



corridor study
Montrose - Foster

CLARK STREET CROSSROADS

Virtual Community Workshop Q&A Summary

FEBRUARY 15TH, 2022 | 6 - 7:30PM (CT)

This document provides a brief summary of the community feedback gathered during the first community workshop for the Clark Street Crossroads held in early 2022. Some questions were edited for clarity, with answers provided by the Department of Planning and Development staff and its planning partners.

Community Workshop Statistics

Number of registrants: **280**

Number of attendees: **226**

Number of questions and comments received: **~35**

Key Speakers (study team): **Maurice Cox (Chicago - DPD), Paul Reise (Chicago - DPD), Lance Dorn (SB Friedman), Brett Weidl (SmithGroup), Janet Attarian (SmithGroup), Marisa Schulz (All Together), and Cristina Gallo (Via Chicago Architects + Diseñadores)**

Interactive Polling Questions*

**Note, not all attendees participated in the polling questions during the workshop.

What brings you most frequently to this stretch of Clark Street?

- **Live: 43%**
- Dining: 14%
- Commuting (passing through the corridor during your commute): 13%
- Shopping: 13%
- Entertainment: 8%
- Work: 6%
- Recreation: 3%
- Community Spaces: 0%

How do you travel most frequently throughout the corridor?

- **Walking: 39.5%**
- Driving (including using taxis and rideshare): 33.5%
- Biking: 16%
- Public transit: 11%

What “experience” do you feel is currently missing along this stretch of Clark Street?

- **Community Spaces: 30%**
- Dining: 27%
- Entertainment: 16%
- Shopping: 13%
- Recreation: 6%
- Live: 4.5%
- Work: 3.5%
- Commuting (passing through the corridor during your commute): 0%

What commercial use are you most interested in seeing along Clark Street?

- **Restaurants (sit-down): 29%**
- Destination retail / specialty shops: 20%
- Entertainment options: 14.5%
- Bars / Taverns: 13.5%
- Restaurants (fast-casual): 10%
- Coffee shops : 4.5%
- Child care providers: 3.5%
- Professional or co-working office space: 3%
- Service-oriented retail (e.g. dry cleaners, fitness studios, etc.): 2%
- Medical office space: 0%

What is your biggest priority for public way improvements along the corridor?

- **Scale of buildings: 24%**
- Intersection crossings: 23%
- Storefront facades: 22%
- Landscaping: 16%
- Curb use (parking, uber pick-ups, etc.): 12%
- Paving treatment: 3%

What residential development type are you most interested in seeing along Clark Street?

- **Income-restricted or workforce housing: 33%**
- For-sale residential condos: 29%
- Market-rate rental apartments: 17%
- For-sale townhomes: 10%
- Senior housing: 7%
- Market-rate rental townhomes: 3%

Have you taken the Community Survey?

- **Yes: 60%**
- No, didn't know about it: 25%
- No, haven't had the time: 15%

Questions & Answer Feedback Summary

1. How is the Clark Street corridor planning process engaging low-income, minority, immigrant, queer/trans, disabled, and other constituencies?

Public outreach has included mass marketing through the press, social media, and related digital engagement tools. Direct marketing has included outreach to a wide range of neighborhood representatives, including aldermanic offices and special interest groups, as well as through flyers, banners and notices placed at strategic locations throughout the study area. Translation services are provided upon request and in-person meetings are held at accessible locations. Check out the full list of community partners at www.clarkstreetcrossroads.com/partners.

2. When was the online survey available to the public?

Tuesday, Jan. 25, through Monday, Feb. 28.

3. Is the Feb. 15 workshop presentation available for review?

Yes. The workshop recording and presentation are available at www.clarkstreetcrossroads.com.

4. Can the City of Chicago implement more innovative bike lanes on Clark that are physically separated from car traffic?

Bike lanes that are raised, have barriers, or involve other design innovations would require extensive planning and funding from multiple City, State or even Federal sources. The first step toward implementing non-traditional bike lane improvements would start with public advocacy, support from elected officials, and review by impacted public agencies.

5. What is the source funding for potential public improvements?

Infrastructure and related funding for public projects may be provided from a number of City and State sources, including Tax Increment Financing, general obligation bonds, and other resources.

6. How can community members make their voices heard when new private developments are proposed?

For projects that need formal City approval due to zoning changes or other changes to the municipal code, public meetings and hearings are required in advance that offer opportunities for the public to make comments and suggestions.

7. Is “rent control” an option to help businesses and residents reduce their costs?

Chicago’s municipal code does not include provisions for rent control, except for projects that have affordable housing requirements due to various forms of City assistance that may be involved. Rent control provisions for businesses, though possible, are relatively rare for City-assisted private developments.

8. The Clark/Montrose Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district is partly intended to be used for building rehabilitation projects. Where is information available about TIF being used for improvements to existing buildings?

Approximately two dozen building rehabilitation projects in the Clark/Montrose TIF district have been assisted through the TIF program, primarily through the City's Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF). For information and project data, visit www.chicago.gov/sbif.

9. What type of small business funding sources might be made available as part of the study?

Grant funding for businesses is largely administered through the City's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program, as well as through the City's post-pandemic recovery programs. For more information, visit www.cityofchicago.org/recovery, respectively.

10. Is it possible to limit the construction of projects that have "as of right" zoning?

All land in the City has a zoning designation that controls the size, scope and use of any physical improvement. Improvements that are allowed by zoning typically cannot be prevented from moving forward "as of right," provided they conform with multiple other aspects of the City's municipal code involving building permits, licensing, materials, and other considerations that are reviewed by relevant City agencies.

11. How will parking be considered as new development and traffic increase?

Parking is controlled by the City's municipal code based on the size and use of a given building. All new construction projects are reviewed for conformity to the City's parking standards and, depending on the size of the proposed project, traffic studies may also be required.

12. Could there be a demolition moratorium until this planning process is complete? A number of owners lowered their property tax burdens through demolition, which in turn lowered returns to the TIF district.

A demolition moratorium is not under consideration at this time.

13. Is one of the goals of the study to better utilize vacant space along the corridor?

In part, yes. The study's goal is a unified and strategic vision for the corridor and commercial vibrancy is an ongoing discussion topic.

14. Will we know the preferred land uses for opportunity sites prior to implementation of the study?

Yes, the opportunity sites will be identified and recommendations presented for discussion prior to the issuance of a final planning document.

15. What is the plan for future phases and when will the planning process be completed?

The study entered its initial phase in winter 2022. Planning efforts will continue into the summer and potentially into fall.

16. Will the planning team be using any existing spaces along the Clark Street to promote the study?

In-person meetings have yet to be scheduled as of early March 2022 but, pending availability and stakeholder sentiments, an indoor public space may be utilized for a community meeting.

17. How is the study being funded?

The study is being funded through the Clark/Montrose TIF district for approximately \$250,000.

18. How can the City help ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing is available for residents?

The City requires certain construction projects with 10 or more housing units to set aside 20% of total units as affordable. The corridor is also part of an area where the City has legalized additional dwelling units to be constructed within attics, basements and coach houses to help lower rental rates by increasing supply. Additionally, the City's affordable housing resources are regularly reviewed to ensure proposed affordable housing projects on the North Side lakefront are equitably considered for government assistance.

19. What are the planning implications of changing demographics in area?

The area's demographic information provides a baseline understanding of local dynamics that will be considered as the Clark Street planning process moves forward in the spring and summer of 2022.

20. How have the corridor's racial and ethnic demographics shifted in recent years?

Demographic changes between 2010 and 2020 will be published on the project website by spring 2022.

21. Is there a significant population that both lives and works in the corridor?

According to the most recent data available (pre-Covid), only a small percentage of residents who live near the corridor also work near the corridor. Most area residents commute to the Loop, Evanston, or job centers in the northern suburbs.

22. How is St. Augustine College playing a role in this process?

St. Augustine College is a significant anchor and job center in the area. Efforts to more directly engage college representatives will take place in later phases of the study.

23. Does the dining category of the survey include taverns that don't serve food?

No, taverns that don't offer food were identified in the Bar/Tavern category for both the survey and poll.

24. What can be done about the high property taxes facing small retailers?

This issue has been raised extensively and will be part of ongoing community discussions.

25. What is happening on the northwest corner of Sunnyside and Clark?

A proposal for a 12-unit building was underway as of early March.

26. Are plans underway for the the former By Line Bank at 4701 N. Clark St.?

A proposal for a 38-unit building was underway as of early March.

27. Is there a way to accurately predict how new residential construction may impact retail vacancy rates?

As a rule of thumb, new residential construction is generally thought to provide more demand for nearby retail and service-oriented businesses.

28. Is a car-free Clark Street an alternative that is being looked into? Clark seems redundant for north-south car traffic due to the proximity of Ashland Avenue.

Multiple stakeholders have offered similar ideas to make Clark more pedestrian friendly while shifting more traffic to Ashland. Transforming Clark into a pedestrian-only corridor would require a thorough study of vehicular and multi-modal transportation systems and extensive engagement with local property owners and tenants.

29. What can be done to get bicycle riders to not endanger older pedestrians who cannot leap out of their way?

Pedestrian safety is an important issue that will continue to be explored for improvement through the corridor planning process.

30. Is there an effort to maintain existing historic buildings and/or facades?

The planning process will likely lead to the development of recommendations and guidelines for the treatment of historic and significant buildings.

31. Is there a transportation vision for a larger area or how Clark would fit into that larger vision?

The study is examining current conditions and how Clark can best function within its surrounding context. While this study does not focus on transportation beyond the limits of the corridor, its impacts are being considered.

32. There area between Montrose and Wilson has seen little private investment for quite a while. Many of the businesses have closed. Is there a plan for this area?

This area is a key portion of the study and will be subject to ongoing assessment and review.

33. How do raised intersections impact the flow of rainwater and melting snow?

Raised intersections are typically designed to work with the surrounding drainage patterns of the area. Snowmelt and storm water management considerations are incorporated in their designs. This will be evaluated further if raised intersections become the desired solution. Currently, raised intersections are one idea of many being considered.

34. What portions of Clark Street are eligible to be designated as pedestrian street?

Clark is already a designated pedestrian (P) street between Montrose and Bryn Mawr, which helps ensure new development projects are pedestrian friendly and less car-oriented.

35. Is there a way to have architecturally pleasing, functional, and environmentally appropriate car shops?

The study will create design guidelines that ensure historic preservation of existing significant architecture as well as a baseline design standard for proposed development along the corridor. Environmental impacts of individual businesses are beyond the scope of this study.



corridor study
Montrose - Foster

www.clarkstreetcrossroads.com