waves during severe storms. More information on shoreline protection concepts can be found on the project website at www.northdusablelakeshoredrive.org.

Other Corridor Design Alternatives

Question: ***An eight-lane expressway is inappropriate for Chicago's lakefront. Why was a reduced at-grade boulevard alternative with transit lanes not considered for NDLSD?***

Typically, facilities are downgraded when they are underutilized and capacity exists on parallel routes, as is the case with several current expressway removal proposals in other cities. North DuSable Lake Shore Drive carried 177,000 vehicles per day in 2019 between LaSalle Drive and Fullerton Parkway, which indicates that the corridor is highly utilized. The nearest parallel expressway-type route is the Kennedy Expressway, which carried 253,000 vehicles at roughly the same location in 2019, and does not have the capacity to carry additional traffic. Several of the streets parallel to NDLSD have been redesigned with Complete Streets concepts, and many have undergone capacity reductions, so the ability of the street

network to handle large amounts of diverted traffic is limited. Therefore, at a high level, NDLSD would not be considered a good candidate for removal or downgrading to a surface boulevard.

However, a four-lane at-grade boulevard alternative with exclusive bus lanes was considered by the project team and submitted to CMAP for analysis under the ONTO 2050 travel demand model. The key findings from the modeling were as follows:

- Automobile volumes on the boulevard would exceed 40,000 vehicles per day from Montrose Avenue to Chicago Avenue and would impact all NDLSD users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers) due to the resulting congestion.

- Parallel north-south arterials and collector streets would experience substantial increases in traffic, especially closer to NDLSD, with increases of 30 to as much as 80 percent more traffic volume. Due to the Complete Streets improvements discussed previously, these increases in traffic would be undesirable. Transit service on other routes would be negatively impacted by the additional local traffic and resultant congestion.

- Hours spent in congestion would increase by 25% with commute times to downtown Chicago increasing by 10% on average, which has a negative impact on the local economy.

Based on these findings, mobility and safety for all users are notably worsened under this alternative. Thus, it was determined that this alternative would not meet the stated objectives of the project, and was dropped from further consideration.

Next Steps

Question: ***When will the plans for the Lakeview area be finalized?***

Currently the NDLSD Phase I Study is working toward identifying a preferred alternative for the project. It is anticipated a preferred alternative will be selected in fall of 2023.

Question: ***When will construction for the project begin?***

The completion of the Phase I Study is anticipated to occur in 2024. This will be followed by detailed design plan development (Phase II engineering). Construction (Phase III) would only begin after both phases are complete and funding has been secured. Phases II and III are not currently included in **IDOT's FY 2018-2023 Proposed Highway Improvement Program**.

Question: ***How long is construction anticipated to last once it begins?***

Due to funding constraints, it is likely that the NDLSD project will be constructed in several phases over a number of years as funding becomes available. Depending upon the extent and complexity of each phase, construction of individual phases may take 2 to 3 years to complete.

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Question: How will residents be impacted by construction?

Access to residential buildings will be maintained at all times during construction. Traffic will be maintained at all times on the Inner Drive, though lane reductions and parking prohibitions are likely during Inner Drive construction.

Reconstruction of the Outer Drive will be challenging due to the park setting, which will limit construction zones and temporary pavement areas. While portions of the new Outer Drive south of LaSalle may be able to be constructed outside the limits of the existing Drive, throughout the remainder of NDLSD, lane reductions will be required to complete construction. Access at junctions may also be restricted during certain construction stages. Heavy traffic congestion on the Outer Drive and traffic diversions to adjacent arterial roadways will impact local residents during construction of each stage.

Question: How will lakefront access work during construction?

Access to Belmont harbor will be maintained at all times during construction. Lakefront access and access to the Lakefront Trail will also be maintained to the maximum extent practicable, though individual access facilities may need to be closed during certain construction stages. Access to Oak Street Beach will likely be closed during some shoreline protection construction stages, though temporary access will be established once the new beach is constructed.