

Attachment A

North DuSable Lake Shore Drive Improvements: Public Comment Summary and Project Status

Overview

This attachment is provided in support of the Transportation Committee's consideration of whether to recommend the draft 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for public comment release. It summarizes the public comment received on the North DuSable Lake Shore Drive (NDLSD) improvements project (RCP 12120) and explains CMAP's basis for recommending that the project remain on the fiscally constrained list and priority investment list in the draft plan.

The NDLSD project has been the subject of significant public comment throughout the plan development process. CMAP received testimony at Transportation Committee meetings in person and via Zoom, as well as written comment submitted by email. CMAP is grateful for this engagement and values this kind of community investment in regional transportation decision-making that the cooperative, continuing, and comprehensive planning process is designed to foster.

Summary of Public Comment

For the February 2026 meeting, CMAP received 7 in-person comments, 6 Zoom comments, 706 written public comments by the close of the meeting, and 158 additional written comments submitted afterward (February–April). For the April 2026 meeting, CMAP received 9 in-person comments, 12 Zoom comments, 281 written public comments submitted by the Thursday 9:30 a.m. deadline, and 277 additional written comments after that deadline. All totals reflect counts as of the drafting of this attachment.

The overwhelming majority of comments urge CMAP not to advance the NDLSD project in its current form. Commenters oppose maintaining or expanding the facility as a highway, citing concerns about car-centric infrastructure, noise, air pollution, and constrained access to the lakefront and adjacent park spaces. Many reference House Resolution 438, which passed in the Illinois General Assembly, calling for the NDLSD to be transformed into a true boulevard with substantial transit investment and improved lakefront access. Commenters call for dedicated transit lanes, improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and stronger connections between lakefront-adjacent communities and the water.

CMAP's Role and Basis for Recommendation

The RTP identifies projects consistent with regional goals and financially constrained within reasonably expected revenues. Inclusion on the constrained list or priority investment is not an endorsement of project design, but a recognition that it is a project worth funding. The RTP does not define a project's scope, select a preferred alternative, predetermine a design outcome, or authorize construction. Those decisions belong to the project sponsors — IDOT and CDOT — and are made through a separate project development process with its own requirements for public involvement, environmental review, and alternatives analysis. What the RTP determines is whether a project is eligible to advance through that process and compete for federal funding.

CMAP recommends the NDLSD project remain on the fiscally constrained list and priority investment list in the draft plan because the analysis demonstrates a significant and

documented need for state of good repair investments. Originally constructed in the 1930s, the NDLS is overdue for complete reconstruction or major rehabilitation. Removing the project from the constrained list would signify that NDLS is not an important regional asset and therefore not worth anticipation of long-term financial investment. Its removal would foreclose federal funding eligibility and eliminate the planning leverage needed to advance the project responsibly. It would not advance the RTP's goals related to state of good repair, safety, or multimodal connectivity. The alternatives under consideration — which include transit enhancements, expanded pedestrian and bicycle access, ADA-compliant crossings, and enhanced shoreline protection — reflect a project whose scope and outcome remain open. Keeping the project on the list does not foreclose any of those alternatives.

Project Status and Path Forward

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) have been conducting an environmental review of the corridor. In 2024, they released a recommended preferred alternative that generated significant public response. Based on that feedback, IDOT and CDOT are revisiting the alternatives analysis using updated modeling data to develop a new recommended preferred alternative. CMAP has confirmed that no preferred alternative has been selected or finalized.

When a new recommended preferred alternative is developed, the public will have additional opportunities to weigh in before any final determination is made. The decisions commenters care most about — how the corridor is configured, what transit and pedestrian treatments are included, and how the facility connects people to the lakefront — will be shaped through that process. CMAP strongly encourages continued engagement at that stage, and the public comment period on the draft plan that this committee is being asked to authorize represents an immediate next opportunity to do so. The goal of retaining the NDLS project on the constrained and priority investment lists is to ensure the project has the funding eligibility and planning momentum needed to carry that work forward.