



COOK COUNTY CONNECTIONS

Letter from President Preckwinkle:



The most recent phase of Connecting Cook County, our long range transportation planning process, asked you to tell us what transportation choice means to you and what kind of future you see for our region. Nearly 1,500 residents answered the call and urged us to embrace and improve upon the many forms of transportation that crisscross our region.

Past investments in transportation established the Chicagoland area as a national and international destination as well as a commercial center by cultivating travel and the shipment of goods utilizing water, rail, mass transit, air and expressways. By the 1950's, and with the growing popularity of the automobile, our Department of Transportation and Highways along with the rest of the nation started to focus almost exclusively on infrastructure that supported the

automobile. However, life in the 21st century demands we challenge longstanding notions and assumptions, and that we take a fresh look at how transportation supports communities and helps build and sustain their economies.

We are shaping a bold new vision that adds freight and public transportation policies and investments to a portfolio that already includes roads, bridges, sidewalks and bike paths. As part of this vision, Cook County commits to a new direction, one in which it strategically deploys the full scope of its staff and financial resources, policy decisions and partnerships to enhance its position as a desirable place to live and conduct business.

With your feedback, we have been able to move closer to a draft transportation plan for public review and discussion. I thank you for your opinions to date and ask that you stay involved with us — and once again answer our call when we unveil our draft plan.

Learn more at www.connectingcookcounty.org.

Survey says residents want more transportation choice, greater investment in infrastructure

Public outreach continues to be an important element in the development of the Cook County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. MetroQuest, an online community engagement platform, provides a unique opportunity to actively engage the public in Connecting Cook County, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) process.

Input received to date has helped guide the identification of transportation deficiencies and priorities. The Phase 2 MetroQuest survey focused on further defining what transportation choice means to Cook County residents and presented four alternative scenarios describing future year conditions in Cook County. From late August 2014 to mid-December 2014 nearly 1,500 individuals completed the survey on the LRTP website or on six kiosks that rotated monthly throughout the County. The number

of completed surveys spiked during early December when public open houses were held throughout Cook County.

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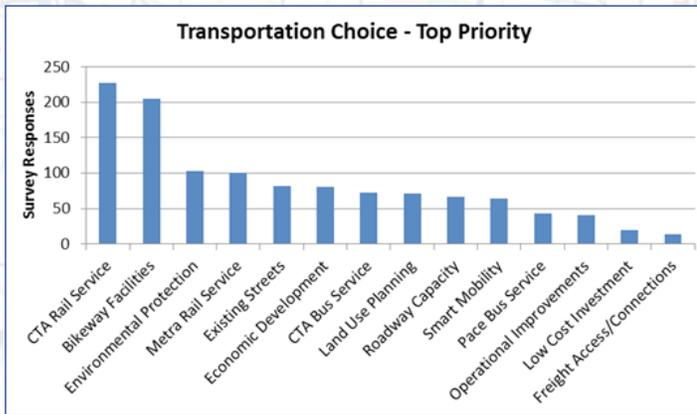


DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHWAYS

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Survey says... continued from page 1

As shown in the following chart, four of the top five choices highlighted as priorities by respondents focused on alternative transportation modes while the fifth focused on investing in the existing roadway infrastructure. One survey respondent commented, "We can't keep patching a public transit system that was designed and built in the 19th Century. It's a bad use of public money."



The four alternative scenarios detailed the likely outcomes of varying levels of transportation investments and land use policies. Survey respondents were asked to rank the scenarios from 1 (low approval) to 5 (highest approval). The All Aboard scenario was viewed by the majority of respondents as having the greatest impact on improving our regional transportation system (see graphic below). Respondents' support for the new revenue sources associated with this scenario are captured in this comment, "As a resident of this region, I am incredibly willing to pay higher taxes... if it will go towards the aggressive modernization of our transit system... This will not only make our region more attractive to outside investment, but also make my day-to-day commute and weekend exploring MUCH easier."



Taking the Plan on the Road

Last December, the Connecting Cook County project team conducted four Open Houses across Cook County to give members of the public a direct chance to comment on the plan. Thanks, in part, to good media coverage, hundreds of people came out to learn more about the planning initiative and provided critically important input to the team. Thanks to all who contributed — your input is helping shape a plan that will serve the County well into the future!



Public Open Houses

- Franklin Park
- Northbrook
- Chicago (downtown)
- Orland Park



Making Connections... Hitting the Streets

Presentations on Connecting Cook County continued over the winter with County staff updating audiences on new developments in the planning process. The Transportation, Freight, Regional Coordinating and Policy Committees of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning were all briefed, as were representatives of the Maritime Industry. Participants learned about the Goals and Objectives that have been developed by members of the Advisory and Program Committees. Attendees also received an overview of the four Alternative Scenarios — Running on Empty, Stuck in First Gear, Picking Up Steam and All Aboard — that were out for public comment and that described the various outcomes that can be expected given different levels of capital investment and a range of land use policies.

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

Goals and Objectives - establish priorities for **Connecting Cook County**

Over the past several months, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Advisory and Program Committee members have worked with the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways and the project team to develop goals and objectives for the 2040 Connecting Cook County LRTP. Committee members lent their expertise to establish well defined goals and objectives for the 2040 LRTP, knowing they will serve as a benchmark for all potential improvements and strategies. These goals and objectives synthesize the themes and priorities that were identified as important early in the planning process or which surfaced as public input from residents, business owners and stakeholders. Each goal is a far reaching statement of intent, representing a desired end state or outcome, while the corresponding objectives support each goal and provide more detail about how the goal will be achieved.

Goal statements read as follows:

- 1. Economic Opportunity** – Invest in transportation improvements that support the economic vitality of the County by fostering local and regional competitiveness, sustained productivity, and increased access to economic productivity for all of the County’s residents and businesses.
- 2. Accessibility and Reliability** – Increase the integration, connectivity, reliability, and physical accessibility of the transportation system by developing a comprehensive multimodal system that expands mobility options for all transportation users.
- 3. Safety** – Provide a safer transportation system that balances the travel needs of all users, including the general public and area businesses and industries.
- 4. Land Use** – Create a built environment that promotes healthy, sustainable communities through coordinated land use and transportation policies.
- 5. Environmental Stewardship** – Promote a sustainable future through a transportation system that protects, enhances and provides connections to natural, cultural, and historic resources in addition to more traditional destinations.
- 6. Implementation** – Advance a plan that preserves, maintains, and strategically operates existing transportation assets while investing in the expansion and diversification of critical transportation services and infrastructure.

Visit www.connectingcookcountygolangsandobjectives.org for the complete matrix of the goals and objectives developed for the 2040 Connecting Cook County LRTP.