

The following questions and comments were shared at the Jan. 11 Milwaukee Avenue Urban Identity Study community meeting or submitted via email to DPD.

Question	Answer
Who is the working group? Is it still possible to volunteer?	The list of the participants in the Working Group can be found on slide 12 of the presentation. We have sought for a balanced representation of citywide and area-specific perspectives for the Working Group participants. We have identified additional opportunities outside of the immediate working group for community input at all stages of this project and would welcome your participation. Please reach out to DPD@cityofchicago.com .
How were the overall boundaries established for this project? Why not go to North Avenue or Division? It seems that areas south of the project area are an important part of the corridor.	The initial request from all three Aldermen was for a study area from Western Avenue to Central Park Avenue. Since this study did require funding resources to be used, it was determined that the study boundary would remain within the TIF boundary. Additionally, extending the boundary further to the north or south would not be realistic within the project timeframe. This does not mean that there won't be future opportunities to study these areas, but for this project, we are focusing on the immediate boundary outlined in the initial request.
Will these be just optional "design guidelines"? Or something with more teeth like a form-based code?	This Special Character Overlay District and design guidelines will be part of the City's Zoning Ordinance. See slide #19 in the presentation materials to review the regulatory process of a SCOD. Please reference: 17-7-0600 Special character overlay districts generally of the Chicago Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Ordinance.
Are there going to be any funding sources for property owners who might want to rehab?	The guidelines will identify potential funding sources and incentives that could benefit local businesses and property owners for improvements.
Absent any new Landmarking, will downzoning be on the table to discourage demolition?	Zoning changes proposed for specific parcels will still need to go through City Council.

<p>How does proposing a special character overlay square with the city's desire to build more housing (indicated by them passing the ETOD)? Won't the additional time for approval and going through Landmarks make an already lengthy process even more of an obstacle to building homes, thereby prioritizing aesthetics over people's homes?</p>	<p>After City Council approval of a new overlay district, permit review will not go through Landmarks. The overlay district permit review would be done concurrently with other reviews needed to confirm zoning code compliance. The intent is not to increase permit review time process nor is it to limit development or growth of this corridor.</p>
<p>Thanks for the details on the process for this project! What kind of actionable outcomes are you expecting to come from this? I'm still unclear on what exactly the outcomes might end up being.</p>	<p>The expected deliverable will be a report that includes overlay district designation, design guidelines for historic and older architecture, rehabilitation and new construction, and focus area recommendations.</p>
<p>What can we do about the ineffective demolition 90-day stay on red and orange-rated buildings? Developers just wait it out and tear down the buildings anyway no matter what the community says.</p>	<p>Landmark designation is the best way to prevent the demolition of contributing historic buildings. It is also possible for City Council to amend the 90-Day Demolition Delay Ordinance. Sometimes, historic structures are partially retained via the Planned Development process (example: PD 1358 at 1980 N. Milwaukee)</p>
<p>How will this affect the Milwaukee Complete Street project, focus area 5?</p>	<p>This study will not focus on ongoing or approved public or private proposals.</p>
<p>Where will the first community meeting be? Is there a project hashtag to correspond with?</p>	<p>This was the first community meeting held, but the following community meeting will be held hopefully somewhere along the corridor. We will be reaching out to the Aldermen to find potential locations which we will share with the Working Group.</p>
<p>Can I ask how will this project will be funded?</p>	<p>This scope of work is being funded by the Fullerton/Milwaukee TIF.</p>
<p>How can we be sure that this project does not restrict or slow down the development of housing or the opening of new businesses?</p>	<p>Once City Council reviews and approves the Special Character Overlay District, permits will be reviewed by DPD per the design guidelines, and the review will happen at the staff level. We do not expect this to slow the process down.</p>
<p>Will this limit height or number of units for any developments on Milwaukee? I am for keeping the feel of the character, but want to make sure that we aren't limiting the ability to build more housing.</p>	<p>We do not have predeterminations of what the design guidelines will be. Through the project, we will study the existing character along Milwaukee Avenue and co-create design guidelines with the community based on our research. This project will identify 3-5 focus areas along the corridor and develop conceptual scenarios, but ultimately, zoning changes will need to continue to go through the current process.</p>

<p>Will the SCOD route as-of-right projects to an additional review process by DPD? For instance, would one-story commercial buildings be allowed in the overlay even if it is allowed by-right?</p>	<p>Yes. Any development within this overlay district would be included in the review process similar to the existing overlay districts we have now. Please reference: 17-7-0600 Special character overlay districts generally of the Chicago Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Ordinance.</p>
<p>Is there another neighborhood in the city that's going through a similar process?</p>	<p>This is the first Special Character Overlay District in Chicago that we will be developing design guidelines for! Character Overlay Districts are located along portions of Roscoe Street, Longwood Drive, Southport Avenue and within Norwood Park and Sheridan Park. However, they do not have design guidelines for rehabilitation or new construction development.</p>
<p>Doesn't it make sense to maintain the historic character of Milwaukee Avenue (size of buildings, windows, etc.) by keeping the present storefronts and improving them rather than tearing them down and losing this key characteristic?</p>	<p>The SCOD would not encourage the demolition of historic character buildings on Milwaukee. As part of the existing conditions study, buildings which contribute to the character of Milwaukee Avenue have been identified, and their rehabilitation will be encouraged in the SCOD design guidelines.</p>
<p>How exactly will the overlay zoning create more affordable housing?</p>	<p>We will be studying how to retain and encourage new affordable housing opportunities. Other tools can also be utilized for affordable housing, such as the TIF Rehab/Affordability Program or the Assessor's Program, which ties property tax relief to affordability.</p>
<p>What do the distinct 'Focus Areas' represent in terms of the goals of this project? Have each of these been identified as having a distinct character to be preserved?</p>	<p>Each potential focus area has been identified based on distinct character/sense of place that contributes to Milwaukee Avenue as a whole. Some also look at acting as a transitional zone between Landmark districts. Landmark districts themselves are excluded, but there's at least one focus area between Logan Square Boulevard District and the Milwaukee, Diversey, Kimball District that looks at preserving the historic character between those. Some potential focus areas have a significant number of vacant lots, but each potential focus area has its own reason as to why it's been identified.</p>
<p>Do you believe that the Milwaukee-adjacent Emmett St. monstrosity in any way whatsoever supports the overall LS community architectural aesthetic?</p>	<p>This development was not surveyed as it falls outside of the project study boundary.</p>
<p>Thank you all for working on this. Is there a specific budget that is being allocated for this great project?</p>	<p>Our budget for this contract to do this initiative is \$280,000.</p>

<p>It appears that high density is being painted in a somewhat negative light. I think developments like MiCa are vital to corridors like this. Does this SCOD intend to limit density/upzoning along the Milwaukee Avenue corridor? Considering how transit rich it is, how vital it the corridor is to the city, etc., doesn't it make sense to focus on limiting downzoning instead?</p>	<p>The SCOD is not meant to limit density, upzoning or downzoning, but is intended to enhance and preserve the unique physical character of properties within their boundaries through the creation of the overlay district designation, design guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and new construction and focus area recommendations. There will be an existing conditions report and market analysis which will be utilized to inform our team and support any future recommendations as part of this effort.</p>
<p>What steps are added from a developer for a development project in an overlay district?</p>	<p>The development will need to follow the design guidelines of the SCOD, which will then be reviewed in the permit review process by DPD.</p>
<p>What exactly does "red" and "orange" designate in the CHRS?</p>	<p>In the CHRS, "red" and "orange" are defined as the following: RED (RD) properties possess some architectural feature or historical association that made them potentially significant in the broader context of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois or the United States of America. About 300 properties are categorized as "Red" in the CHRS. ORANGE (OR) properties possess some architectural feature or historical association that made them potentially significant in the context of the surrounding community. About 9,600 properties are categorized as "Orange" in the CHRS.</p>
<p>Will you be meeting with representatives from the individual groups listed as stakeholders (such as Logan Square Preservation) for initial input? And if so, where?</p>	<p>Yes, we have been and will continue to meet with the project stakeholders during the four Working Group meetings throughout the project. We will also engage in key stakeholder meetings, which will help gain insight into specific issues or topics. The Working Group meetings will be a mix of virtual and in-person meetings, and the interviews will be held virtually.</p>
<p>What number or percentage of affordable housing will be built in these development?</p>	<p>Housing developments would be required to meet any affordable housing percentages as noted in the 2021 ARO Ordinance (reference: Chapter 2-44-085). In addition, this area could be designated a "Low Affordability Community" by the City Council in order to unlock a state incentive for at least 20% on-site affordability</p>
<p>What leverage will you have with regard to new construction and even renovation of buildings along the corridor? i.e. - Does it add additional review phases?</p>	<p>The design guidelines will provide tools, resources, and direction for renovations, redevelopment, and new construction along the corridor. Once a permit is submitted for a development, DPD will provide a permit review per the design guidelines, ensuring any proposed work is consistent with the guidelines. If the work is not consistent, certain elements can be appealed through an administrative adjustment through the Zoning Board of Appeals.</p>

<p>Would the new required design guidelines allow opportunities for low income housing or just keep rents rising? Can the overlay create a more equitable affordability requirement?</p>	<p>No change to the 2021 ARO Ordinance is proposed under this scope of work. The intent of a proposed overlay is to guide the design of future development, including for affordable or mixed-income projects. The final report will include market analysis, land use, zoning, affordable housing development and regulation recommendations as part of the scope of work. Please also note that the 2022 Connected Communities Ordinance encourages more affordable housing and housing opportunities near transit. Special Character Overlay Districts 17-7-0600 are intended to enhance and preserve the unique physical character of properties within their boundaries. Outside of the zoning overlay, there are opportunities to connect property owners to the Low Income Housing Trust Fund or other subsidies.</p>
<p>How does this designation affect longtime homeowners in the area? will it affect property value/property taxes?</p>	<p>There are limited correlations between Special Character Overlay District designations and property values, which are more directly influenced by multiple issues relating to market conditions within a neighborhood.</p>
<p>Can old dilapidated buildings be torn down and new ones built in their place following the new guidelines?</p>	<p>Yes. Any new construction development will need to follow the design guidelines. The SCOD does not require a demolition delay of existing buildings, unless a building is identified as "red" or "orange" rated in the CHRS.</p>
<p>Recent TOD's have justified ignoring scale of the corridor at Western and Milwaukee. Will this be used to push back on that trend, or will the TOD continue to override context?</p>	<p>The 2022 Connected Communities Ordinance increases housing opportunity, affordability and accessibility, especially near transit. The intent of the overlay design guidelines is to provide district-specific design guidelines that would consider the scale of the context.</p>
<p>Is the Milwaukee Avenue Corridor Plan being used as a reference and cautionary tale? Between Western and California, it was the result of a very thorough community process under Ald. Manny Flores with all adjacent stakeholders. It defined design guidelines and identified buildings to be protected. It was adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in 2008. Then subsequently completely disregarded by DPD under Ald. Moreno's tenure, including the inexcusable demolition of an Orange Landmark rated building. How will this be different? And how can you assure community stakeholders that this will not be another futile effort with no enforcement or tangible results?</p>	<p>The Milwaukee Avenue Corridor Plan is being reviewed in our research of previous planning documents for the corridor.</p>

<p>Could we establish sustainability performance requirements for both renovations and new construction?</p>	<p>It's an important point to consider, and we should be striving to make our communities more resilient. We should have a forward-looking document that positions this neighborhood in a way that grows and develops more sustainably. For Planned Developments (PDs), there are already requirements where you need to adhere to a sustainability policy. We can include these references in the guidelines.</p>
<p>Has there been any traffic study completed as part of this project? Or does it not apply?</p>	<p>This project aims to protect the character of the Milwaukee Avenue built environment. We will not be studying potential improvements within the roadway, and a traffic study will not be associated with this project.</p>
<p>Milwaukee Avenue is such a vibrant street known for walkability. Though one thing that the corridor lacks is affordable grocery options that residents can walk to. Are there any plans in the future recruit more grocers. Would the grocers fill existing buildings or target future development?</p>	<p>This project will not have an impact on future tenants.</p>
<p>What can be done to discourage demolition of historic buildings before this is put in place? One of the buildings pictured was the former Father & Son location, which has construction going on now.</p>	<p>Prevention of demolition is only possible through a Chicago Landmark designation. Please note that this planning effort will not focus on ongoing or approved public or private proposals.</p>
<p>Can the overlay district include a demolition surcharge to help fund affordable housing?</p>	<p>This suggestion will be considered by the planning and consultant team.</p>
<p>Will the guidelines be limited to properties on Milwaukee Ave, or could they also apply to adjacent stretches of intersecting avenues (California, Western, etc.)?</p>	<p>The design guidelines will be limited to properties within the project boundary. Our scope of work, which includes an existing conditions report and focus areas identified along the corridor, do include the review of important intersections and areas of adjacent interest which overlap. Although they may not be in Milwaukee Ave, they'll be important to the scale, view and adjacencies. We have taken a look at that and will be including things like that in our final report.</p>
<p>Will the guidelines of this SCOD focus exclusively on design, or will there also be some performance-based guidelines? For instance, can this overlay district require a certain amount of affordable housing/business spaces for new developments?</p>	<p>The design guidelines will exclusively focus on design and will be a unique combination of neighborhood characteristics that include pattern, form, scale, architectural features and materials that provide qualitative design measures. Any future housing development would need to meet the requirements of the 2021 Affordable Housing Ordinance.</p>

<p>Re: Meeting with group question... When in the process would you meet with groups?</p>	<p>Four working group meetings will be held at various stages of the process. The working group meetings are an opportunity to help inform the project team if the information is clear prior to the community meetings.</p>
<p>How will DPD prioritize racial equity in this process?</p>	<p>DPD, Wards 1, 32, 35, and our design consultants have coordinated efforts to include local, state and business officials, City of Chicago department representatives and community partners to form a diverse working group. A future Special Character Overlay District would be a tool which would be contingent on community input and City Council approval.</p>
<p>Will these guidelines impact any change in zoning of this corridor?</p>	<p>At the completion of the existing conditions study, the consultant team may make recommendations for changes to the zoning. Any recommendations will be presented to the community for feedback.</p>
<p>How will this project help the neighborhood? Is the focus economic or social?</p>	<p>A Special Character Overlay District is a zoning tool to protect a neighborhood's unique character and consider the relationship between place and architecture, including the area's demographics, culture and environment. A Special Character Overlay District can help achieve community-identified goals involving aesthetic character for the built environment.</p>
<p>Will in-person meetings include COVID mitigation strategies? Big unmasked meetings aren't accessible to lots of folks</p>	<p>The in-person meetings will follow City of Chicago and CDC guidelines. We will encourage the public to wear masks and bring supplies for those who wish to participate. We will discuss meeting recording options and post our presentation materials and the results of our workshop for those unable to attend.</p>
<p>Will this study include signage? Some beautiful buildings are ruined by gaudy signage, usually on the first level, which detracts from the look and feel of the streetscape.</p>	<p>The study will include signage. The existing conditions analysis has cataloged the type of signage at each building within the corridor and the design guidelines will include guidance on appropriate types of signage that are recommended for future developments.</p>
<p>Is the project focused primarily upon the architecture of Milwaukee Ave, or does it address the many other character-defining elements of the street, such as SIGNS, canopies, sidewalk width, trees...</p>	<p>The project will address characteristics of the public realm as well.</p>
<p>Will the city and its consultants be meeting with representatives for various city groups, Like Logan Square Preservation?</p>	<p>Yes, the working group includes various organizations such as Logan Square Preservation. Please refer to slide #12 of the community meeting #1 presentation posted to the project website for the full list of organizations we have reached out to.</p>

<p>Is the goal to provide suggestions to developers? Will the final product be guidelines only?</p>	<p>The expected deliverables would include design guidelines, overlay district designation materials, focus area recommendations. Please refer to slide #23 of the community meeting #1 presentation posted to the project website.</p>
<p>Will any of the results from this project make their way into the zoning codes? In other words, form-based restrictions and incentives.</p>	<p>Yes, the approval of this would be referenced in 17-7-0600 Special character overlay districts generally of the Chicago Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Ordinance</p>
<p>Would highly recommend reaching out/working with the Logan Square Chamber of Commerce and also joining the Logan Square Community Page group on Facebook.</p>	<p>Members of the Logan Square Chamber of Commerce are currently a part of our Working Group.</p>
<p>Will the deck be available afterwards?</p>	<p>Yes, the presentation materials and recording of the meeting can be found on the project website.</p>
<p>Milwaukee Ave. has traditionally been, as a diagonal street, a major thoroughfare. As changes are made, gridlock is being ignored. The lanes for motorized vehicles are narrower and, in many places, zig zag. The speed limit in places has been dropped to only 20 mph. CDOT appears to be more interested in the desires of well-organized special interest groups than the majority of those who travel on Milwaukee Ave. Bring back straight and wide lanes that can be shared by all users. Do not give any group exclusive use of lanes.</p>	<p>This project aims to protect the character of the Milwaukee Avenue built environment. We will not be studying the potential improvements within the roadway, and a traffic study will not be associated with this project. If we receive recommendations and comments, we will relay them to CDOT.</p>
<p>How many historic buildings have we already lost?</p>	<p>We don't have a definite number at the moment, but we can review this in more detail as we dig further into the existing conditions.</p>
<p>I'd love to see an overlay on the new construction slide of what each new construction project did in terms of sustainability and combating their carbon output.</p>	<p>We can look into this as we study the recent and ongoing developments within the corridor.</p>