

DIRECTIONS!

REDEFINE THE DRIVE

NORTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE

Winter 2021 Issue V

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) are directing the North Lake Shore Drive Phase I Study. During the Phase I Study, the project team is reviewing the current road configuration and redesigning the corridor and adjacent park trails as an improved multi-modal system that comfortably and effectively accommodates and balances competing needs of people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving. The corridor study area extends from Grand Avenue to Hollywood Avenue. This 7-mile length includes 12 highway junctions, 22 bridges and tunnels, and touches 11 Chicago neighborhoods. Lincoln Park, Lake Michigan, bicycle and pedestrian lakefront trails and historic landmarks surround the Boulevard.

To remain eligible for federal funding the North Lake Shore Drive (NLSD) Phase I Study is following the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires a rigorous and objective evaluation of design alternatives and considers both stakeholder input as well as quantitative, measurable factors.

TOPICS INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- Project Overview and Public Input Opportunity Recap
- Engagement Results and Summary
- Small Group Discussion FAQs
- Alternatives to be Carried Forward
- Next Steps and Project Outlook

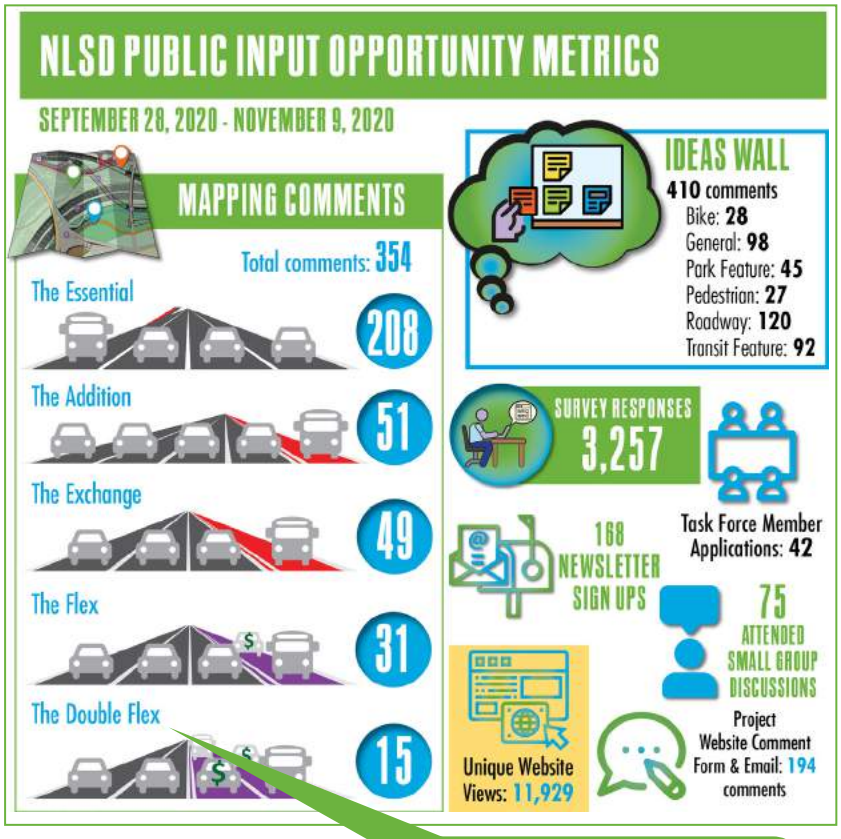


PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY RECAP

Thank you to all who participated in the virtual Public Input Opportunity (PIO) that took place from September 28, 2020 to November 9, 2020. The feedback and input received regarding the proposed designs and alternatives directly influences the evaluation and refinement of alternatives. The goal of the input opportunity was to allow the public to review the five top performing alternatives from the Level 2 Screening analysis and provide feedback. The project team also provided materials that gave a comprehensive review of the study background as well as examined the proposed designs that are included in all NLSD alternatives.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually through the interactive website NLSDinput.org. The project team offered a variety of engagement tools through which participants could provide comments and questions. These tools included an ideas wall, an interactive map, and a survey. The website also featured informational materials such as project videos, summary handouts, and study exhibits.

Additionally, the project team hosted seven virtual small group discussions between the public and project team members. A total of 75 participants attended these sessions. Attendees provided comments and asked questions to better understand potential designs. Topics included, but were not limited to, the Lakefront Trail, parks and park access, transit, the Alternatives to be Carried Forward (ATBCF), and location-specific comments at various points along the Drive.



View the Public Input Opportunity Metrics document on the project website

Do these alternative names look new to you? We gave them a refresh during the Public Input Opportunity. Check them out in detail on page 5.

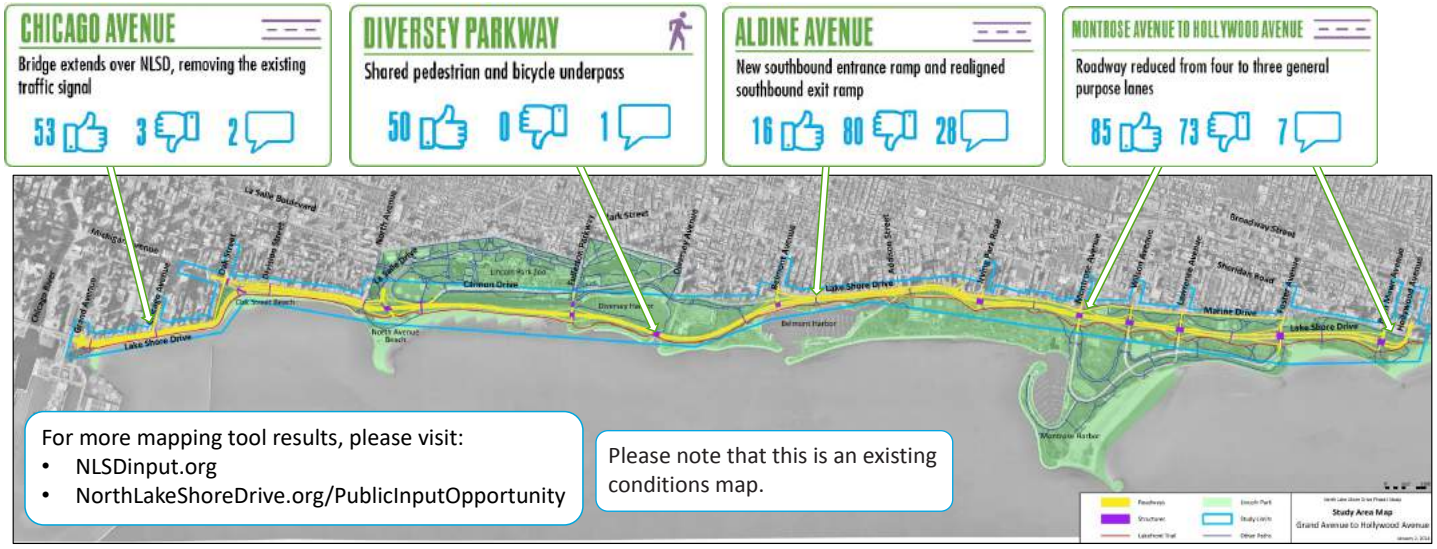
ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND SUMMARY

Interactive Map

As part of the Public Input Opportunity, an interactive map illustrated the five proposed alternatives and associated improvements throughout the corridor. Using this tool, participants were able to like, dislike, and comment on the common and unique features of each alternative. Design features included transit, roadway, pedestrian and bike, and general aspects.

The public input provided through the interactive map gave the project team a greater understanding of specific proposed changes that the public viewed positively or may have concern about. Several of the most popular improvements common to all alternatives are displayed below (based on the greatest number of likes, dislikes, and comments).

To see more interactive map comments, check out the **popular comment map** on the project website or visit the archived interactive map on **NLSDinput.org**.



Ideas Wall

Another Public Input Opportunity engagement tool was an ideas wall. The ideas wall was designed to provide an open forum for public discussion on any study topic. Participants used virtual post-it notes to share thoughts on existing issues or the proposed improvements. This included original comments as well as responses to others' thoughts. The public commented on pedestrian, bike, roadway, transit, and park features. A sample of the most frequently received comments are below. To view all ideas wall comments, visit the archived ideas wall on **NLSDinput.org**.

> Add protections for cyclists, runners and walkers on the Lake Shore Path so cars stop plowing off LSD and on to the path.

> The suggestion of adding a "Bus Only" lane would be most preferable, BUT before anyone could reasonably comment on that option, it would need to be clarified how that would be managed, particularly along North-LSD, where it is bordered by streets, Belmont harbor etc.

> I attended one of the small-group discussions about this project, and wanted to raise a point discussed there. This project is designed to accommodate the drivers on today's LSD, many of whom might not have good transit alternatives today. However, if we take that approach on this and other projects, we will only cement the region's car-dependence. We should build the Drive for the region we want - and we can and should reduce the size of the drive and prioritize transit on this new version.

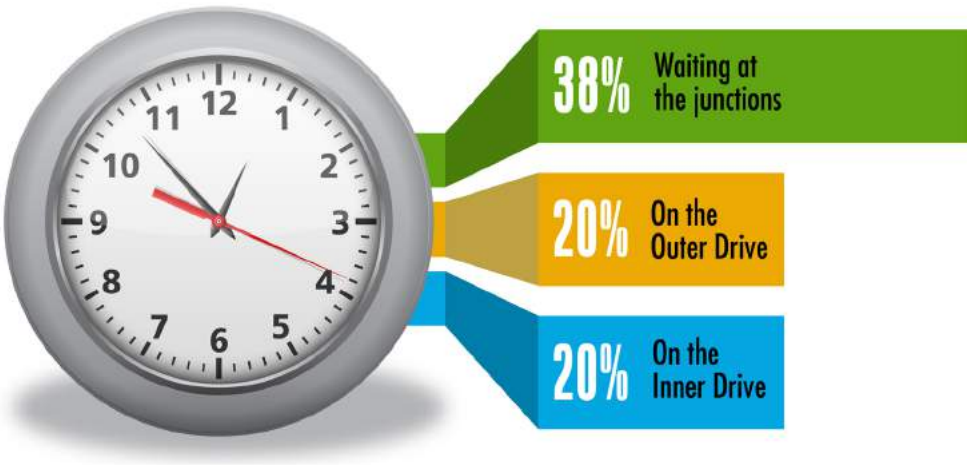
> Simply, I wish there to be a maximum amount of landfill added between Grand Avenue and North Avenue. I believe our lakefront parks are the prettiest part of the city and this particular section is almost entirely bereft of parkland. More, more more.....
>
> Start a discussion (1)

> Key pedestrian underpasses currently at Chicago Ave, Division St., Roscoe St. and off Argyle St near Margate Fieldhouse need to be widened, bike lanes need to be seperated off from pedestrians for everyones safety.

Public Survey

As the study moves into the next stage of evaluation and analysis, it is important to receive feedback on how participants use the multi-modal corridor today and their perspectives on the potential future roadway design. The Public Input Opportunity featured a public survey that allowed participants to provide input on different characteristics of the finalist alternatives such as travel times, footprint, cost, dedicated transit space, and tolling. The graphics on this page display results from some of the survey responses. To see a comprehensive list of survey responses, visit the **project website**.

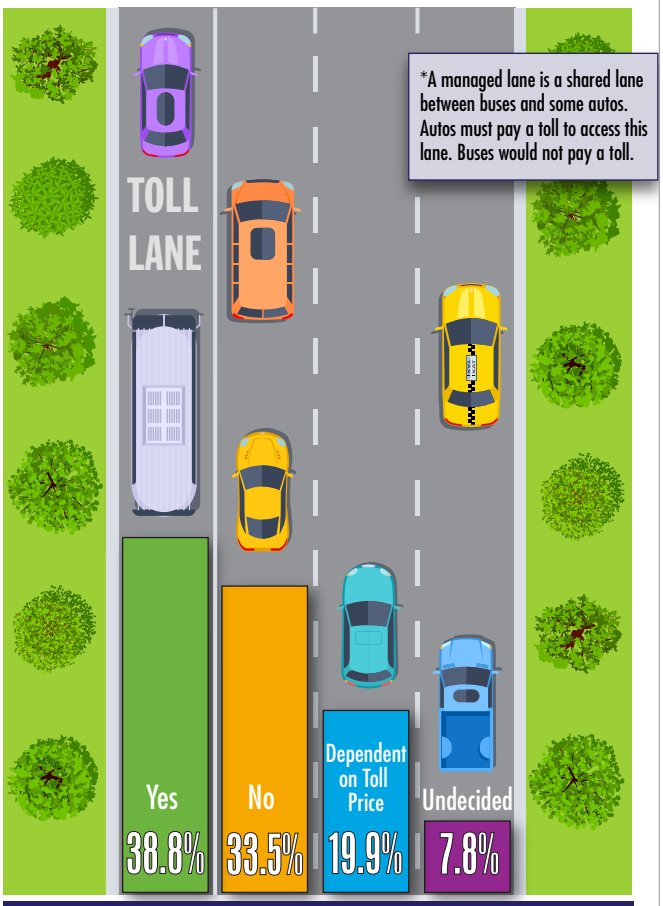
When on the bus, where do you generally experience the longest delays in travel times?



TOTAL RESPONSES: 2,565

Q5: When on the bus, where do you generally experience the longest delays in travel times?

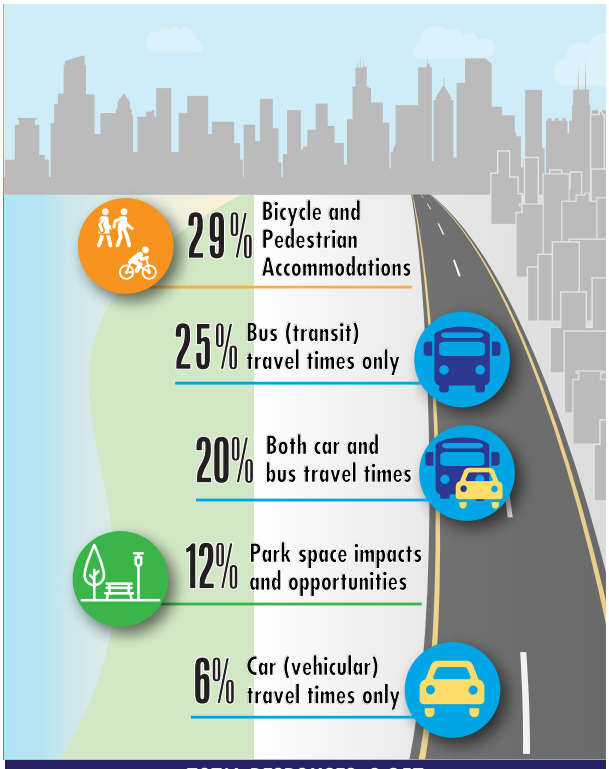
Would you support a tolled managed lane* on NLSD to maintain a free flow speed at all times for buses and autos in this lane?



TOTAL RESPONSES: 3,257

Q14: Would you support tolling autos in the managed lane(s) in order to maintain a free flow speed of 40 mph at all times for buses and some autos?

Which factor is most important to you in selecting a roadway design for NLSD?



TOTAL RESPONSES: 3,257

Q9: What factors are most important to you in selecting the preferred alternative roadway design for NLSD?

Additional responses:
3% Construction Cost
4% Roadway footprint (the amount of space the road requires)

Source: Survey responses from NLSD Phase I Study PIO Sept-Nov, 2020

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The project team responded to many questions during the small group discussions and throughout the Public Input Opportunity. Common questions and responses are included below. For a more comprehensive review of the small group discussion questions and the project team's responses, check out the guide on the **project website**.

What is being done to separate people walking and people biking on the Lakefront Trail and at access points throughout the corridor? I often see conflicts and potential for collisions between various users.

The proposed design would create separate pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout the LFT corridor, minimizing conflict between lower and higher speed trail users. The biking trail is expected to feature a 14-foot wide paved path, 7 feet in each direction. The walking trail is expected to feature a 12-foot wide paved path flanked by 3-foot wide gravel jogging paths. Underpasses and bridges at the access points would also be wide enough to provide ample separation between pedestrians and bicyclists. Additionally, all pedestrian bridges and underpasses would be ADA compliant. Where feasible, paths and roadways will be grade separated at junctions to minimize conflicts between people walking, biking, driving, and taking transit. The project team is committed to ongoing coordination with the Chicago Park District on Lakefront Trails.

What kind of transit service improvement will be expected from the five alternatives?

Four of the five finalist alternatives (the Addition, the Exchange, the Flex and the Double Flex) provide a space for either a bus only lane or a shared bus/auto lane, which would allow buses to travel reliably at free flow speed (40 mph) on NLSD. The remaining finalist alternative (the Essential) focuses transit improvements at the junctions with bus priority signals and queue jump lanes, where much of the bus travel delay presently occurs. These features and others would also improve bus speeds. The project team will further model and review the comparative performance of these alternatives in the next round of evaluation.

Are there bus only lanes in the remaining alternatives?

Four of the five remaining alternatives (all except the Essential) include restricted access lanes that would allow a bus to travel at free flow speeds (40 mph) on the Outer Drive. Two alternatives (the Addition and the Exchange) include dedicated bus only lanes, and another two (the Flex and the Double Flex) include managed access lanes that give priority to buses as well as autos that pay a toll.

How would enforcement be implemented to prevent motor vehicles from using a potential bus only lane? Would there be any barrier separating the bus only lane from the general purpose lanes?

The enforcement concept still in development would generally include measures such as cameras or other electronic methods to detect and distinguish authorized from unauthorized vehicles. The bus only lane would be separated from the general purpose lanes by a four-foot painted buffer. A physical barrier is not proposed because it would require a further expansion of the transportation footprint to allow for passing a stalled bus. Technology related to traffic management is rapidly advancing, and the project team will seek to incorporate features that provide sufficient levels of enforcement while also respecting the context of historic Lincoln Park.

Does a tolled managed lane and/or a bus only lane affect traffic diversion onto neighborhood streets?

Traffic models used by the project team have found that a tolled managed lane would result in relatively less traffic diversion away from the Outer Drive than converting one of the existing lanes to bus only. For example, the Exchange alternative, which converts an existing general purpose lane to a bus only lane, results in relatively greater traffic diversion to the nearby arterial streets as compared to the Flex alternative, which converts an existing general purpose lane to a shared managed lane for both buses and tolled autos.



Typical Pedestrian Underpass - Potential View

ALTERNATIVES TO BE CARRIED FORWARD

Five alternatives will be further analyzed during the next stage of analysis, Level 3 Screening. These Alternatives to be Carried Forward include the Essential, the Addition, the Exchange, the Flex and the Double Flex.

THE ADDITION

Formerly...
Dedicated Transitway – Left
(DTW-L)

Alternative Description



Four general purpose lanes remain, similar to existing conditions

Adds a **dedicated transit lane**

THE ESSENTIAL

Formerly...
Context Tailored Treatment
+ Transit Advantages (CTT+TA)

Alternative Description



Transit queue jump lanes provided at exit and entrance ramps

Four general purpose lanes remain, similar to existing conditions

THE EXCHANGE

Formerly...
3+1 Bus-Only Lane
(3+1 BOL)

Alternative Description



Three general purpose lanes remain

Converts one lane into a **dedicated transit lane**

THE FLEX

Formerly...
3+1 Managed Lane
(3+1 ML)

Alternative Description



Three general purpose lanes remain

Converts **one lane into a transit priority lane**

THE DOUBLE FLEX

Formerly...
2+2 Managed Lanes
(2+2 ML)

Alternative Description



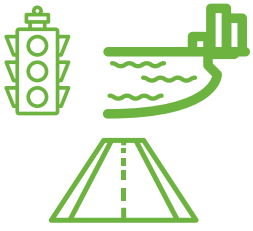
Two general purpose lanes remain

Converts **two lanes into transit priority lanes**

Common Improvements to All Alternatives



Common improvements include Lakefront Trail and park access improvements, transit improvements (such as transit priority signals and improved bus stops), shoreline protection and park space improvements, and roadway improvements. Explore these further in the Project Updates Video: *Common Improvements to All Alternatives*.



View the Alternatives to be Carried Forward handout in detail on the project website.

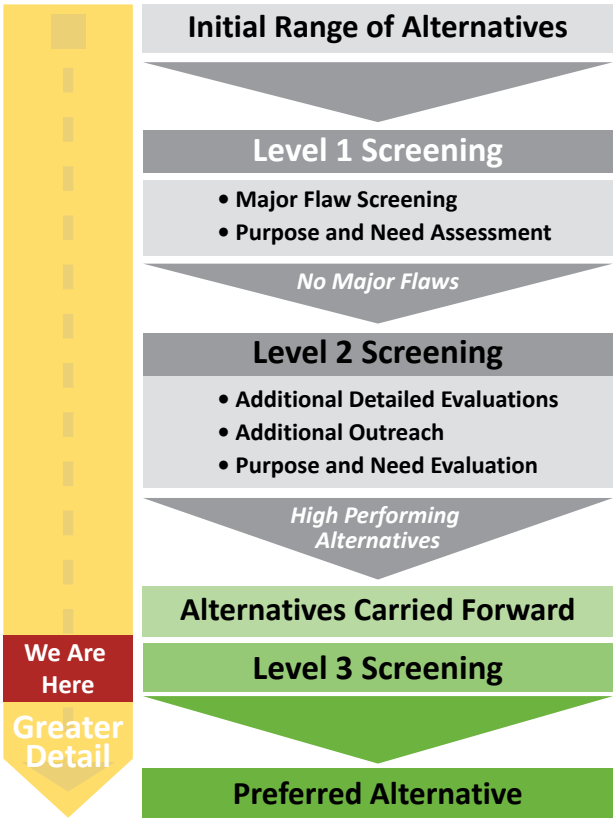
NEXT STEPS AND PROJECT OUTLOOK

In 2021, the project team looks forward to presenting the Level 3 Screening process and results, holding additional Task Force meetings, community meetings and Public Meeting #5. Numerous engagement opportunities will be available to further assess plans and analyses and provide feedback throughout 2021 and 2022.

Level 3 Screening Preview

During the Level 3 Screening process, the project team will evaluate and analyze the five remaining alternatives using an expanded set of performance, social, economic, and environmental criteria. At the end of the Level 3 Screening process, the project team will recommend one preferred alternative. Throughout this process, the analytical results and recommendations will be discussed with the Project Study Group (PSG), Task Force members, community stakeholders, and the public for their input.

***Please note that the criteria displayed below are preliminary and are subject to refinement based on project team analysis and stakeholder feedback.*



Preliminary Level 3 Screening Criteria

Development of preliminary criteria informed by federal review process and stakeholder input

Performance Criteria

- Inner Drive Mobility (transit and auto travel times)
- Safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, Outer Drive features
- Future flexibility; ability to adapt to future transportation needs
- Performance Criteria carried over from Level 2 Screening:
  - Person throughput
  - Transit mode share
  - Transit mobility
  - Transit reliability
  - Vehicular mobility
  - Arterial volume change
  - NLSD volume change

Economic Criteria

- Economic
- Access to employment
- Funding/Finance Options
- Construction Cost

Environmental Criteria

- Air Quality
- Traffic Noise
- Impervious Surface Areas
- Natural Resources
- Green Space
- Shoreline Protection
- Water Quality
- Waters of the US

Social Criteria

- Environmental Justice: Does an alternative cause disproportionate impacts to low income and minority communities?
- Equity: How does an alternative distribute project benefits, impacts, and costs?
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Experience
- Parking Impacts
- Displacements/Private Property Impacts *(No displacements or private property impacts are anticipated)*
- Compatibility with Local Plans

Task Force Meetings

To date, the project team has held 11 Task Force meetings. During the previous four Task Force meetings, the project team described the four major alternative categories, presented the analysis and evaluation of those alternatives, and received valuable input that resulted in the finalist alternatives. Most meetings were held in a workshop format to allow for one-on-one discussion and refinements to alternatives. During the upcoming Task Force meetings, the project team will provide further details on the Level 3 Screening criteria as well as the analytical results of evaluating the remaining finalist alternatives. Thank you to all Task Force members for your time, effort and dedication to this project.

Northern Terminus Traffic Study (NTTS) Community Meeting #3

The purpose of the NTTS is to address transportation and traffic issues along Sheridan Road, Broadway, Ridge Avenue, Bryn Mawr Avenue, and Hollywood Avenue near the northern terminus of North Lake Shore Drive at Hollywood Avenue. Since the NTTS was initiated in 2017, study goals and objectives were established and proposed alternatives were presented during two community meetings. At the third community meeting to be held in spring/summer 2021, the project team will present the evaluation and analysis of the four final alternatives. A preferred alternative will be determined based on further assessment of the alternatives and community input and then presented at a fourth and final community meeting.

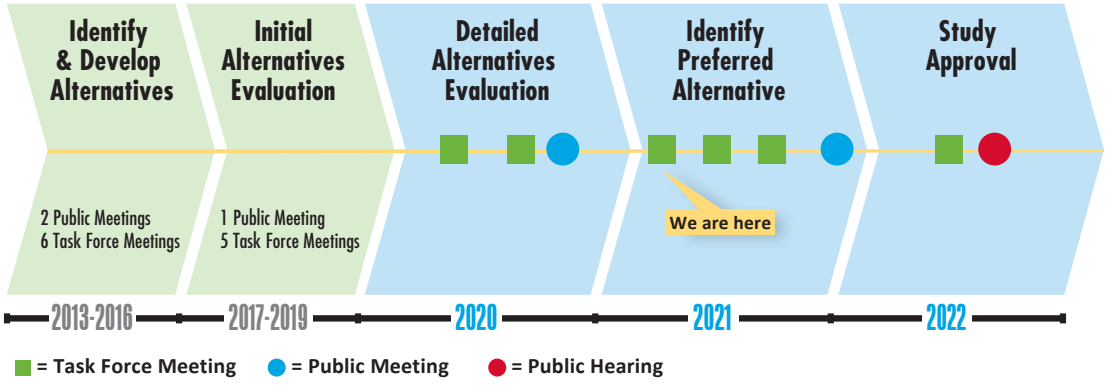
Lakeview Area Community Meeting

Initial Lakeview community meetings were held in 2019. During the recent Public Input Opportunity, the project team received the highest concentration of feedback and input from community members between Diversey Parkway and Irving Park Road. Comments focused on the proposed Belmont bus turnaround, Aldine access ramps, and the proposed park configuration east of the Drive. Another Lakeview community meeting will be held in summer 2021 during which the project team will discuss traffic operations assessments of the proposed improvements as well as additional alternative designs for key locations within the area. Community members will be able to provide further input regarding the proposed improvements.

Public Meeting #5

The project team will present the evaluation criteria and results from the Level 3 screening process at the fifth public meeting, currently expected in fall/winter 2021. A preliminary preferred alternative will be presented at this meeting based on the upcoming evaluation and analysis of the five finalist alternatives. Feedback and input provided at the public meeting will be used to refine the preferred alternative. A final formal public hearing will be held following the completion of Level 3 Screening.

PHASE I STUDY TIMELINE



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you use North Lake Shore Drive for your daily commute? Walk, run or ride along the Lakefront Trail? We want your input on the current alternatives and at future meetings. All materials from past Task Force and public meetings are available on the project website and we welcome your feedback throughout the project. If you are not yet on our newsletter list, please send us an email to receive project updates!

Not yet following the project? Find us using the handles below!

www.facebook.com/NorthLakeShoreDrive

@n_Lakeshoredr

info@northlakeshoredrive.org

www.northlakeshoredrive.org