



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee

**From:** CMAP Staff

**Date:** March 6, 2019

**Re:** Summary of public comment on the Proposed Amendment to ON TO 2050 – Roadway Improvements to Support the Update to the South Lakefront Framework Plan (the Jackson Park Project)

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The following summarizes feedback regarding a proposed amendment to ON TO 2050 submitted by the City of Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) regarding **the Roadway Improvements to Support the Update to the South Lakefront Framework Plan** (more commonly known as the Jackson Park Transportation and Mobility Improvement Project).

The public comment period for the Jackson Park Transportation and Mobility Improvement Project was open from January 25, 2019 to February 25, 2019. This aligned with the public comment period for a second amendment request from CDOT for the O'Hare Express Service. Comments were collected via two dedicated e-mail addresses that were set-up expressly to receive comments on the amendments: [jacksonpark@cmap.illinois.gov](mailto:jacksonpark@cmap.illinois.gov) and [ohareexpress@cmap.illinois.gov](mailto:ohareexpress@cmap.illinois.gov). Links to these e-mail addresses were included on **a dedicated webpage** that contained more information on the proposals. Feedback was also solicited in CMAP's weekly e-mail newsletter and via social media posts. Residents were also invited to provide comments by mail and in-person at the CMAP Board and Transportation Committee meetings.

### **Jackson Park Transportation and Mobility Improvement Project Comment Summary**

Overall, 6 residents offered comments on the project. One comment supported the project, two comments related to extending the green line and other transit service to the park, one advocated for a variety of transit improvements within and to the park, and two opposed the project.

Although concerns about parkland reduction were mentioned, most comments pertained to transportation and accessibility. Many comments spoke to much larger transportation access and affordability issues that exceed the scope of this project. Several residents looked beyond the proposed project to recommend extending the CTA Green line and otherwise add transit connections to Jackson Park in order to improve access, reduce parking, and promote economic development in the area. Residents suggested a shared fare system between the CTA and Metra to make transfers faster and more convenient. One resident advocated for ensuring that new and existing transit options are ADA compliant and accessible. Some residents commended the project's implementation of complete streets and some lane removals, while others opposed widening roadways and felt more thought should be given to complete streets techniques that prioritize more walking and biking. A resident thought that the amendment should wait until the court case involving the Obama Center, which the project supports, has been resolved.



Eric C. M. Basir

2/1/2019, email

Subject: Extend green line to park instead

Please extend the green line past cottage grove into Jackson Park! That is very important.

Additional: none

Austin Busch

2/1/2019, email

Subject: Make Jackson Park a transit hub, invest in more than a drive-by

When considering these Jackson Park improvements, please also revisit the mistake made in canceling the extension of the CTA's Green Line. A revived Cottage Grove branch of the Green Line, connection to a Metra Station at 63rd Street, and a free transfer with fare integration would allow for the inclusion of the Metra Electric District into the CTA system, greatly improving the commutes of local residents and all south-siders. Such a connection would also greatly reduce the need for parking at the Obama Library project, returning some of the lost green space from this development. A further short connection and station across the Dan Ryan between the two 63rd branches would allow for an alternate routing, in which Green Line trains would only terminate at Ashland/63rd. A new line would connect Englewood to Jackson Park, as well as allowing transfers between the Green Line, Red Line, and Metra Electric. This new transportation hub would help make Hyde Park, Woodlawn, and the University of Chicago into a major node in the city, shifting the dense jobs and investment from downtown closer to economically depressed neighborhoods. A transfer connection at Jackson Park would greatly benefit local business with increased foot and transit traffic, both local commuters and tourists. Further road widening will only lead to more people driving through the area without spending money at local businesses. Please consider a holistic approach to this site and the community around it.

Additional: none

Mike Erickson

2/23/2019, email

Subject: Public Comment

A federal judge has held up the South Lakefront Framework Plan (which includes the Obama Library) for a challenge to the City taking of lakefront parkland put forward by a parks-advocacy group's lawsuit, therefore the request for amendment to ON TO 2050's list of fiscally constrained regionally significant projects (RSPs) should be denied at least until final ruling has been made. It is obvious that CMAP 2050 Goals would be better met if the project were put in a destitute part of the city for the betterment of all.

Additional: Adjunct Professor of Earth and Environmental Science, MVCC, 708-625-2597

Harvey Kahler

2/22/2019, email

Subject: Add ADA compliant improvements to Metra Electric 59<sup>th</sup> Street station and increase frequency of service

ADA compliant improvements to Metra Electric 59th Street station should be added to the Jackson Park amendment to the South Lakefront Framework Plan section of the On to 2050 CMAP LRP in conjunction with the nearby Obama Presidential Center. The Metra Electric is accessible at Van Buren and Millennium Station from many Downtown hotels.

South Lakefront communities developed around the Metra Electric (former Illinois Central Suburban Lines) and suffered greater disinvestment with the decline in Metra service. Increasing Metra fare disparity has driven away ridership compounded by reduced service to meet lower demand. This has resulted in increased and costly CTA bus competition and operations that increase surface traffic on Downtown streets even if a goal of all-electric buses is attained.

Improved rail service would facilitate community renewal. The underutilized Metra Electric needs to be exploited with frequent service and coordinated with CTA fares. While a State mandate for fare coordination was never achieved or was ignored; one solution may be a CTA purchase of Metra Electric South Chicago and Mainline-Blue Island services mostly in the City but with suburban connections.

The purchase of service would add two rapid transit branches to the CTA network serving lakefront neighborhoods and major travel destinations. This would save the need for a \$2.3-billion CTA Red Line extension to serve the same area now poorly served by Metra, afford closer Pace connections with reduced route mileage, and allow offsetting reductions in CTA express bus operation costs.

Additional train cars will be needed, but there may be enough equipment available to provide an initial, 20-minute headway, interim service throughout the day, comparable to the CTA Green Line branches.

Metra crews would operate the trains and inspect tickets and smartphone app displays on board compatible with continuing travel on Metra and NICTD trains without segregated station fare control.

Ticket vending machines would be needed for that segment of the public without those phones. and would be the only initial cost for implementation.

PTC is installed and undergoing testing.

Beside a small number of new or restored Highliners, long-term needs would be for ADA station accessibility compliance and catenary (power collection) conversion to a constant tension system for a tenth of the cost of the RLE.

Shane Misztal

2/15/2019, email

Subject: CMAP Amendment Public Comment

I am writing to express my opinion on the Jackson Park project being added to the ON TO 2050 Plan. I would like to state that I am NOT for the roadway improvements at Jackson Park. My reasons for this is because:

a) I am against the Obama Presidential Library being built. My reason for this is because it will be using tax payer dollars to fund a tourist landmark where it's benefits don't outweigh its costs. Unless this project was completely privately funded by the Obama Foundation and private investors, I don't think this is a good use of our funds.

We shouldn't have our regional plan be dictated by the Mayor and City Council because they said so. They already got us to this point having CDOT request these amendments just so they can have their way. The majority of the people don't think it's a good use of our funds but the people in charge choose to ignore them (aka the people they represent) and push the project anyways. It's time to put our foot down and not give in.

b) Even if this library was to be built the idea of widening roadways to accommodate personal vehicles is not how I want our money spent. I'm for the bicycle and pedestrian improvements, as well as the Metra improvements. I think highlighting and prioritizing the use of public transit to access the library would be the most unique and equitable way of going about this. Installing more bus only lanes and prioritizing transit over private vehicle use is the way to go. Having a landmark as grand as this and allowing for people all over the world and country take a bus or train to the site and experience the way "we Chicagoans" do things is my vision and is a perfect representation of Obama and his way.

Additional: none

Terry Witt

1/26/2019, email

Subject: Jackson Park

I applaud focus on Complete Streets and Vision Zero. At each step it will be important to not allow pedestrian and bicycle projects be sacrificed for more concrete as budgets cause an either or choice. I have enjoyed riding in that area, and believe these plans will invite many more people to experience the joy of outside.

Additional: Bicycle Advocate, Bartlett, IL, 847-712-1845