The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) initiated the North Lake Shore Drive (NLSD) Phase I Study in 2013 to improve NLSD from Grand Avenue to Hollywood Avenue. The study is anticipated to continue through 2021 with many opportunities for input throughout the project process. Please visit the project website, northlakeshoredrive.org, to provide comments and view previous meeting materials.

As part of the study, the project team is working with stakeholders to develop a plan that improves safety and mobility for all users. The following is an overview of current issues and the proposed improvement concept for the LaSalle Drive junction.

There are three categories of alternatives being examined as part of the NLSD Phase I Study: Context Tailored Treatments; Transitways; and Managed Lanes. The top performing alternatives from these categories can be layered on top of one another in combination, or serve as standalone NLSD corridor designs. The following information addresses only the design features associated with the Context Tailored Treatments category.

**North Lake Shore Drive Corridor**

LaSalle Drive junction - ramp to southbound NLSD

East of NLSD near current turnaround at North Avenue Beach
The area near LaSalle Drive is one of the most popular locations in the NLSD corridor, drawing heavy traffic of all kinds to North Avenue Beach and other nearby amenities in the summer. There is a need to provide for the safe operation of all modes of travel in this area.

- LaSalle Drive is currently heavily congested during the morning and evening peak periods. This congestion is especially severe on the ramps to and from the south. Most crashes at this junction occur on these ramps.

- During busy summer weekends access to the turnaround and parking areas east of NLSD is restricted, and sometimes motorists attempt to pick up and drop off passengers on the northbound on-ramp.

- While no CTA buses access NLSD at the LaSalle Drive junction, Inner Drive and LaSalle Drive are serviced by #151 Sheridan west of the Outer Drive. Route #72 North connects transit users from North Avenue to the beach during the summer.

- The turnaround at the east end of LaSalle Drive is often congested with taxis, rideshare vehicles, and other motor vehicle traffic, which interfere with bus operations. On busy summer weekends, the turnaround is closed to all but bus traffic. Taxis and rideshare vehicles are directed to the northbound on-ramp to NLSD. Closure of the turnaround, combined with limited parking capacity and high rideshare demand, often results in high congestion levels at the junction at these times.

- The North Avenue Beach parking lot is filled to capacity on busy days. Chicago Park District is currently planning to enlarge the lot.

- The North Avenue Beach House will undergo renovation and a boardwalk will be added.
A reconfigured parking facility, along with improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, would enhance access and safety by providing separate space for all modes at the popular North Avenue Beach area.

- **LaSalle Drive would be realigned** further south to pass beneath NLSD and terminate at the parking and bus layover facilities east of NLSD. The realignment of LaSalle Drive from an acute angle of intersection with NLSD to a more perpendicular configuration allows for a more compact junction with smaller turning radii and lower vehicle speeds.

- **The North Avenue Beach parking lot would be relocated and expanded**, enhancing access to the area and improving transit and motor vehicle operations. Incorporating vehicle turnarounds within the parking lot would expand the storage area for those movements and eliminate the need to close off the turnaround during busy periods. This would reduce congestion at the east junction ramp intersection. The facility would allow cars to easily pull through the lot and exit if no spaces are available.

- **A pick-up/drop-off facility** to accommodate taxis and rideshare vehicles would also be provided within the parking facility, eliminating the need for rideshare pick-up and drop-off to occur on the NLSD ramps. Regular motor vehicles would be able to use the facility as well.

- **A wraparound bus-only facility** at LaSalle Drive would complement the relocation and expansion of the current parking lot. The bus-only facility would separate entering buses from regular automobile traffic and enable buses to easily pull through, drop off and pick up customers, and then exit to begin westbound service.

- **The bus-only facility would accommodate bus staging as well as passenger boarding and alighting.** This would improve transit operations and enhance access to the park, allowing for “bus to beach” service.

- **Two new high-capacity underpasses** immediately north and south of LaSalle Drive would provide improved access to the park and beach for people walking and biking.

- **The existing Passerelle bridge at North Avenue would be replaced by an underpass with separated space for people walking and biking,** the Passerelle bridge may be repurposed to serve as the overpass for the bike trail across LaSalle Drive or at some other location.

- **A new 75-foot-wide separated underpass** south of LaSalle Drive would allow people walking and biking to cross beneath NLSD without any interactions with motorized traffic at the busy junction and access the park and beach; the Chess Pavilion in this area would be preserved.
Q: Is the proposed parking facility larger than the existing parking facility?

A: The existing parking facility offers 133 spaces, while the proposed facility would offer over 230 spaces. The project team is working closely with the Chicago Park District to determine the ideal number of spaces and refine the parking facility design.

Q: Why does this design relocate the Passerelle bridge?

A: The NLSD alternatives under consideration call for a wider roadway configuration at this location, which would be unsuitable to the width of the aging Passerelle structure. The Passerelle would be replaced by a modern, ADA-compliant pedestrian underpass with separated pedestrian and bike paths. As previously noted, the Passerelle structure could be repurposed to serve as an overpass, allowing people biking to cross over LaSalle Drive east of NLSD without interacting with motor vehicle traffic.

Q: How would Chicago Park District plans to renovate the North Avenue Beach House and the surrounding area be affected by this project?

A: Chicago Park District is currently planning to upgrade the North Avenue Beach House and add a boardwalk-type plaza and other amenities to the surrounding area. The project team has been working closely with Chicago Park District to preserve these and any other proposed improvements and incorporate them into its designs.

Q: With Transitways and Managed Lanes alternatives still under consideration, what potential modifications associated with Transitways and Managed Lanes features are being considered?

A: Transitways: There is a possibility that dedicated bus lanes could run in the center of the NLSD corridor at LaSalle Drive. However, buses could not enter or exit NLSD at this location.

Managed Lanes: Managed lane facilities would be routed over LaSalle Drive if a Managed Lane alternative was implemented, though users would not be able to access the managed lane facility from LaSalle. Some Managed Lane alternatives would require the roadway to be widened in this location to accommodate reversible lane or contraflow lane configurations.

How can I comment on this proposal?

We welcome comments on the project and the Foster Avenue concept. Please visit our online comment form on the project website (northlakeshoredrive.org), email info@northlakeshoredrive.org, or mail feedback to NLSD Study c/o Civiltech Engineering, 30 N. LaSalle St., Suite 2624, Chicago, IL 60602.

For more information about the overall study, or to join our mailing list, please visit the project website northlakeshoredrive.org

We look forward to continuing to work with you to Redefine the Drive.