



**Randolph Street Corridor Improvement Study
Virtual Community Meeting #1 - June 25, 2020
Public Questions and Answers**

The questions included below were submitted prior to the meeting via the Zoom registration page and the project team email, and during the meeting via the Zoom Q&A function. All comments have been recorded as part of the meeting record. Similar questions have been grouped together for ease of response and readability.

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Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations

1. How will you improve safety for pedestrians, people on bicycles, and transit users?

One of the main priorities of the Randolph Street Corridor Improvement Study is safety. The details of these safety improvements will be identified in our next stage of the study. Improvements that will be considered in this analysis include, but are not limited to:

- Reduced footprint for the intersections that are currently very large
- Adding dedicated bicycle infrastructure and more bike parking
- Providing wider and less circuitous pedestrian paths along sidewalks
- Improving pedestrian visibility at intersections with strategies such as corner bumpouts
- Enhancing pedestrian comfort with landscaping and human-scale lighting



- Right-sizing the travel lanes to current and anticipated demand
- Improving the efficiency and management of curbside activity like freight loading, valet, and pick-up/drop-off
- Evaluating the placement of stop signs and traffic signals

The analysis and potential improvements will also need to be coordinated with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), who has jurisdiction over the mainline travel lanes.

2. How will safe and efficient bike lanes be incorporated into the development plan?

As noted in response to Question #1, the study is looking at adding dedicated bicycle infrastructure and more bike parking. Various bike lane configurations will be reviewed to address safety concerns.

3. How will CDOT expand space for pedestrians and cyclists? Currently, too much of Randolph is allocated to cars. Thank you!

As noted in response to Question #1, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be reviewed as part of this study. Potential improvements that will be explored include providing wider sidewalks, space for social activities, dedicated and separate bicycle facilities, and right-sizing the travel lanes to current and anticipated demand. The study will look at concept alternatives that remove the service drives and or medians to create more pedestrian and bicycle space.

4. How will you handle safety for pedestrians crossing expressway on ramps?

There are established best practices for improving pedestrian and bicycle visibility at ramps, as well as slowing traffic on the ramps. One example strategy is tightening the turning radius at ramp junctions to encourage drivers to slow down. In coordination with IDOT, the project team will explore this, and other options, in the upcoming stages of study and future design phases. IDOT has of the roadway and the expressway ramps at this location.

Curb Management and Parking

5. Will the parking continue to be free?

The parking on Randolph Street will continue to be free in the short term. The City does plan to install meters. Pavement striping along the corridor has already been completed, but installation of the meters has been on hold due to the COVID pandemic.

6. There are many – many – valet controlled curb spaces, what is the current licensing regime for these companies and what are the proposals to [hopefully] displace them?

Valet loading zones are granted through the Alderman’s office in an application process similar to that used for standing and loading zones. Curbside management—which encompasses the



various parking designations present along the corridor and the manner in which they are used by the public, valet services, freight deliveries, rideshare services, and more—has a significant influence on the Randolph Street corridor and is a high priority of this study. Strategies for improved management will therefore be explored as part of this study.

7. As a veterinary hospital at Randolph and Halsted, parking (currently we have 6 loading zone spaces) inside of the service lanes is essential to our business. Losing parking directly in front of our space for sick, injured, and disabled pets would drastically and negatively affect our business. What type of consideration will be made for those of us where the service lanes (or simply the parking in those lanes) are essential?

The project team prioritizes the maintenance of necessary access for businesses or essential services on the corridor. At this stage of study, we will identify general concepts for the Randolph Street corridor, and this comments such as this will be considered during that stage of analysis. Future stages of the project, including Phase I and Phase II design will proceed with a level of block-by-block design. CDOT will coordinate more closely with businesses and property owners about specific concerns at that time.

8. Hello, We are lacking parking garages. The drives are used for pick up and drop off. Without the drives, where will pedestrians be able to pick up and exit Ubers and cabs? Ubers will stop in the middle of the street to drop off their customers.

Regarding additional parking, it was noted during the Virtual Community Meeting that a 4-story parking garage on Randolph Street is proposed, which may help to relieve some of the current issues.

Additionally, the project team has recognized curbside management and parking as key issues for this corridor. The concept alternatives for Randolph Street will consider ways to improve curbside operations in terms of both safety and functionality.

9. Parking lot on Randolph and ? which cross street?

Southeast corner of Randolph and Ada.

10. Another (more general) question: With parking difficult as it is, and the service lanes providing a majority of the parking space due to the current layout, how will all of the parking be replaced?

As concept alternatives are developed in this study, strategies for managing parking and other curbside demands will be developed, including consideration of replacing/relocating parking.

11. Since the meters are leased and Chicago is NOT receiving any income from it, who makes the decisions to install additional meters that the City does not benefit from and makes it less



affordable for visitors to come to the neighborhood from elsewhere and prevent residents from having parking near where they live?

The additional meters were approved in the 2020 City budget and are reserve meters meaning beyond the minimum required by the parking meter contract. As a result, the City gains revenue from these meters.

Design Ideas

12. Have you considered diagonal pedestrian crossing intersections?

As the project is still in the study stage, we have not yet begun the detailed Phase I and II design. The project team recognizes the importance of gathering community feedback and improvement ideas prior to developing alternative designs. Therefore, options like diagonal pedestrian crossings will be reviewed in Phases I and II of this study.

13. Why wasn't the 3rd street promenade or Las Ramblas used as inspiration for Randolph?

The project team did review a number of additional streetscapes other than those presented in the meeting, such as Las Ramblas. We limited the number of examples shared to provide a wide array, but digestible amount of information.

The intent of sharing the streetscapes from around the world is not to bring one specific design from another city to Randolph Street, but to provide an idea of how users could be prioritized in different streetscape designs and what the “feel” of some inspirational designs would be. We encourage you to send us ideas of what you would like to see.

14. Can we make Randolph west of I-90 into a pedestrian-only corridor? It would make West Loop a social hub for the city+world.

14a. Are there plans to make portions of Randolph street car free during particularly busy nights? Some nights the sidewalks can get really busy. Maybe we could have parking and rideshare drop offs a few blocks away.

14b. Has this group explored the feasibility of putting all roads and parking underground a la lower wacker? Then the entire width of the road could be used for expanded outdoor dining, pedestrian walkways and greenspace.

14c. Let's talk about the historic plan to create a new covered Randolph Market and how it makes sense given Chicago's weather. In 1878 a design for an improved Market Hall on W. Randolph St. was proposed by architect F. M. Whitehouse (pictured on today's Randolph) — creating a Public Market on Public Space — Randolph Street. More recently the Fulton Market Innovation District Plan included a year round Farmers Market and Innovation Showcase. Where other cities have celebrated and grown with their Markets, Chicago has



destroyed Water Market, Maxwell Market, Fulton Market, Randolph Market and Hay Market. It's time to reconnect with our past and create a year round Covered Market. How do we get there?

The study will evaluate various alternative designs and their impacts. Pedestrianizing a street has many impacts that need to be considered. IDOT has jurisdiction over the mainline travel lanes and any substantial changes to the roadway must also be reviewed and accepted by the State. Maintaining access for businesses on Randolph Street, many of which are not served by a rear alley, is also a priority in order to maintain this vibrant business district.

The project team is supportive of and receptive to community-sourced ideas for this corridor. The purpose of this feasibility study is to prepare a quantitative assessment of what is needed and what can be provided from an infrastructure standpoint, which ultimately provides the platform for executing those ideas. We ask that you to please stay involved and share your thoughts with us as we move through the process so that we can progress to future stages during which we can evaluate ideas like these.

Waste/Recycling Receptacles

15. Can we get all the businesses to take a proactive approach to cleaning up litter in the Neighborhood?

15a. Please speak to the implementation of recycling containers on Randolph.

As the project progresses through various stages of design, the City will review where trash receptacles could be located and will also review maintenance partners so that cleanliness is a consideration in all improvement concepts.

Outdoor Dining

16. Will Randolph St close this weekend to create more outdoor open space/seating for restaurants?

Since the Virtual Meeting took place on June 25, 2020, portions of Randolph Street have been closed for outdoor dining as part of CDOT's Make Way for Dining program.

17. Is a goal to drastically expand outdoor dining?

As the project team is still in the stage of study that evaluates existing conditions and alternatives, we have not yet begun the design. One goal of the study is to assess the current allocation of space in the corridor and improve this allocation based on the feedback received from the community.



18. Will you use the city's new COVID outdoor dining program (Cafe Streets) to evaluate a more pedestrian design on Randolph in the future?
- 18a. Will feedback from the outdoor dining in the streets which launch this weekend be taken into account in the studies/options/etc?

Yes, the project team will review the outdoor dining program when reviewing potential improvements to the corridor. This program provides a good opportunity to see how the expanded outdoor dining functions, and if it could be supported by the corridor concepts that will be developed as part of this project.

Study Process

19. How do I become a part of the resident community board to help in this process?

With help from local community group leaders, the project team assembled a group of approximately 20 individuals who bring a variety of perspectives about the corridor, including residents, business owners, developers, and representatives of various community organizations. We also value input from the general public who have a vested interest in this corridor. That input can be provided through the interactive tools presented at the Virtual Community Meeting, at future community meetings for this project, and through leaders of your local community organizations, such as West Loop Community Organization, West Central Association, Neighbors of the West Loop and your Alderman's office. All participants in the Virtual Community Meeting will also be added to the e-mail list for this project and will receive project updates in the future. If you were not in attendance, but would like to receive project updates, please email the project team at kduff@metrostrategiesinc.com.

20. Tax increases and can we get out of the historic district?

The landmark district does overlap with Randolph Street, generally from Halsted Street to Carpenter Street. The landmark district boundary was approved by City Council in 2014, and properties within the boundary cannot opt out. Prior to this approval, the City underwent a lengthy community engagement process and met with many community groups.

There are tax incentives available for eligible projects in the district. There is a Class L tax incentive which reduces taxes to 10% for 12 years. Also there is the 20% Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit incentive available that is administered by the SHPO and NPS.

21. How are the concerns/desires of Randolph Street businesses being incorporated into the study and plan?

The project team is coordinating with existing businesses owners, residents, developers, and community organizations in the Community Advisory Group. We have also notified businesses in the corridor of the Virtual Community Meeting and hope to receive input in the public engagement



tools. Additional and more intimate coordination with business and property owners will be completed in the future during the Phase I and Phase II design of the project.

22. Why is this meeting being held virtually now instead of waiting for the COVID-19 crisis to lessen and allow full public meetings, in order to discuss Randolph St. as a community for the next century?

22a. Why is this meeting being held virtually now instead of waiting for the COVID-19 crisis to lessen and allow full public meetings, in order to discuss Randolph St. and make these serious decisions? Will the future meeting be public meetings?

The original in person community meeting was scheduled to take place March 12, 2020 but cancelled due to the community health risks posed by the COVID pandemic. With the uncertainties around the COVID pandemic, the decision was made to move forward with a virtual public meeting and introduce this study to the community in the safest and most accessible approach possible. CDOT will continue to follow public health guidelines for future meetings and will strive to provide adequate notice and accessibility to all interested parties. We hope to have in person meetings in the future as the project progresses into Phases I and II design.

23. Were all Randolph St. building owners, businesses and residents notified of this meeting by certified mail or by mail?

The project team notified community members and businesses through a few avenues: e-announcements to a community stakeholders list; promotion in newsletters by WLCO, WCA, and Ald. Burnett's office; social media (Twitter and Facebook) posts from the Chicago Department of Transportation; and hand distribution of flyers throughout the corridor. If you did not receive an e-announcement but would like to receive project updates in the future, please email the project team at kduff@metrostrategiesinc.com.

24. Why is there a three-week July 17 deadline for comments when modernizing Randolph is a monumental issue to be explored carefully? Why is this study being fast-tracked? How can this study become a community-driven process where the community gets to set the study parameters and timeline?

Comments are welcome at any time during the project process. While the comment period after meeting #1 was limited to three weeks, it is not the last opportunity for public input. Initial comments and public engagement tool responses are needed within a certain period of time to be a part of the community meeting record and to start to inform the concept alternatives. There will be many more opportunities for community input in this study and more detailed business and community coordination in the future project phases.

25. How is the preferred alternative selected, and more important, how are the options in the decision set selected? Is it Community Driven or being herded into a predetermined solution?



After receiving this initial round of community feedback, the project team will begin to develop concept alternatives for the Randolph Street corridor informed by the technical analysis and public comments received to date. Those concept alternatives will then be presented to the public at a Community Meeting. Input received will inform the preferred alternatives for this study. More detailed analysis and additional public engagement will also take place in future phases of the project.

26. Can you describe in detail how you will be engaging businesses located on Randolph to assess their needs?

The project team is coordinating with existing businesses owners, residents, developers and community organizations in the Community Advisory Group. We have also notified businesses in the corridor of the Virtual Community Meeting and hope to receive their input in the public engagement tools. Additional and more intimate coordination with business and property owners regarding their needs will be completed during Phase I and II design.

27. This all seems prescriptive and not rooted in creative thinking and design. How will you change this process to reflect a more creative process to develop the vision for this important corridor?

Creative thinking is essential for the Randolph Street corridor as it is a unique and historic street in the city. The project team recognizes the importance of gathering community feedback and improvement ideas prior to developing alternative designs. Therefore, the creative “phase” will begin in the next steps of this study after the project team and community have established the existing issues. Creative design will then continue and expand during Phase I and II design.

28. Can future meetings also be on Zoom simultaneously? As a parent of young children it is harder for me to go to in-person meetings.

Thank you for the feedback. We will take this into consideration for future meetings.

29. The West Loop is not represented by just WLCO, WCA and NOWL. When are things going to be opened up to the ENTIRE Community with Resident Votes versus Appointed Committees?

The project team is soliciting feedback from all interested parties (residents, business owners, community group leaders, property owners, and more) at each stage of this study in order to comprehensively consider community input in the development of concept alternatives for the Randolph Street Corridor Improvement Study. The current stage of the study is focused on evaluating existing conditions, and all participants are invited to provide feedback on this subject through the interactive tools presented at the Virtual Community Meeting. At the next public meeting, concept alternatives for the corridor will be presented for public comment and refined accordingly.



30. With the improved streetscapes, have you thought about certain types of businesses you want to attract to Randolph? And have you talked to those business owners/included them in this process?

The project team is coordinating with existing businesses owners, residents, developers and community organizations in the Community Advisory Group. All business owners are invited to provide feedback on this project through interactive tools presented at the Virtual Community Meeting and at future public meetings for this project. Additional, and more in-depth coordination with business and property owners will be completed during Phase I and II design.

31. Why isn't there a voting process being used and asked of the building owner and business on Randolph St that this will affect the most?

The engagement tools (survey and Wikimap) should be utilized to provide that feedback. The project team is coordinating with existing businesses owners, residents, developers and community organizations in the Community Advisory Group, and feedback from all interested parties will be solicited at key points in the study process. Additional and more in-depth coordination with business and property owners will be completed during Phase I and II design.

Timeline and Funding

32. What percentage of TIF funds will be allocated to the project?

Currently, 56% of the study is funded with Kinzie Industrial TIF funds.

33. Can you talk about the timeline for starting these improvements?

Currently there is no construction schedule for this project. After this study is completed in 2021, we anticipate the project moving into Phase I Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Impact Assessment, then Phase II Detailed Engineering, before starting Phase III Construction. Typically Phases I and II each take 18 months to complete, but that time can vary depending on the complexity of the final design.

34. And how much money has been spent?

\$550,000 has been allocated for the study. \$310,000 from the Kinzie Industrial TIF and \$240,000 from the State of Illinois Statewide Planning & Research grant.

35. If Randolph improvements are requested by our community eventually, what pot of government funds will pay for these improvements? Could this result in a local tax increase? Is this study related to a community organization wanting a new tax on businesses and residents called a Special Service Area tax?

- 35a. What funds will be used to support this initiative?



Various funding sources will be considered, including but not limited to federal, state, and local funds. The funding for current and future stages of the Randolph Street Corridor Improvement Study are unrelated to the request for a Special Service Area (SSA).

36. What about the use of funds in the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund?

Neighborhood Opportunity Fund cannot be used outside of eligible areas and cannot be used for public infrastructure projects. To learn more about the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund please visit the following websites:

<https://neighborhoodopportunityfund.com/about/>

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/neighborhood-opportunity-fund0.html

Other

37. I would like to know more what you mean by enabling "community right of way"

A primary objective of the Randolph Street Corridor Improvement Study is to achieve a corridor design that is reflective of modern travel behaviors and community desires while also promoting safety and comfort for all users. The "right-of-way" is generally defined as the space from building face to building face. This study involves reviewing how space is allocated to different purposes within those right-of-way boundaries today and how we can better allocate it in the future. Public input will be an important aspect of achieving that objective.

38. Immediately to protect the public, can CDOT install uniform "Do Not Enter/One-Way" signs on all Service Drive lanes to prevent vehicles from going the wrong way on the Drives, since there is no uniform safety signage today?

CDOT will conduct a site survey and install the signs as appropriate.

39. Because each new renovation and new construction project presented to our community provides a traffic study only for their individual project, The Neighborhood's community groups have constantly asked for a comprehensive traffic study by CDOT and have always been told that it was underway. Is there a completed study that you can share with the Community at this time?

The most recent, comprehensive study is the 2016 Fulton-Randolph Traffic and Curbside Use Study.

40. Was Fulton Market Street also going to be made into a car free flex zone?

There are no plans to date to make Fulton Market a car free flex zone.



41. Is Ogilvie Station included in the corridor? Would love to see the roof of Ogilvie Station train tracks built into a greenspace gateway for Randolph.

Ogilvie Station is not in the corridor boundary. The east boundary of the study area is Des Plaines Street, and the west boundary is Ogden Avenue.

42. Are there plans to add more bus options to get to Randolph Street? I find it hard to approach from the south if you are coming from the area between Halsted and Ashland.

We will be coordinating with the CTA to assess transit around the corridor and will provide them this feedback.

43. Understanding that there are no pre-determined solutions, does your team consider the idea of treating the portion of Randolph west of Racine differently from the portion of Randolph east of Racine to be on the table? As your own data demonstrably shows, the two have different needs.

The project team does acknowledge there are different needs and potential improvements within different portions of the corridor. We are taking this into consideration in regard to both current and future conditions. The project team is working closely with the Chicago Department of Planning and Development and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to understand what is planned along the corridor to accommodate future needs. The improvement designs will reflect and address the differing needs and resources along the corridor.

44. When were the traffic study and curb/sidewalk usage study conducted?

Data collection for traffic and curb/sidewalk usage was conducted in September of 2019.

45. My question is can we please not turn Randolph into the albatross of Fulton market and the Washington bus rapid transit streets? Both streets are now always log jammed with horrendous traffic from deliveries and ride-shares.

The project team recognizes that curbside management is a primary concern in the corridor and aims to improve the current and future management through the design.

46. Chicago, as the Sun Times reported this week, is way behind in its tree planting and is still primitive in terms of environmental issues. Many cities are way ahead in planting trees which are the least expensive way to combat climate change and have scores of benefits yet Chicago is really regressing when it comes to greening. The double median along Randolph, from Des Plaines to Ogden, has hundreds of gorgeous trees. Why would CDOT remove these trees given that Chicago's tree canopy is minimal compared to so many other comparable cities around the world and in the U.S?



I also suggest that the car culture of car-addicted people be addressed as the NIMBYs will be out in force talking about cars despite this area being so close to downtown. Randolph is not just a neighborhood street but one for the whole city. Trees and greenery transform lives and nature.

Green space and trees are valuable resources in Chicago. Concept alternatives may necessitate the removal of median trees; however, a priority of the project is to improve green space throughout the corridor and increase the amount of trees and landscaping.