



Community Feedback Summary

August 2022 Report · Project · Virtual Open House & Live Q+A Event

Below is an overview of engagement stats, feedback and findings collected as part of Elevate Devon and the recent Virtual Open House (held August 1st through August 15th) and Live Q+A Zoom Event on August 11th. Highlights include website interactions, FAQs, interactive poll results, and an overview of quotes and comments that were provided in a constructive manner.

7.2K

WEBSITE
VIEWS



710

VIRTUAL OPEN
HOUSE VISITS



3.7K

WEBSITE
VISITORS



480

SHARES ON
SOCIAL MEDIA



2.8K

COMMENT MAP
VISITS



229

OPEN HOUSE
POLL INPUTS



1.2K

TOTAL POLL
RESPONSES



245

WEBSITE
SUBSCRIBERS



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PART 1: Local Insights + Feedback

A sampling of constructive comments, sorted by topic area:

“My family and I have lived in the neighborhood and very close to Devon for 5 years. I am thrilled to see further investment in what I've always thought was an untapped opportunity for the neighborhood. Keep it up! Can't wait to learn more!”

- This group has done a fantastic presentation. Thank you for all the info.
- Thanks for explaining the trade-offs (speaking to sidewalks and bike lanes).
- Thank you very much for all of your thoughtfulness during this process.



Business Vitality

“Increasing pedestrian and bike safety is a huge way to bring in more customers to the businesses on this street. Most college students don’t have cars.”

- I would love to hear more about specific plans for attracting businesses to empty storefronts, especially "experiential" businesses like breweries, cafes, music venues, etc. Making Devon prettier will hopefully attract new businesses. It's kind of a chicken and egg thing!
- Business support would be accomplished by way of a nice environment, more so than events.
- Love the blade signage idea for businesses.
- What is the strategy for coordinating and encouraging real estate developers and business owners to invest? This is a street with many private owners and opportunities come and go so there needs to be a strategy for quick approval of zoning, TOD, and density issues so potential opportunities do not go for naught.
- Work with the businesses to attract a wider customer base. More restaurants, boutiques, retail. It's also a good idea to work with stores on their internet presence.
- Reducing commercial vacancy along the corridor should be a high priority.

Streetscape

“I'm excited to see these design concepts come to life. I'm especially looking forward to seeing more murals, outdoor dining options, and fun lighting along Devon.”

- I love all the work to make the street more lit, more spots to hang out and overall more accessible.
- Super exciting. Would be great to involve Loyola students too as well as students from all local schools in planning murals etc. super great.
- I especially like the native plants and pollinators. I love catching an eye of the rabbits which have made a home in the bushes at the bend onto Sheridan.
- Bringing humans back in contact with nature feels right.
- The bumpout spaces at intersections look good.
- I love the seating areas.
- We need more restaurant choices, outdoor cafe seating, and more trees on Devon. I walk to and from the P.O. often to Glenwood. It's always very hot and way too sunny.
- We need to be planting things that will thrive in the “climate of the future” not the “climate of now”.
- Parklets should be protected by bollards.
- Represent / integrate local Native American tribes, history, culture and neighborhood roots.

Safety + Circulation

“Make Devon a better place for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. This planning process has shown an unmet desire for de-prioritizing cars along Devon and making the corridor more people-friendly. I hope that this is reflected in the final plan and future improvements.”

- I'm all in favor of the brightly painted crosswalks (such as the recently installed decorative ones that RPBA put in place), as they create both a visual representation of the community and a heightened safety element to crosswalks.
- Patterned surfaces at the crosswalks also help drivers recognize pedestrians and bikes are there.
- Bump-outs or bike lanes need to take into consideration sightlines for motorists turning at intersections, as the moved parking areas can create obstructions in view and therefore safety issues (prime example being the intersection of Clark and Rosemont on the East side).
- Add signs for bike rules in traffic (re: signaling) and denoting it is illegal to ride bicycles on sidewalks and no one over 12 can ride bicycles on sidewalks. As someone who bikes occasionally, protected bike lanes are appreciated. I've repeatedly encountered bikers going the wrong way on streets, pedaling through 4-way stop intersections (or stop light intersections) without regard to motorists or pedestrians, and more.
- Striped lines are necessary for bike safety. I support painted crosswalks for pedestrian safety.
- Controlling side street parking on Devon cross-streets may be an issue as Devon parking is reduced to accommodate bumpouts and other pedestrian related areas.
- CDOT policy is [to locate bus stops at the] far-side of the intersection.
- Painted markings on the street are great and affordable.
- Bumpouts at intersections squeeze the unprotected cyclists in unpredictable ways.
- Getting passed by a bus is really scary on a bike on Devon. Would the amount of space a bus has to pass be the same? Is there any way to physically protect bikers at intersections?
- As someone who does not have a car, or plan to get one anytime soon, being bike safe and accessible is very important. I know there are nearby safe streets to bike on, but then we are going to other streets.

PART 2: Questions + Answers

A sampling of FAQs submitted via the website, open house, and zoom event:



Q: What does streetscape refer to?

A: Streetscape refers to the public rights of way associated with a roadway. This generally includes the roadway itself, sidewalks, parkways, and open spaces in between. By planning for and maximizing the value of public rights of way we can better support business access, vitality, and sense of place on Devon.

Q: What types of improvements can we expect to see?

This project includes planning for long term infrastructure improvements, such as enhancements to intersections, sidewalk connections, lighting, landscaping, and site furnishings. While these types of improvements can take many years to implement, the project also includes planning for near term projects such as public art, identity signage, support for outdoor dining, and seasonal plantings.

Q: Are these improvements being 100% funded by SSA #26?

A: No, but it is an important funding source that help support early action items and maintenance. Moving forward, the plan will be a tool through which local leaders, community partners and organizations – Edgewater Chamber, Rogers Park Business Alliance, Loyola University Chicago, Ald. Wards, and others -- can use to show community support for determining City and other resources for implementing projects and recommendations; re: infrastructure improvements that improve safety, walking, biking, and commuting. Grants are also available for art and installations that celebrate local culture and sustainability efforts.

Q: Will sustainability be a focus? I hope the plan considers the dual aesthetic and functional value of selected native prairie perennials...

A: Sustainability & eco-urbanism are definitely central themes of the project. Through online polls and events, locals have reiterated the importance of sustainability both in practice -- i.e. material selection, native flowers, pollinators, reuse, etc. -- and as a factor of local corridor identity – i.e. this is who we are. The balance of form, function and aesthetics will be of primary importance as we move forward with drafting recommendations and future implementation efforts.

Q: What will the public input be regarding the public pieces of art? It would be great to have a sense of cohesiveness to all the public art installations.

A: Great question and comment. The implementation plan will include recommended next steps to provide direction here. We anticipate these to include the formation of an “Devon Arts Committee” to help plan future murals and installations, and coordinate details regarding site selection, project type, materials, partners, and funding. Partnering with local organizations and talent will be a primary objective. Many organizations have expressed interest through this community process, including Girl Forward and the Chicago Industrial Arts & Design Center.

Q: What ideas or concepts have come forth for the Gateways to this District? How can these intersections be a real destination and celebrate the District?

A: Corridor gateways will feature different design recommendations based on their setting, location, and geometry - whether on the ground or building face. For example, a public art feature and underpass mural is proposed at Devon and Ravenswood; vertical gateway piers at key intersections, including Clark, Glenwood, and Broadway; pedestrian kiosks and wayfinding signage in areas of high foot traffic and bus stops; festoon lighting, stamped concrete, landscape accents, and public art on corners. Consistency and creativity in these tapas style elements will strengthen Devon as a unique destination. Community feedback was supportive of establishing and reinforcing creative identity *throughout* the corridor vs. large arches / gateway treatments at intersections, which were not favored as part of the placemaking poll. Ongoing coordination of improvements to Devon Avenue and Clark Street will be necessary to integrate and connect these neighborhood corridors.

Q: Why not take the opportunity to put the bike lanes next to the curb instead of next to parked cars?

A: Improving the safety and experience for cyclists and pedestrians on Devon is a primary focus and a balance of roadway dimensions and design. Given the community's desire for wider, more accessible sidewalks with space for seating, dining, patios, shade trees, and benches for commuters to sit – bike lanes are proposed in their current location with restriping and color treatments to enhance visibility. Raised and colored intersections and crosswalks are proposed to aid in traffic calming, slow the speed of cars, and strengthen cyclist/pedestrian safety. Shifting bike lanes curbside was discussed and explored as part of the Live Q+A Session on August 11th. Given roadway dimensions, if lanes were to shift curbside, the pedestrian enhancements and safety improvements listed above wouldn't be possible. As this is a planning level study, next steps will be further coordination and engineering with CDOT to finalize streetscape improvements.

Q: Has Chicago ever considered putting bike paths in the parkway between the sidewalk and the street. Obviously not for Devon where it's too narrow but maybe for Glenwood or other wide residential streets. In Berlin the bike paths are often part of the sidewalk, not the street. Often we have wide parkways between the sidewalk and the street curb.

A: To locate bike paths in parkways would, in most cases, require mature trees to be removed and would make the sidewalks too narrow for accessibility. If roadway widths are wide enough, protected bike lanes or raised bike paths are an option, which are elevated from street level to sit adjacent to the parkway. Given roadway dimensions on Devon, raised bike paths are not an option unless an entire parking lane were to be removed.

Q: I am curious about the desire for open seating -- the community is having serious issues with open seating areas being occupied by panhandlers and unhoused people.

A: Community feedback has been highly supportive of more seating and gathering areas -- and ensuring such is inclusive and accessible to make Devon a more vibrant, comfortable space for the whole community to enjoy. Community partners and Aldermen are working to help support the homeless community. North Side Housing and Supportive Services—a homeless shelter which has been operating in Rogers Park since 1984 – “is looking to open a 72-bed shelter at 7464 N. Clark St. The organization needs a special-use permit to open at the site, a former medical office. A shelter would expand the organization's capacity to help unhoused neighbors and get them out of a temporary and costly situation at a local motel.”
– Block Club Chicago Article

PART 3: Open House Polling Summary

Reflects 229 Inputs · Poll open for 2 weeks · August 1st through August 15th, 2022

Rank the following strategies to help support local businesses on Devon:

Weighted rankings closest to the value of 1 reflect highest ranked strategies.

RANK	CHOICE	WEIGHTED RANK
1	Increase foot traffic along Devon by adding bumpouts for outdoor seating, landscaping and public art	1.88
2	Provide funds for façade, landscaping and signage improvements to local businesses	2.57
3	Improve identity, branding and signage along Devon	3.25
4	Expand seating and dining spaces via temporary parklets	3.59
5	Market Devon through events, activities, profiles of local businesses	3.71

Rank the following features to improve design and amenities on Devon:

Weighted rankings closest to the value of 1 reflect highest ranked features.

RANK	CHOICE	WEIGHTED RANK
1	Crosswalk improvements to enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists	1.91
2	Bumpouts to expand areas for seating and landscaping	2.50
3	Public art such as murals, vertical sculpture, lighting elements, and crosswalk art	2.61
4	Sustainable landscaping (including native plants), recycled and locally sourced materials	2.98

Which identity concept resonated with you most?

Weighted rankings closest to the value of 1 reflect highest ranked concepts.

RANK	CHOICE	WEIGHTED RANK
1	Medallion Light Pole	2.38
2	Lotus Light Pole	2.80
3	Medallion Gateway Pier	3.13
4	Peacock Light Pole	3.29
5	Pixel Gateway Pier	3.41

Paraphrased feedback on identity:

- *I like them all; appreciate hyper-focus on community, people, culture, and stories.*
- *One vote for peacock; more for the strength of the colors and the overall shape.*
- *Medallion is great; unique/connective to branding on West Devon; picks-up on colors/motifs on North Clark.*
- *Balance bright colors with nature; natural palette.*
- *Nervous about branding Devon as Devon; has a national reputation to would compete with.*
- *Love all of the symbolism but concerned of cultural appropriation of Lotus.*
- *No preference selected; didn't like any of the options.*