

Public Comment #1

Ethan Saltzberg – received on 10/4/24 at 11:24 am.

To the CMAP Board & MPO Policy Committee,

My comment today concerns our principal arterial highways. Whether it's North DuSable Lake Shore Drive, the Eisenhower, or the Stevenson, the large-scale reconstructions of these transportation arteries for Chicago are all led by IDOT, and all have one large issue in common: widening.

The fallacy of "just one more lane will fix traffic" has been debunked by traffic engineers for decades, and widening projects all over the nation have and continue to prove that concept false over and over. As Texas learned when expanding the Katy Freeway multiple times, even when you have the widest highway in the country, traffic speeds actually decreased and travel times went up, and Illinois is no exception to this phenomenon of induced demand. But IDOT seems intent on widening regardless, to the detriment of travel times, safety, and climate goals.

On Lake Shore Drive, IDOT completely ignored a decade of residents demanding dedicated transit priority when they released their Redefine the Drive proposal which includes no bus lanes, does nothing to lower speeds for safety and crash reduction, and in fact claims to increase driving speed in some of the most crash-prone parts of the roadway, all while baking in noise pollution and lakefront emissions to our lakefront.

They also plan to widen the I-55 Stevenson to include an extra lane, and it recently came to light that on the Eisenhower, they want to replace the Blue Line median tracks with additional vehicle lanes, forcing the CTA to relocate an entire transit line. These are absolutely shameful, wasteful plans that ignore the proven fact of induced demand, and ignore the only viable solution to fix traffic: reliable alternatives to driving. For I-290, this should mean concepts like express tracks on the Blue Line, or downsizing the road by converting an existing lane into an express bus-only lane to reduce car trips.

But IDOT seems hell-bent on adding as many lanes as they can, even when this is clearly not the solution to improving traffic volumes, reducing car trips, lowering our carbon emissions, and most importantly, right-sizing and slowing down our most dangerous roads to prevent crashes and keep people safe & alive. As regional planners, I am begging you to oppose any IDOT projects that involve widening roads under the claim of "fixing traffic." It will not fix traffic, it never has, and we need CMAP and the MPO to push for what actually works.

Thank you,
Ethan Saltzberg
Chicago, IL

Public Comment #2

Hayden Harris – received 10/4/2024 12:49 p.m.re: Expand Forest Park Blue line, not the freeway

Hello,

I would like to submit a comment for the Oct 9th meeting between CMAP and MPO policy committee. Please find it below:

Name: Hayden Harris

Subject: Expand Forest Park blue line, not the freeway!

Comment:

Any discussions around rebuilding the Forest Park branch blue line and the surrounding freeway should automatically prioritize expanding blue line tracks, station safety, speed, and rider experience over adding more lanes to the freeway.

More lanes on the freeway will only result in more cars, more pollution, more crashes, and a worse city. While improving and expanding the blue line will prioritize low-income Chicagoans on the West side, reduce pollution, and make Chicago a more competitive city worldwide in transportation policy.

Any rebuild plan should include the following:

- Closed and soundproof stations that provide a quiet experience free of traffic noise and pollution to riders. A great example of this is the most recent train expansion in Montreal, the REM. This new line has tracks in a freeway median, but has closed stations with track screen doors and automated trains that don't force riders to stand in the middle of the freeway in the open air for 30 minutes between trains.
- Express tracks to help riders get to jobs in downtown and O'Hare quicker from the far west side neighborhoods and suburbs.
- Quality tracks that fix ALL slow zones on the Forest Park branch with a plan to maintain speeds after the project.
- Automated trains for more frequent and dependable service.

Chicagoans deserve better than more freeway lanes that are used primarily by people who don't live in the city. I hope this board thinks forward instead of using the same harmful policies from the late 20th century.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Hayden Harris