

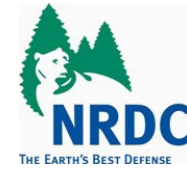
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Greene & Propp Design, Inc.

Our Lakefront

*A Civic Platform for the Reconstruction
of North Lake Shore Drive JULY 2013*

Chicago's lakefront belongs to the people of Chicago.
Its design should meet the needs of everyone who
uses the lakefront.

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ON THE COVER:
This conceptual illustration depicts one potential scenario to incorporate the principles in this platform into the reconstruction of North Lake Shore Drive. Access to the lakefront could be more accessible and welcoming. Transit could be faster and more reliable with enhancements such as bus-only lanes or Bus Rapid Transit. Traffic on the Lakefront Trail could be safer and more convenient by creating a new path to separate different kinds of trail users.

Introduction

Lake Michigan and Chicago's lakefront have shaped our region's history and identity. Our lakefront is one of the jewels of the city, our front yard, a symbol of who we are. Chicago's early civic leaders like Montgomery Ward and Daniel Burnham understood how special our lakefront could be when they called for setting it aside to remain forever open, clear and free. They recognized the need to balance the use of our lakefront as a hub of industry and transportation with the need to promise a more livable city for future generations of Chicagoans.

Chicago now faces a choice with the reconstruction of North Lake Shore Drive. We can seize the opportunity to pursue bold plans in the tradition of Chicago's great visionaries who hoped for a more livable city, or we can reinforce the slow shift towards a superhighway that serves as an ever-widening barrier between Chicago and its lakefront.

We envision a Lake Shore Drive that creates a stronger connection between Chicagoans and their lakefront, knitting together our neighborhoods, our parks and our beaches. We believe that Chicagoans deserve an iconic roadway that's not just scenic to drive along, but is also an asset for the estimated 60 million annual users of the lakefront, including people walking, biking, running or visiting our parks and beaches. A project of this scale should not be designed only based on the needs of today, but should anticipate the needs of the future. This means recognizing that livability is as important to the region's economic strength as transportation.

The reconstruction of North Lake Shore Drive has implications for millions of people who use our lakefront every year or live alongside it. The context of this project is more than just a roadway—it is the connection between a treasured lakefront, a major public transportation corridor, an historic park and some of the state's most densely populated neighborhoods. Therefore, this project must be held to Chicago's highest standards in design, public engagement and construction. We urge the project team to engage design professionals from diverse industries in planning the project, reaching beyond transportation planners and engineers.

This platform was developed by a broad coalition of advocates for better transportation and public space in Chicago. It promotes key principles and recommendations for the North Lake Shore Drive reconstruction project.

Principles

We encourage the North Lake Shore Drive Project Study Group, as well as the government agencies and elected officials overseeing the process, to support a bold vision for North Lake Shore Drive. It should meet the needs of everyone who uses the lakefront as well as serve as a model for waterfront cities everywhere.

We uphold these principles to guide the reconstruction of North Lake Shore Drive and recommend incorporating them into the project's Purpose and Need statement:

Facilitate safer, easier, more accessible and more comfortable East-West access between neighborhoods, Lincoln Park, Lake Michigan and the Lakefront Trail for people walking, running, biking or taking transit.

Significantly improve the safety, reliability, convenience, accessibility and comfort of all people traveling along the length of the lakefront, especially for public transportation and bicycling.

Increase park land and enhance the landscape design, identity, livability and amenities of Lincoln Park, Lake Michigan and the Lakefront Trail.

Utilize placemaking and gateway planning to enhance the identity and livability of Lake Shore Drive as a roadway serving the needs of local residential and retail activity as well as linking neighborhoods together and to downtown.

Leverage the north lakefront as an environmental asset, evaluating the design's sustainability and mitigating the impact of Lake Shore Drive on air and water quality, storm water run-off and noise pollution.

Bring Lake Shore Drive into conformity with The Lake Michigan and Chicago Lakefront Protection Ordinance by restoring the road as a major boulevard in order to reduce the negative impact on other lakefront users and mitigate the spill-over congestion in neighborhoods.

Protect the historic assets of Lincoln Park, including architecture and landscape design.

Recommendations

We recommend that the following be considered as part of the design alternatives process for North Lake Shore Drive:

Safety

Redesign and widen lakefront access points for the safety and security of all users and to reduce conflicts between Lakefront Trail traffic, vehicular traffic and people trying to reach the beaches and other park facilities.

Add a separate bike facility for higher speed traffic to improve safety and convenience for both recreational Lakefront Trail users and for bike commuters.

Reduce conflict points between cars and Lakefront Trail users.

Improve bike and pedestrian facilities on streets connecting to park access points.

Design Lake Shore Drive with a maximum 35mph design speed with no increase in the number of lanes, exceeding the requirements of the Lakefront Protection Ordinance.

Mobility

Separate transit from automobile traffic with bus-only lanes and other public transportation enhancements, such as Bus Rapid Transit, improving transit service and capacity to levels more appropriate for the high population density along the lakefront.

Upgrade the Lakefront Trail to meet existing Chicago Park District design standards.

Create boardwalks along beaches to improve pedestrian access and reduce Lakefront Trail congestion.

Connectivity

Increase lakefront access points to exceed the minimum standard of quarter-mile intervals required by the Lakefront Protection Ordinance.

Increase vehicular connections between the street grid and Lake Shore Drive, to reduce congested bottlenecks at limited access points.

Redesign roadway connections and intersections with Lake Shore Drive in order to provide a more seamless park experience between the neighborhoods and the lakefront.

Create programmed parks or plazas serving as access points across Lake Shore Drive and as iconic gateways between the city and the lakefront, with special consideration for creating seamless connections at the southern and northern ends of the project.

Livability

Increase park land and green space, especially between Ohio Street and North Avenue.

Emphasize the boulevard character of Lake Shore Drive by incorporating landscaping, greening the street and maintaining planted medians.

Leverage performance-based parking strategies in the park and along Lake Shore Drive to manage congestion.

Reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking lots within the park.

Minimize the impact of construction on the historic character of Lincoln Park.

Sustainability

Use park land to improve storm water run-off between the city and Lake Michigan using natural landscaping strategies for storm water management.

Soften the Lake Michigan shoreline in order to improve ecology and foster habitat restoration.

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