



COOK COUNTY CONNECTIONS

Fall 2014 Volume 1 Number 3

Message from President Preckwinkle:



Nine months into our Long Range Transportation Plan, Cook County is at a crossroads: Do we continue the narrow focus of concentrating only on the roads and bridges under our jurisdiction, thereby diverting resources away from broad-based transportation investments? Or do we think more expansively, with an eye to the movement of people and product, growth and economic vitality?

Because we don't have a crystal ball to see the future, four scenarios have been developed that build on an approved Vision Statement and draft Goals and Objectives. These scenarios paint a picture of what our transportation and economic situation might look like in 25 years given different levels of funding and varying policies, programs and investments.

The first scenario – Running on Empty – represents what I inherited when taking office in 2010. The second – Stuck in First Gear –

reflects where things currently stand with some improvements in funding and a broader portfolio of transportation investments that takes into account demands of the private sector. The third and fourth scenarios are aspirational and are designed to test public interest in the different outcomes that each yields – knowing that the most far-reaching scenario, All Aboard, comes with a higher price tag.

I urge you to take the Connecting Cook County survey by clicking [here](#). Tell us what transportation improvements matter most to you. Then see how your priorities fare under each of the scenarios and score them. You can also provide input at one of our upcoming Open Houses in December (see accompanying article for schedule and locations). The decisions that Cook County makes at this critical juncture will have far-reaching consequences for residents and businesses well into the future. Public input is essential to development of our Long Range Transportation Plan. Help shape that future by sharing your perspective.

Learn more at www.connectingcookcounty.org.

Better Infrastructure Brings Economic Growth

The Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH) has targeted the Southland for strategic truck route improvements since many roads are in such dilapidated condition that they no longer meet the needs of area employers. DOTD is leading three economic development-projects in the south suburbs by securing financing, designing, and overseeing their construction. The Department is playing a pivotal role in a fourth project:

(1) Center Street, an \$11 million expansion and reconstruction of a County route. This improvement will increase capacity on this industrial truck route by providing turning and queuing lanes at key points along the corridor so that through traffic is not blocked. This improvement directly impacts businesses such as Fore Transportation, Allied Tube, UPS, Cleco Industrial Fasteners, Fuchs Lubricants, and Ryder Transportation.

(2) 151st Street, a \$1.55 million road reconstruction project, to support Sterling Lumber, which relocated from the Blue Island headquarters it had outgrown. Plans include investing \$15M in its new Phoenix, IL facility, retaining 112 employees and hiring 50 new employees. This company was listed as one of Crain's Chicago Business 2014 Fast Fifty firms in the Chicago metropolitan area.

(3) 156th and 157th Streets, a \$2 million street reconstruction and rehabilitation project in support of LB Steel, a Harvey manufacturer of steel products for the construction, mining and railroad industries. LB Steel employs 225 union workers in Harvey and a total of 450 employees across all of its facilities. The local roads are in poor condition and loaded trucks are at risk of tipping from the large potholes. As a result, the firm has had to pay a premium for truck shipments from this facility. LB Steel expects to add 65 new employees over the next three years and

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHWAYS

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Better Infrastructure Brings Economic Growth

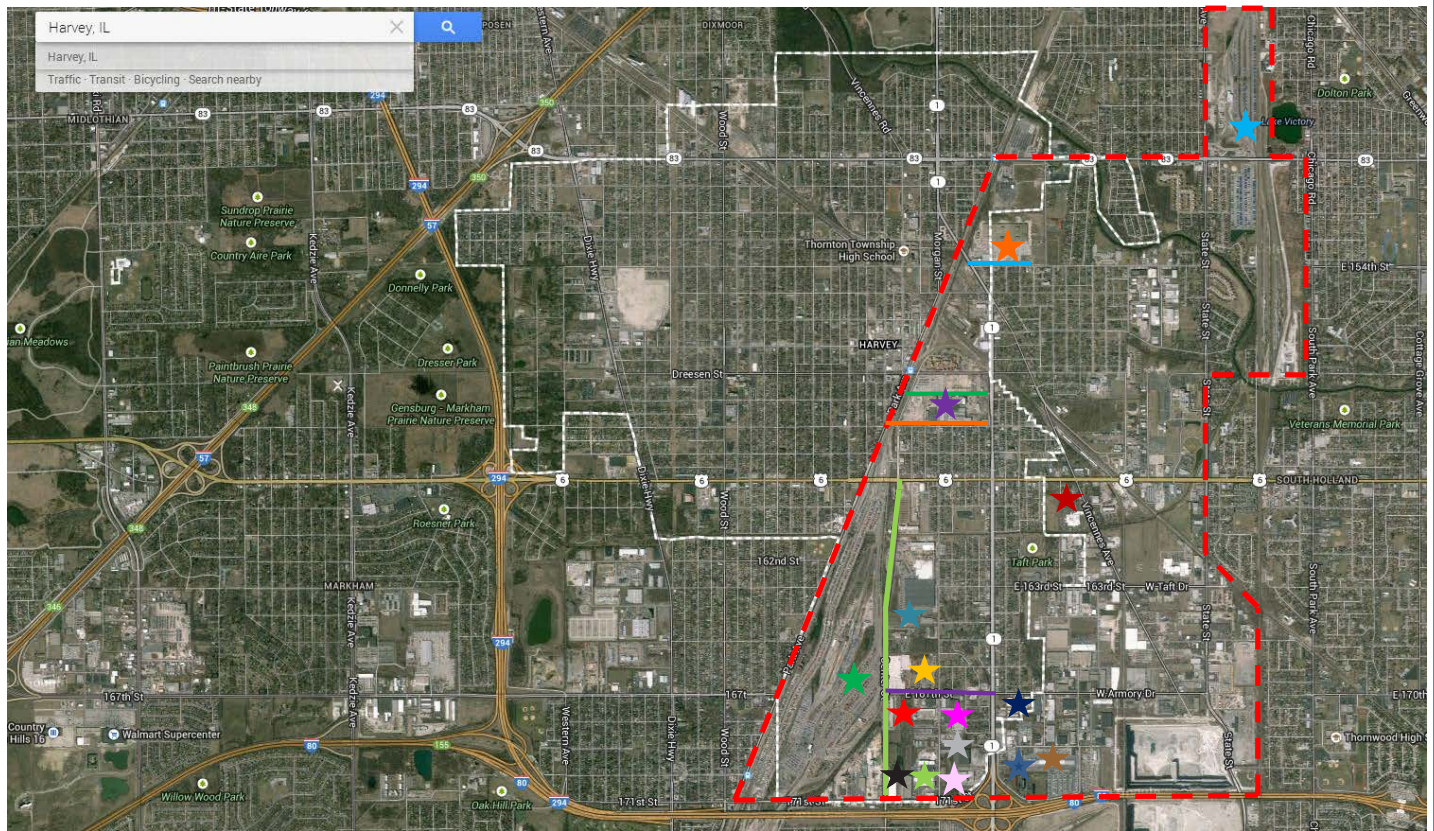
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has committed to staying in Harvey if infrastructure improvements can be made to allow them to operate safely and efficiently.

(4) 167th Street, DOTD has played a vital but supportive role to ensure the timely reconstruction of this local truck route that is at risk of being closed. This project is expected to cost \$5.6M and will bring this critical intermodal connector into excellent condition and up to modern commercial truck standards. DOTD will submit an application to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for funding that can serve as a match to a \$2M award already made by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Collectively, these routes represent a \$20 million investment to connect these and other area employers to the interstate highway system, the CN and UP terminals in Harvey and Dolton, and six industrial parks within a 10-mile radius. Ten key businesses in the area employ 1,170 people and expect to grow by 380 jobs. They will, in aggregate, make investments of \$62.3M in their facilities and have engaged with DOTD because of the critical need for infrastructure improvements that cannot be financed locally. The map shows the location of these improvements to each other and in relation to other key freight transportation facilities.

South Suburban Truck Route Investment Map



Legend: Region Boundaries, Truck Route Improvement Projects and Area Companies Benefiting from the Improvements

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|--|---------------------------------|--|---------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|------------------|--|---------------------|--|------------------|
| | Green TIME Zone Industrial Core | | Center Street | | 151 ST Street | | 156 th Street | | 157 th Street | | 167 th Street | | Allied Tube | | Fore Transportation | | Ryder Transportn |
| | Related Improvements | | CN RR | | Fuchs Lubricants | | Skyline Provisions | | Sterling Lumber | | Union Pacific RR | | UPS Facilities | | Cleco | | Knickerbocker |
| | Eagle Express | | LB Steel | | Litetronics | | Ed Miniati, LLC | | Skyline Provisions | | Sterling Lumber | | Union Pacific RR | | UPS Facilities | | |

MetroQuest Phase II Survey Underway

Thousands of you weighed in during Phase I, letting us know which transportation priorities mattered most. Now, a second phase of public engagement is underway and we once again seek your opinion: this time we want to know what transportation choice means to YOU. Please take our [new survey](#), ranking your priorities and providing input on potential long-range scenarios. Your feedback is critical as it will help shape the development of the Connecting Cook County plan, helping refine the County's transportation priorities.

The Phase II survey is currently available on the project [website](#) or at one of the following [mobile kiosks](#) locations near you until mid-December:

- Chicago Public Library-West Chicago Branch, 4856 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago
- Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State, Chicago
- Wright College, 4300 N. Narragansett, Chicago
- Winnetka-Northfield Library, 768 Oak Street, Winnetka
- Stroger Hospital, 1969 West Ogden Avenue, Chicago
- Lemont Public Library, 50 E. Wend Street, Lemont

Cook County wants to produce a plan that links transportation to jobs and economic development, supports more livable and sustainable communities and addresses infrastructure needs 25 years into the future. Help shape the plan by taking the survey and invite colleagues and friends to weigh in. Lend your voice to ensure a plan is developed that prioritizes improvements in areas important to you!



Connecting Cook County Goals and Objectives Build on the Vision

This past summer key civic, labor, transportation, business, urban planning and economic development experts – along with representatives of suburban councils of governments – provided valuable input that was used to develop a long-range transportation vision for Cook County. More recently, in September 2014, the [Advisory and Program Committee members](#) provided direction on the 2040 Connecting Cook County LRTP goals and objectives. The goals and objectives build on the [LRTP vision statement](#) and provide additional direction regarding future transportation and land use policies and projects for Cook County. Ultimately, the goals and objectives reflect and support the desired vision of the region which focuses on strengthening the County's multimodal transportation networks, including highways, roads, freight corridors, public transit, sidewalks, bike lanes and trails.

Over the next several months, the project team will continue to review input from committee members and the public, developing final LRTP goals and objectives, as well as a set of evaluation criteria that will be used to assess future year transportation improvements throughout Cook County. In early 2015, it is anticipated that partners and the public will again be asked to weigh in on a preferred scenario that best supports the overall LRTP vision, goals, and objectives.

Learn more about the draft LRTP Goals and Objectives developed in partnership with the Advisory and Program Committee. These Goals and Objectives may undergo further revision following additional input from the public.

Making Connections... Hitting the Streets continues

Throughout the summer, Cook County staff presented information about the Connecting Cook County project to audiences throughout the County. Last week, they were again on the road, presenting to groups in the south suburbs. Attendees heard how the plan aims to develop a broader vision and coherent strategy for transportation investments by tying them to greater economic growth and by making communities desirable places to live and work. They also learned where to go to provide input – critically important at this stage of the planning process so that the plan, as developed, responds to the needs of residents and business owners throughout the County, improving the movement of goods and people and identifying priority investments.

If your organization is interested in hosting a briefing session with your members, please sign up at info@connectingcookcounty.org or contact: tara.fifer@cookcountyil.gov.

CONNECTING



COOK COUNTY

Cook County Wants Your Input

**Learn about, and weigh in on the County's
Long Range Transportation Plan
Attend an upcoming Open House:**

Tuesday, Dec. 2 • 4-7pm

Franklin Park Police Station
Community Room
9451 W. Belmont
Franklin Park, IL 60131

Wednesday, Dec. 3 • 4-7pm

Northbrook Village Hall
Board Room
1225 Cedar Lane
Northbrook, IL 60062

Thursday, Dec. 4 • 4-7pm

Chaddick Institute (DePaul University)
14 E. Jackson
Dublin Room, 16th floor
Chicago, IL 60604

Tuesday, Dec. 9 • 4-7pm

Orland Park Civic Center
14750 Ravinia Avenue
Orland Park, IL 60462

Learn more about the project and
how you can provide input at

www.connectingcookcounty.org