

Chicago Mobility Collaborative
December 07, 2023
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM
Hibbard Elementary School & Virtual
Meeting Summary

Event Date & Time: Thursday, December 07, 2023 from 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Number of Attendees: 85 total attendees (including participants joining via Zoom and in-person at Hibbard Elementary School)

CDOT Staff Attendees: Romina Castillo; Brad Huff; Sean Weidell; Erica Schroeder

Guest speaker: Ald. La Spata, Committee on Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Chair

Leadership Group Attendees: Jeremy Cuevas, Ismael Cuevas

Summary of Meeting: This meeting was held both in-person at Hibbard Elementary and virtually via Zoom. CMC representative, Ismael Cuevas welcomed everyone to the meeting reminding attendees about the meeting format, the general goals of the CMC, and the community agreements of engagement. Attendees were also welcomed by Principal Hiliana León, who shared a brief history of traffic safety issues and solutions around her school's campus. After this, Brad Huff shared CDOT updates and upcoming projects and initiatives, see below for a complete list of updates. Alderman La Spata, Chair of the Committee on Pedestrian & Traffic Safety made remarks remotely via Zoom, and committee staff were also present. Ismael Cuevas introduced the Community Tables facilitated by representatives of CDOT, CTA, civic organizations, and members of the public. These conversations are summarized below.

CDOT Updates:

- Traffic Safety Data
 - Traffic fatalities have decreased by double-digit percentages year over year since 2021. To access public crash data, visit <https://data.cityofchicago.org>.
 - Learn more about CDOT's traffic safety strategy on the new website: [Chicago.gov/completestreets](https://chicago.gov/completestreets).
- Project Updates
 - The CTA and CDOT released the [Better Streets for Buses Plan](#).
 - New bike and pedestrian safety improvements, such as raised crosswalks and bus boarding islands, on Central Park Ave through Garfield Park.
 - The CDOT Bikeways team is continuing its Neighborhood Bike Network effort in the Southwest neighborhoods of McKinley Park, Brighton Park, and Gage Park.
 - CDOT's free bike giveaway program, Bike Chicago, has distributed 1,400 bikes in 2023.

- Divvy is expanding the Classic (Blue Bike) fleet and adding more heavyweight stations.
- For the 33rd Ward, new Neighborhood Greenways are planned for Central Park, Berteau, and Collum.
- The SAFE Ambassadors had another successful year for outreach, engagement, and education. To view the annual report, visit [Chicago.gov/safeambassadors](https://chicago.gov/safeambassadors).

Community Tables Summaries – What we heard from participants.

Table 1 – Better Streets for Transit: *Better Streets for Buses* plan

Facilitators – Audrey Wennink, MPC; Jennifer Henry, CTA; Jason Meter, CTA; Brad Huff, CDOT

- Action Items
 - CTA and CDOT will move forward with three Bus Priority Corridors and continue to engage stakeholders at a hyperlocal community level. This includes outreach to parents, students, schools, and stadiums in places where “people already are.”
 - A model like CDOT’s Neighborhood Bike Network effort could work to engage neighbors, community groups, and institutions like health clinics.
 - CTA and CDOT should aim to co-create a process as opposed to traditional community engagement.
 - Changing the narrative around buses and elevating riders’ experiences will better ensure constituents can make stronger connections to the benefits of BRT. Public transit is an asset of the city, make it attractive.
- High-level participant feedback and conversation overview.
 - Small incremental improvements such as boarding islands do not require engagement, as these often get slowed down by community outreach efforts. 100% consensus is impossible.
 - Leave community engagement for more transformative projects.
 - There needs to be more of a presence of city staff to connect at the community and ward level. Wards have an existing presence and connection to the community.

Table 2 - Beyond the Bike Lane: Activating public spaces through Open Boulevards and Open Streets

Facilitators – Jonathan Kelley, Lawndale Pop Up Spot; Romina Castillo, CDOT

- Action Items
 - Connect with CDOT to identify potential locations for future Open Streets.
 - CDOT will document and outline an improved process for communities to request these types of programs
- High-level participant feedback and conversation overview

- Leveraging existing streets closures/permits such as farmers markets or outdoor dining. This could be an opportunity to extend the footprint of existing events and add additional flexible programming as determined by the community.
- Identifying short but tactical corridors (residential and/or commercial) where the community has identified an opportunity to pedestrianize a street, and study/socialize the possibility of implementing more long-term closures such as people plazas.
- Downsize the Open Boulevards program to be able to implement more during a year. This can be an option to continue collaborating with DCASE by creating smaller Open Boulevard events with smaller footprints where we can still host music, vendors, and activities, and where the focus of the event is not only on the closure, but also on a bike ride along the boulevards that ends at the event.

Table 3 – Committee on Pedestrian & Traffic Safety (Hybrid Table): City Council, the Inside Scoop

Facilitators – Iris Postma, Morgan Madderom, Committee Staff (in-person); Emily Melbye, Niki Heer, Committee Staff (virtual)

- Action Items
 - Watch a City Council or committee meeting online
 - Reach out to your alder on a safe streets issue
 - Attend a Ward Night or other community event
- High-level participants feedback and conversation overview
 - Iris and Morgan guided the in-person conversation and answered questions about how City Council and committees function. Participants were interested in the structure of various committees and how they influence city operations like legislation and agenda setting.
 - The facilitators were curious about attitudes towards incentivizing citizen reporting, especially for concerns like parking violations. Participants were unanimously proponents of this type of reporting system.
 - Iris and Morgan discussed the Committee’s broad policy goals such as a city-wide slower speed limit and a legislated bike grid. Participants were largely in agreement for these initiatives.
 - Emily and Niki facilitated the virtual roundtable and received feedback in the form of informational requests and policy and infrastructure suggestions.
 - Participants flagged how aldermanic prerogative has halted safe street infrastructure projects, specifically around biking infrastructure. Many asked how CDOT could work with community members on infrastructure requests when certain Aldermanic offices are non-responsive.
 - Participants requested a speed limit map to showcase where speeds are different than the citywide 30 MPH limit.

- There was also a call for increased signage on streets that do have a lower speed limit (I.e. 20 or 25 MPH) as many times these street signs are damaged or stolen and never replaced.
- A few participants made comments that the new LED streetlights CDOT is installing make it difficult to see street markings as a driver.
- There were many calls for more comprehensive sidewalk repair throughout the city.
 - There were many complaints about walk signals taking months to be repaired if they go out of service.
- There was a question about how bus shelters are funded, as one participant had asked their Alderperson about their ability to refurbish a bus shelter and they were told that 'CTA Funds' had run out for bus shelters. It's unclear how bus shelters are funded and who's responsible for maintenance and replacement (CDOT vs CTA vs Menu Money).

Table 4 – Featured Project: Chicago Moves Electric Framework Overview

Facilitators – Sean Wiedel, CDOT

- Action Items
 - Explore a rebate or incentive program to promote the use of e-bikes
 - Consider investing infrastructure in safe public parking and charging station options (e.g., libraries can have charging cords that can be loaned out)
- High-level participant feedback and conversation overview
 - When asked what resources would increase the use of electric vehicles and devices, participants recommended centralizing charging lots in different neighborhoods
 - Some participants suggested integrating charging infrastructure in public rights-of-way, such as curbside chargers.
 - Participants also mentioned significant barriers to the adoption of electric vehicles and devices, such as:
 - People living in multi-family homes have a harder time storing their e-bikes, since there's a higher risk of theft if it is stored outside, and there are difficulties bringing e-bikes up the stairs.
 - There aren't enough charging stations, especially since EV's require more frequent charging than, say, filling up a gas tank.
 - Even with universal adoption of EV's, the same mobility challenges exist because of car culture. Attention should continue to be paid improving walking, biking, and public transit options.
 - Suggested locations for charging stations include: Midway Airport, Garfield Park, Fulton Market, Hyde Park, Norwood Park East, Woodlawn, and Big Marsh Park.