Meeting Display Boards for Public Meetings on the Ashland Avenue Ashland Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project, held December 10 and 11, 2013.

Logos: CTA in partnership with Chicago Department of Transportation and Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development

Welcome: Welcome to the public open house for the Ashland Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment and project.

- In April 2013, CTA and CDOT announced a vision for a center running Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system on Ashland Avenue between Irving Park Road and 95th Street to provide a fast and reliable north/south transit connection for 16 miles through Chicago. The vision reflects the planning process and community engagement undertaken in 2012.
- Over the summer, CTA and CDOT heard from various key stakeholders about this plan. We are now holding two public open house meetings as an extension of this outreach to gather additional input from the public. CTA and CDOT are still developing the Ashland BRT design, and we are considering options and modifications, including the implementation of additional left turns, based on continued feedback from the public.
- The public open house meetings will summarize studies of the project impacts, including traffic analyses, that have been performed as part of the formal Environmental Assessment for the project, in accordance with federal government requirements. The Environmental Assessment is now complete and available on CTA's website and in hard copy at several community locations. CTA and CDOT would like your comments on the Environmental Assessment, which can be made at the public open houses or by e-mail at ashlandbrt@transitchicago.com.
- CTA and CDOT will consider the results of the analyses, potential impacts and strategies for mitigation, and all public comments before moving forward with the next phase of the project. In addition, there will be additional public input solicited as part of the next design phase, scheduled to occur in 2014.

In accordance with federal requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1968 (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771.119, this public open house is the official public hearing for the EA. It is being conducted to give all interested persons an opportunity to express their views concerning the location, design, and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed improvements.

How to Participate Today

1. Sign in
2. Review exhibit boards, project videos, and project plans
3. Talk to CTA or City of Chicago representatives
4. Provide formal comments
   There are several ways to provide comments that will be entered into the official record

    a. Tell them to a court reporter at this meeting
    b. Fill out a comment card and place in the box provided
    c. Provide written comments during the 30-day public comment period by e-mail or mail
5. Request assistance, if needed

What will happen to your comments?

- Comments will inform the next phase of design.
- Comments made at the meeting tonight or during the 30-day public comment period will become official record for the Environmental Assessment.
- Comments and responses to comments will become part of the final Environmental Assessment, which will be available on the CTA website.
- Concept designs will be refined based on additional technical analysis and community input. CTA and CDOT will hold additional public meetings as part of the next phase of design.

The Ashland Avenue BRT design is still being developed. CTA and CDOT are considering options and modifications, including the addition of some left-turns to the design, and we want your feedback on the current proposal.

Project Partners

- CTA
- Chicago Department of Transportation
- Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development
- Illinois Medical District Chicago
- The Chicago Community Trust
- Active Transportation Alliance
- Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
- Urban Land Institute, Chicago
- Civic Consulting Alliance
- AARP
- Metropolitan Planning Council
- Chicago Architecture Foundation
- Support from: Rockefeller Foundation: Innovation for the Next 100 Years

Project Overview

The Ashland Avenue corridor is a key north-south connector that has seen residential and employment growth and is expected to attract more.

Providing fast, reliable, convenient transit is a solution for present day Chicago, as well as an important strategy to help accommodate growth without adding congestion.

Bus Rapid Transit on Ashland Avenue is part of a vision for a world-class, 21st Century transit system in Chicago that improves neighborhoods and quality of life.

Population Growth: The population living within a half-mile of Ashland Avenue between Irving Park Road and 95th Street is expected to grow by 55,000 (about 24%) by 2040.
Source: *Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, GO TO 2040.*

2010: Population of 232,000

2040: Population of 287,000

- The Ashland #9 bus has the highest ridership in the CTA system.
- Existing bus service on Ashland Avenue currently operates at some of the slowest bus speeds in the city.

Image: This graphic depicts the entire Ashland BRT corridor, listing all stops from north to south: Irving Park, Addison, Roscoe, Belmont, Diversey, Fullerton, Cortland, North, Division, Chicago, Grand, Lake, Madison, Jackson, Harrison, Polk, Roosevelt, 18th, Blue Island, 31st, 35th, Pershing, 43rd, 47th, 51st, Garfield, 59th, 63rd, 69th, 74th, 79th, 83rd, 87th, 91st, 95th. The image also highlights the "Phase 1" corridor, which includes all stops between the Cortland Street stop and the 31st Street stop.

What is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a term applied to a variety of bus service designs that provide **faster, more efficient and more reliable service** than an ordinary bus line.

Elements of BRT Systems

To get riders to their destinations quickly and on schedule:

- Bus only lanes
  Image: Bus only lanes with red paint
- Transit Signal Priority
- Limited stops

To make it easy to board and keep the bus moving:

- Fares paid at the station before boarding
- Wide doors and/or multiple doors
- Level boarding between bus and curb

To improve the customer and pedestrian experience:

- Stations with enhanced shelters and amenities
- Real-time bus arrival signs
- Streetscaping

BRT and Economic Development
(1 of 2)

BRT can be an economic driver for a corridor, since it provides fast and reliable transit service similar to rail.

BRT Improves Access to Jobs

- Ashland BRT would expand the transit "commute-shed" along Ashland, meaning the number of jobs easily accessible by transit would grow.

- According to analysis by the Metropolitan Planning Council, Ashland BRT would mean the number of jobs accessible within a 20-minute transit ride:

  - Would grow by 82% around 63rd at Ashland, from about 16,000 currently to about 29,000.
  - Would grow by 60% around Cermak at Ashland, from about 69,000 currently to about 110,000.
  - Would grow by 120% around Fullerton at Ashland, from about 62,000 currently to about 136,000.

Image: Percent Commuters Using Transit. High transit commuter densities are on North Ashland Avenue. High, medium and low commuter densities are along the core area of Ashland Avenue (between Cortland and 31st). Medium to high commuter densities are along the southern part of Ashland Avenue.

Map Sources: Percent Commuters using Transit: 5-year American Community Survey (2009)

Image: Three maps that depicts the proposed BRT stations at 63rd and Ashland, Cermak and Ashland, and Fullerton and Ashland. The map shows the planned BRT stations with the existing CTA rail and demonstrates the current areas that are accessible in 20 minutes by transit from the depicted stations and then the additional areas accessible in 20 minutes by transit from the depicted stations WITH Ashland BRT. The additional areas of accessibility extend the area accessibility on a north-south axis for all three maps.

Map Sources: Commute-shed, 20-minute Transit Ride: Travel times for BRT trips assume average 15.9 mph travel speeds throughout the corridor and an estimated walk speed of 3 mph; Map and job analysis provided by Metropolitan Planning Council using data from Chicago Transit Authority (2013); Mapnificent.net (2013); U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2011).

BRT and Economic Development
(2 of 2)

BRT Helps Neighborhood Businesses

- BRT can increase the capacity to move more people more efficiently along a corridor.
- BRT can increase foot traffic, including new visitors and customers.
- Pedestrian-focused design can build on BRT improvements, creating a safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment. CTA and CDOT are working together closely to do this as part of the Ashland Avenue BRT Project.

NEW YORK CITY

- After Select Bus Service (SBS) was implemented on 1st and 2nd Avenues in Manhattan there were 47% fewer commercial vacancies (compared to 2% more borough-wide).
- After SBS was implemented on Fordham Road in the Bronx there was a 71% increase in retail sales at locally-based businesses (compared to 23% borough-wide).

BRT Attracts Investment and Spurs Development

- Improving transit and enhancing stations demonstrate public investment in a corridor, which tends to draw additional private sector development.
- Additional transit-oriented development (TOD) can be encouraged by coordinating land use policy near proposed BRT stations. The Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) will be conducting a study of the Ashland Avenue corridor to facilitate this.
- Including placemaking measures, such as adding bike parking, streetscaping, or other public amenities, can further help create vibrant, attractive public spaces.

CLEVELAND, OHIO

The Cleveland HealthLine is estimated to have attracted between $4 and $5 billion worth of investment since it began operations in October 2008.

EUGENE, OREGON

According to local city officials, $100 million worth of construction projects are underway near the Franklin Emerald Express (EmX) BRT line.

Case Study Sources: New York - Measuring the Street: New Metrics for 21st Century Streets. Cleveland and Eugene - U.S. Government Accountability Office Report GAO-12-811, July 2012.

Ashland Avenue Corridor Profile

Ashland Avenue is an urban corridor with predominantly mixed-use commercial and residential uses along with retail, business, industrial and institutional land uses lining the street. It is also contains high population and employment densities, and is located near major centers of activity and employment in the city.

Image: This map of the Western and Ashland BRT corridors is depicted with population density per acre, the CTA system and Metra's rail system. Between Lake Street and 18th Street have low population densities, while between Chicago Avenue and streets more north have higher population densities. Manufacturing districts are picture as well and generally follow Metra Rail lines. Additionally images are used to exemplify industrial corridors, the Illinois Medical District, which is a major employment centers and an image of medium to high density mixed use neighborhoods. The source is CDM Smith "Screen 2 Alternatives Report – Western and Ashland Corridors Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project," 2013.
Sources: 2010 US Census; 2010 American Community Survey; City of Chicago Existing Land Use Database; CMAP. Values in the table above reflect statistics within a half-mile of Ashland Avenue.

Image:

Population: 232,051
Jobs: 133,797
Households: 90,797
Percent Low-Income Families: 4%
Percent Households with Zero Cars: 25%

Pie Chart: Land Use within a half-mile

- *Residential: 52%*
- *Industrial/Warehousing: 14%*
- *Urban Mix: 13%*
- *Institutional: 6%*
- *Roads/Utilities: 5%*
- *Open Space: 4%*
- *Vacant: 3%*
- *Other: 3%*

Pie Chart: Race and Ethnicity within a half-mile of Ashland Avenue

- *White: 35%*
- *Black 35%*
- *Hispanic/Latino: 24%*
- *Other 2%*
- *Asian: 4%*

Sources: 2010 US Census; 2010 American Community Survey; City of Chicago Existing Land Use Database; CMAP. Values in the table above reflect statistics within a half-mile of Ashland Avenue.

Project Planning Process

Image: Flow chart that explains the project planning process.

- Project Development
  - *2012*
    - *Conceptual Development*
    - *Alternatives Analysis: Planning Process Outcomes*
      - Studied options or "Alternatives" for project that include different features and street configurations
      - Gathered public feedback
      - Selected a "Preferred Alternative" street configuration based on analysis and public feedback
  - 2013
    - Concept Design: More detailed designs developed to help assess impacts
    - Environmental Assessment:
      - Documents the full range of possible positive and adverse effects of the project
      - Identifies mitigation measures to address or minimize adverse impacts
      - Public comment period
- *Detailed Design and Construction*
  - Timeline TBD, contingent on funding
    - Detailed design
      - Additional public outreach
      - Refines plans and engineering
    - Construction
    - Operation

Source: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has developed this process for all federally funded projects of this type to follow.

How Did We Get Here?

(1 of 2)

In order to assess options for improving transit along the high-ridership corridors of Ashland and Western Avenues, a year-long planning study called an "Alternatives Analysis", including technical analysis and public outreach, was completed.

The results of the Alternatives Analysis were:

- Selection of a street configuration dedicating two general travel lanes (one in each direction) as center running bus-only lanes
- Prioritization of a 16-mile section of Ashland Avenue for development of more detailed concept designs and assessment of potential project impacts (called an "Environmental Assessment")
- The identification of a Phase 1 segment for implementation: 5.4 miles of Ashland Avenue between Cortland and 31st Streets

The Environmental Assessment for the 16-mile section of Ashland Avenue, between Irving Park Road and 95th Street, is now complete and available for public comment.

How Did We Get Here?

(2 of 2)

How Public Input Shaped the Project

Input received at six community open house meetings was used to shape project alternatives for the Ashland Avenue BRT Project.

Previous Public Open House Meetings

Alternatives Analysis Screen 1 Public Meetings

• June 12, 2012 (7th District Police Station - 1438 W. 63rd)

• June 13, 2012 (Lane Tech College Prep High School - 2501 W. Addison)

• June 14, 2012 (Wells Community Academy High School - 936 N. Ashland)

Alternatives Analysis Screen 2 Public Meetings

• October 16, 2012 (Iglesia Rebaño Church - 2435 W. Division)

• October 17, 2012 (Lindblom Math and Science Academy - 130 S. Wolcott)

• October 18, 2012 (Lane Tech College Prep High School - 2501 W. Addison)

What We Heard

At the June 2012 public meetings:

- Support was expressed for faster and more reliable bus service along these corridors, center running bus lanes, and the idea of varying the use of alternatives to best suit individual sections of the corridors.
- Concerns were expressed about project cost and funding, pedestrian safety to cross to a center platform, reducing sidewalk widths, and removal of a travel lane or parking lane.

At the October 2012 public meetings:

- Center running bus lanes were preferred over curbside running bus lanes.
- Use of a travel lane as a dedicated bus lane, rather than removal of a parking lane and median, was preferred.
- Participants collectively ranked the following as their top two priorities for the project:
    1. Bus Speed/Performance: increase bus speed and reliability, reduce travel times for riders.
    2. Streetscaping: improve landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, benches, etc.

Alternatives Screening

Image: An image that explains the "Alternatives Screening" process. In June 2012, three public open houses presented Screen 1 advancements. The screen 1 alternatives of center running BRT included travel lane removal, parking removal on both sides and sidewalk width reduction. Travel lane removal advanced to screen 2 alternatives without any changes. Center Running BRT with parking removal on both sides advanced to screen 2 with a modification of only one side of parking needs removed, becoming parking and median removal. Center running BRT with sidewalk width reduction alternative was not acceptable and added significant costs and did not advance to screen 2. Curbside BRT with travel lane removal advanced with no changes. Curbside BRT with parking removal on both sides advanced with modifications to only one side of parking removed. Curbside BRT with sidewalk width reduction was not advanced to screen 2 because reducing the sidewalk width was not acceptable and added significant costs.
In October 2012, three public open houses presented the Screen 2 advancements. A center running BRT with travel lane removal was advanced as the "proposed street layout" and selected in April 2013. This configuration was selected to increase bus speeds and reliability, enhance streetscapes, preserve medians and parking, decrease congestion and improve safety.

Ashland Avenue BRT Project Benefits (1 of 2)

Saves Time and Improves Reliability

- Increases bus speeds up to 83%
- Increase in reliability helps keep buses running regularly and on-schedule, so travel times are more predictable
- Save the average commuter nearly 65 hours per year compared to local bus
- Provides fast north-south transit connection outside of downtown
- **Image**: Bus Rapid Transit is faster than regular buses. For proposed Bus Rapid Transit on Western the average speed ranges between 15.6 and 18.4 miles per hour, depending on the design alternative chosen. The current bus on Western has an average speed of 10.1 miles per hour. For proposed Bus Rapid Transit on Ashland the average speed ranges between 13.5 and 15.9 miles per hour, depending on the design alternative chosen. The current bus on Ashland has an average speed of 8.7 miles per hour. The average speed for the 'L' train (on the Red Line) is 19-21 miles per hour, depending on the extent of slow zones. Source: CDM Smith Western and Ashland BRT Alternatives Analysis, 2012.

Meets High Demand and makes Room for Economic Growth

- Ashland Avenue has the highest bus ridership of all CTA routes with 10 million boarding sin 2012, more than 31,000 per weekday
- Provide an option about as fast as driving for the 1 in 4 households located within walking distance that do not have a car
- Provides access to 133,800 jobs within walking distance
- 55,000 new residents along the corridor expected by 2040 (about a 24% increase in population)

- **Image:** Ashland is the highest annual CTA bus ridership. Ashland #9 had 10 million boardings in 2012. Source is Annual Ridership Report: Calendar Year 2012, Chicago Transit Authority, 2013.

Sources: All information taken or generated from data included in Screen 2 Alternatives Report (CTA), Ashland Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project Environmental Assessment (CTA), or GO TO 2040 (CMAP).

Ashland Avenue BRT Project Benefits
(2 of 2)

Connects with Major Destinations and Existing Transit Network

- Illinois Medical District, United Center, University of Illinois at Chicago, Malcolm X College
- 99 Schools
- 7 CTA 'L' stations, 2 Metra lines, 37 bus routes

Improves Neighborhood Streetscape

- Maintains most existing medians and adds more than 75 blocks of new landscaped medians
- Improved lighting and ADA ramps at new stations
- Additional pedestrian space provided at station intersections
- Level boarding between bus and station platform to make boarding easier

Image: A map of Ashland BRT corridor and BRT Phase 1 corridor. Includes schools within a ½ mile of the corridor.
Sources: All information taken or generated from data included in Screen 2 Alternatives Report (CTA), Ashland Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project Environmental Assessment (CTA), GO TO 2040 (CMAP), or Chicago Public Schools (Chicago GIS Database).

How Would BRT Work on Ashland?

Image: Rendering of BRT stations and dedicated lanes, with callout lines and labels that explain the amenities of BRT.

- Wider sidewalks at station intersections.
- Approximately 90% of parking and loading zones maintained on both sides of the street.
- A dedicated center running bus lane in each direction to keep buses out of general traffic, moving fast and on-schedule. One vehicle lane in each direction and most left-hand turns removed.
- Streetscape benefits, including:
  - Maintains most existing medians
  - Adds more than 75 blocks of new medians
- Station amenities including:
  - Real-time bus arrival information
  - Improved lighting
  - ADA ramps

- Transit Signal Priority intersections and longer green lights to keep buses and general traffic moving.
- To make boarding faster and easier, other features include:
    - Wide doors on left side of new high-capacity vehicles
    - Potential for paying fares at the station before boarding
    - Potential to use multiple doors for boarding
    - Level boarding between bus and station platform

The Ashland Avenue BRT design is still being developed. CTA and CDOT are considering options and modifications, including the addition of some left-turns to the design, and we want your feedback on the current proposal.

Ashland Avenue BRT Route and Stations

Full Corridor

- Irving Park Road to 95th Street, approximately 16 miles
- Makes limited stops; approximately every half mile and at CTA 'L' stations
- Local bus service would be maintained as an additional service using existing curbside stops

First Phase for Implementation

- BRT is being planned in phases
- The Phase 1 segment is between Cortland and 31st Streets approximately 5.4 miles

Until subsequent phases are built, the BRT service would continue north of Cortland Street and south of 31st Street for the full 16 mile corridor, operating in mixed flow traffic and making stops curbside at the future BRT station locations, using existing curbside local bus stops.

Balancing the Trade-offs

The design process is still in its early stages and we will continue to work closely with neighbors and businesses to determine the detailed design for each section of the corridor. It is important to know how adjustments to the standard configuration will affect other elements, such as parking, auto speeds and bus travel times.

	Parking	Lanes	Medians	Left Turns	Sidewalks

Benefits	Approximately 90% of parking and loading zones will be maintained on both sides of the street.	Center running, dedicated bus lanes increase bus speeds by up to 83 percent, and keep buses moving reliably and on-schedule.	Most landscaped medians widths will be maintained and new medians will be provided in some areas that currently have none.	Removing left turns improves safety, and keeps buses and general through-traffic moving.	Pedestrian space will be maintained and expanded at station intersections.
Trade-offs	If modifications are made to maintain additional left turns or right turn lanes, small reductions in parking (and/or sidewalk widths) may be necessary.	Slight decrease in vehicle speeds (on average 1 to 3 MPH) due to dedication of one lane in each direction as bus-only.	Some small reduction in median widths at select locations may be necessary.	Removal of most left turns may make some auto trips longer.	If modifications are made to maintain additional left turns or right turn lanes, reductions in sidewalk width (and/or parking) may be necessary

The Ashland Avenue BRT design is still being developed. CTA and CDOT are considering options and modifications, including the addition of some left-turns to the design, and we want your feedback on the current proposal.

Left Turn Data

Over the summer, CTA and CDOT heard from various key stakeholders about this plan. A primary concern was the removal of left turns and impacts to neighborhood circulation and access for cars and trucks.

CTA and CDOT are still developing the Ashland BRT design, and are considering options and modifications, including the implementation of additional left turns, based on continued feedback from the public.

Chart: Chart shows the maximum number of vehicles making left turns from Ashland Avenue to cross streets during both the AM and PM peak hours, as collected by CTA 2013 field counts. The peak hours occur from 7:15 to 8:15 AM and 4:30 to 5:30 PM

Left Turn Design Concepts

Typical Existing Corridor

Left and right turns allowed

- Left and right turns allowed
- Slowest bus speed and greatest auto speed
- No sidewalk bump outs
- No new medians

Planned BRT Configuration
Right turns maintained

- Left turns removed except at interstates
- General traffic and bus speeds improved by elimination of turning movements
- Pedestrian space maintained/expanded
- Maximum possible amount of parking maintained
- Increased need for right turns

Option A to maintain left turn lanes
Left turn lane with combined through/right turn lane

- Slower auto and bus speeds than with Planned BRT Configuration
- Narrower sidewalks compared to Planned BRT Configuration
- Less medians compared to Planned BRT Configuration
- Less parking maintained compared to Planned BRT Configuration
- Some local bus stop locations may be modified

Option B to maintain left and right turn lanes
Left turn lane, right turn lane, and through lane

- Similar auto and bus speeds as Planned BRT Configuration
- Narrower sidewalks compared to both Planned BRT Configuration and Option A
- Less medians compared to both Planned BRT Configuration and Option A
- Less parking maintained compared to both Planned BRT Configuration and Option A

What is an Environmental Assessment?

An Environmental Assessment evaluates and assesses potential impacts related to various features that may result from a project.

The Environmental assessment includes:

- Natural Features: Air quality, water, biological, geology and soils, indirect and cumulative
- Community Features: Land use and economic development, neighborhood and community, environmental justice, historic and archaeological, park land and recreational, visual quality, noise and vibration, displacements/relocations
- Vehicular Traffic and Parking Features: vehicular traffic volumes and speeds, vehicular diversion routes, parking
- Transit, bicycle and pedestrian features: transit travel times and reliability, transit ridership and demand, station access, pedestrian space, connectivity to bike-share
- Construction and Operational Features: energy, safety and security, temporary construction, hazardous materials

What was Analyzed in the Ashland BRT Environmental Assessment?

For the purposes of this Environmental Assessment, the Ashland Avenue BRT Project (Build Alternative) was compared to existing conditions (No-Build Alternative). The No-Build Alternative assumed no major transit system improvements or investments within the corridor.

No-Build Alternative

- Two auto travel lanes in each direction
- Parking on both sides
- Left turn mid-block and at intersections
- 15; sidewalks
- Painted and landscaped medians

Build Alternative

- One center running bus-only lane in each direction
- One auto travel lane in each direction (Two auto travel lanes in each direction will remain where there are currently three travel lanes (between Lake Street and Roosevelt Road)
- Left turns removed, except at interstates
- Maintains existing 15' sidewalks and wider sidewalks (17' to 28') provided at station intersections
- Most landscaped medians maintained throughout corridor
- Over 75 blocks of new landscaped medians provided

The Ashland Avenue BRT design is still being developed. CTA and CDOT are considering options and modifications, including the addition of some left-turns to the design, and we want your feedback on the current proposal.

Environmental Assessment Summary (1 of 2)

- Natural environment features
  - Air Quality: Positive Impact
  - Water: No Impact
  - Biological: No Impact
  - Geology and Soils: No Impact
- Community Features
  - Displacement/Relocations: No Impact
  - Land use and economic development: Positive impact
  - Neighborhood and Community: Positive impact
  - Environmental Justice: No impact
  - Historic and archeological: No impact
  - Park land and recreational: No impact
  - Visual Quality: No impact
  - Noise and vibration: Negative impact
- Vehicular Traffic and Parking Features (see other boards for detailed analysis)
  - Vehicular Traffic – Ashland Avenue: Negative impact
  - Vehicular Traffic – Diversion Routes: negative impact
  - Parking – Negative Impact

- Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian Features
    - Transit: Positive impact
    - Bicycle: Positive impact
    - Pedestrian: Positive impact
- Construction and Operational
    - Energy: Negative impact
    - Safety and Security: No impact
    - Temporary construction: Negative impact
    - Hazardous materials: No impact

Additional detailed analyses can be found in the full Environmental Assessment. Copies of the full Environmental Assessment are available at this meeting and online at www.transitchicago.com/ashlandbrt.

Traffic Analysis Summary

The potential traffic impacts of the project are very important to identify. To better understand these impacts, CTA and CDOT have performed traffic analyses utilizing current traffic counts and industry standard analysis tools.

Analysis

- CMAP Highway Model: Actual impacts of removing one lane of traffic in each direction and left-turns at most intersections on Ashland Avenue were analyzed using the regional transportation model.
- Traffic Counts: New traffic counts were complete for all 89 signalized intersections and 29 un-signalized intersection on Ashland Avenue between Irving Park Road and 95th Street. In addition, new traffic counts were performed at major intersections along parallel arterials between Kedzie Avenue and Halsted Street.
- SYNCHRO Analysis: the impacts to traffic operations at each intersection on Ashland Avenue were analyzed using SYNCHRO, an industry-standard traffic modeling software.

The detailed results of these analyses are shown in the following boards, including:

- Bus and vehicle speeds
- Congestion levels at specific intersections
- Effects of diverted traffic to nearby roadways

Overall, the analysis showed that:

- The project would have minimal city-wide impacts to traffic
- There would be some moderate impacts to traffic on Ashland Avenue
- Some traffic would divert from Ashland Avenue to parallel arterials, but the Chicago grid system provides multiple routes to the same destination, and can absorb changes across multiple parallel roadways

- There would be minimal impacts to smaller side streets (non-arterials)

Impacts to Transit and Vehicle Speeds

Peak AM and PM Travel Hours

Transit Speed Impacts on Ashland Avenue

• Up to 83% (7.2 MPH) increase in bus speed

• Typical bus trips that currently take 30 minutes will take about 16 minutes

Auto Speed Impacts on Ashland Avenue

• Average 16% (2.5 MPH) reduction in speed

• Typical auto trips that currently take 30 minutes will take about 36 minutes

Peak Hour Speeds

	Existing No-Build	With Project Build
Transit	8.7 mph	15.9 mph
Autos	15.3 mph	12.8 mph

Methodology for estimating transit speed for the Build Alternative was based on existing AM and PM peak hour bus speed data and the Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 118 – Bus Rapid Transit Practitioner's Guide. Methodology for estimating auto speeds for the local level of analysis, as shown on this board, is based on the intersection-specific level of service and intersection delay results presented in the Environmental Assessment (EA). These speeds are based on existing AM (7:15 to 8:15 AM) and PM (4:30 to 5:30 PM) peak hour traffic counts and are analyzed using SYNCHRO modeling software for the 16-mile Ashland Avenue corridor. The model used to generate these results included factors for parking maneuvers and local buses in the general travel lane. Auto speed estimates were developed for two levels of analysis – regional and local. Regional auto speed data, based on the CMAP regional travel demand model, is presented in the EA.

Impacts to Traffic on Ashland Avenue

- Level of service (LOS) is a measure of congestion, used to evaluate all roadway projects

- While the overall scale is LOS A through F, the typical range for Chicago streets is LOS D through LOS F

Image: Bar graph that depicts the portion of intersections that have very congested levels (LOS E-F) for No-build and Build situations. No-build has six intersections currently at very congested levels (LOS E-F). Build shows that seven additional intersections (13 intersections in total) degrade to very congested levels (LOS E-F).

Image: Two maps that depict the change in AM peak and PM Peak levels of service by intersection for no-build and build situations.

Methodology for LOS impacts was based on existing field traffic counts collected during AM (7:15 to 8:15 AM) and PM (4:30 to 5:30 PM) peak hour traffic conditions. Data was analyzed using SYNCHRO modeling software for the 16-mile Ashland Avenue corridor. The model used to generate these results included factors for parking maneuvers and local buses in the general travel lane.

Impacts to Traffic - Diversion (1 of 2)

- With the removal of a travel lane in each direction, some vehicles currently using Ashland Avenue would use other parallel roadways, mostly arterials or collectors, for their trips.
- An analysis of traffic over a larger area was conducted to better understand the impacts on surrounding areas.
- Traffic analyses, based on field reviews and standard traffic engineering parameters, showed a shift to parallel thoroughfares from Kedzie Avenue to Halsted Street, rather than side streets, primarily because the side streets would not provide time-competitive alternate routes.

CTA and CDOT are committed to maintaining safety and livability on nearby side streets.

Additional detailed traffic analysis will be performed, along with additional public engagement, as a part of the next phase of design.

CTA and CDOT will continue to monitor the impacts through all phases of the project and will select measures from CDOT's Traffic Calming Program to implement, if necessary. These measures include roadway improvements that have been shown to discourage additional through-traffic, and help make residential streets safer for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Image: A map of the Ashland BRT corridor has a yellow shaded box to indicate the detailed diversion analysis study area. This box stretches from Irving Park to 95th and Halsted to Kedzie.

Impacts to Traffic - Diversion

How much daily traffic would be diverted from Ashland Avenue?

- **Image**: Pie chart with 35% of traffic diverting from Ashland Avenue and 65% of traffic remaining on Ashland Avenue. This means that 35% of the total miles driven would shift to other arterials.

How would this traffic be diverted?

- **Image:** Percent change compared to current vehicle miles traveled (VMT[1]) with Ashland BRT.
  - Kedzie: 3%
  - California: 2%
  - Western:6%
  - Damen: 2%
  - Ashland:-35%
  - Racine/Southport[2]: 12%
  - Halsted: 4%
  - Other N/S Roads[3]: 5%

Traffic would divert primarily to parallel arterials (not side streets) and would be distributed, so no single arterial would absorb all of the traffic.

The traffic shift would mean vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on nearby arterials would increase by 2% to 12% over current levels.

Footnotes

1. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is the total number of miles driven by all automobiles within an average day.

2. A complete list of the roadways tabulated for the Racine Avenue/Southport Avenue corridor included the following (from north to south): Southport Avenue (Irving Park Road to Clybourn Avenue); Clybourn Avenue (Southport Avenue to Cortland Street); Cortland Street (Clybourn Avenue to Elston Avenue); Elston Avenue (Cortland Street to Milwaukee Avenue); Milwaukee Avenue (Elston Avenue to Ogden Avenue); Ogden Avenue (Milwaukee Avenue to Racine Avenue); Racine Avenue (Ogden Avenue to Blue Island Avenue); Blue Island Avenue (Racine Avenue to Loomis Street); Loomis Street (Blue Island Avenue to 31st Street); 31st Street (Loomis Street to Racine Avenue); Racine Avenue (31st Street to 35th Street); 35th Street (Racine Avenue to Morgan Street); Morgan Street (35th Street to 43rd Street); 43rd Street (Morgan Street to Racine Avenue); Racine Avenue (43rd Street to Garfield Boulevard); Garfield Boulevard (Racine Avenue to Loomis Boulevard); Loomis Boulevard (Garfield Boulevard to 87th Street); 87th Street (Loomis Boulevard to Racine Avenue); Racine Avenue (87th Street to 95th Street).

3. Other north/south roads included portions of the following: Humboldt Boulevard, Sacramento Boulevard, Marshal Boulevard, California Boulevard, 31st Boulevard, Western Boulevard, Washtenaw Avenue, Oakley Boulevard, Paulina Street, Morgan Street, Sangamon Street, Green Street, Racine Avenue, Sheffield Avenue.

Impacts to Traffic - AM Peak Diversion

Image: An image of the Ashland BRT corridor and surrounding roadways, with "streamline percent" of AM Peak Diversion represented with different sized circles. Larger circles represent a larger percent and smaller circles represent a smaller percent. These small and large percentages of diversion traffic are generally found on major arterial roads.

Impacts to Traffic - PM Peak Diversion

Image: An image of the Ashland BRT corridor and surrounding roadways, with "streamline percent" of PM Peak Diversion represented with different sized circles. Larger circles represent a larger percent and smaller circles represent a smaller percent. These small and large percentages of diversion traffic are generally found on major arterial roads.

Next Steps

Schedule

- Alternatives Analysis: 2012
- Environmental Analysis and Conceptual Engineering: Spring 2013-Fall 2013 (we are here)
- Detailed Design: To be determined, contingent upon funding

(All phases include public engagement)

What happens next?

- Comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA) are being taken at this meeting and over a 30-day period that began with publication of the EA.
- Comments will inform the next phase of design.
- Comments and responses will become part of the final EA, which will be available on CTA's website.
- Detailed design will begin on the first 5.4-mile segment (Phase 1). Concept designs will be refined based on additional technical analysis and community input.
- CTA and CDOT will hold additional public meetings as part of the next phase of design.

Stay Involved!

To submit comments you have three options:

1. Tell them to a court reporter at this meeting
2. Fill out a comment card and place in the box provided
3. Provide written comments during the 30-day public comment period by e-mail or mail

Mail:
Chicago Transit Authority
Strategic Planning and Policy, 10th Floor

Attn: Joe Iacobucci
567 W. Lake Street
Chicago, IL 60661-1465

Email: ashlandbrt@transitchicago.com

Join Mailing/E-list: At the sign-in desk
Web: To learn more about this project or download a copy of the Environmental Assessment, please visit: www.transitchicago.com/ashlandbrt

Finally, if you are interested in learning more about BRT in Chicago, including other projects and events, visit www.BRTCHICAGO.com

New York's Experience with BRT

Select Bus Service (SBS), New York City's brand of Bus Rapid Transit, offers fast, frequent, and reliable bus service on high-ridership bus routes, forming citywide bus rapid transit (BRT) network that supplements and complement the existing subway network

Elements of SBS include:

- Off-board fare payment (before boarding), which reduces time spent at bus stops
- Low-floor, three-door buses to help speed boarding
- Dedicated curbside bus lanes which speed bus travel
- Transit signal priority which reduces delays at red lights
- Bus stops spaced further apart than typical local buses
- Improved passenger information

SBS Routes in Operation 1

Bx12 Fordham Road / Pelham Parkway
Implemented: June 2008
Project Length: 7 Miles

Bx12 SBS provides a key crosstown transit connection in the Bronx

Project Elements

- Curbside bus lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Off-Board Fare Payment
- New Bus Shelters

Travel Time Savings: 20% in first year
Ridership Growth: 10% in first year

Economic Development

- 71% increase in retail sales at locally-based businesses with implementation

*New bus shelters are installed under franchise agreement

M15 First Avenue / Second Avenue
Implemented: October 2010
Project Length: 15.5 Miles

M15 SBS is the highest ridership bus route in NYC

Project Elements
- Offset and curbside bus lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Off-Board Fare Payment
- Sidewalk widening

Travel Time Savings: 18% in first year
Ridership Growth: 10% in first year

Economic Development
- 47% fewer vacancies after implementation

M34/34A 34th Street
Implemented: November 2011
Project Length: 4.5 Miles

Ridership on M34 SBS has grown even as ridership on other Manhattan crosstown routes has declined.

Project Elements
- Offset and curbside bus lanes
- Off-Board Fare Payment
- Sidewalk widening

Travel Time Savings: 23% in first year
Ridership Growth: 12% since 2011

SBS Routes in Operation 2

S79 Hylan Boulevard
Implemented: September 2012
Project Length: 16 Miles

Bus lanes serve a large number of express and local bus routes in addition to S79 SBS.

Project Elements
- Curbside bus lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Real-time travel information for drivers
- Simplified route path

Travel Time Savings: 13-19% six months after launch
Ridership Growth: 5-10%

Bx41 Webster Avenue
Implemented: June 2013
Project Length: 5.5 Miles

Bx41 SBS was planned and implemented more quickly than any other SBS project to date.

Project Elements

- Offset and curbside bus lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Off-Board Fare Payment
- Sidewalk widening

Travel Time Savings*: More than 15% since launch
**Preliminary results*

B44 Nostrand Avenue / Rogers Avenue
Implemented: November 2013
Project Length: 9.3 Miles

Improvements to Williamsburg Bridge Plaza provide passengers amenities for several other bus routes

Project Elements
(Single Capital Project)

- Offset and curbside bus lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Off-Board Fare Payment
- Sidewalk widening

Results will be available in 2014