

SECTION 10

Plan Implementation and Ongoing Management

Plan Implementation and Ongoing Management

The Will County 2030 Transportation Plan states a long-term vision for a multi-modal transportation system and establishes a common platform for decisions made by Will County and representative stakeholders regarding the development of the future transportation system. The plan establishes a prioritization for the county's capacity enhancements that is projected to be financially attainable. These priority projects along with the other transportation strategies can be implemented over time in relationship to development patterns. Will County's challenge is to be responsive to growth by enhancing mobility and yet maintain the goals and objectives of the County's Land Resource Management Plan. The transportation plan identifies the needed infrastructure and transportation strategies to support the projected growth of approximately 605,500 people and 274,100 jobs in Will County by 2030. The roadway improvements will address capacity, safety, and access issues. In addition, the projected growth will require a sustained commitment to maintain and expand transit service, pedestrian and bike facilities, and transportation policies that would provide a comprehensive and coordinated multi-modal transportation system that serves the differing needs of Will County residents.

10.1 Ongoing Management of Transportation Plan

Priority projects on the county system would be primarily funded by Will County. As a result, the County would focus on implementing these improvements to address the projected transportation needs. For the remaining roadway improvements contained in the Plan, the County would coordinate with state and local agencies to implement these projects as funding becomes available. The County would continue its ongoing process of evaluating projects annually to determine which projects should be incorporated in the County's 5-year transportation improvement plan. It is this process that will allow the County to identify priority projects in the short term by considering local development trends, implementation of regional improvements, and funding issues.

Similarly, the County would partner with the regional public transportation agencies on securing funding for and implementing the major capital projects recommended by this plan. Both Metra and Pace are planning an aggressive expansion of service in the county, and it is anticipated that a combination of federal, state, and regional resources will supply funding for these projects. The County, with local municipalities, has a role to play in this process by actively creating transit-related infrastructure in their communities (such as stations, shelters, and commuter parking). Such infrastructure, which can often be combined with roadway or other capital projects, supports the regional investment in public transportation and makes the public transportation system more convenient for Will County residents.

10.2 Future Planning Opportunities

10.2.1 Coordinated Planning

The implementation of the recommended transportation plan will require significant coordination from Will County and various agencies from planning through construction. Will County has developed a transportation plan that balances the County's goals and objectives and the projected needs given the significant growth in development over the planning horizon. The County's efforts in coordinating with local municipalities to manage transportation and land use issues will be a key success factor in developing a comprehensive transportation system. The County should continue to focus on the preservation and acquisition of right-of-way needed to implement transportation projects in the recommended transportation plan. As part of new developments, Will County should continue to coordinate with local municipalities and developers to incorporate collector roadways with sufficient connectivity to the existing roadway network.

It will be imperative for Will County to continue to coordinate with state and federal transportation agencies to coordinate roadway, transit, and non-motorized improvements. Capacity enhancements to major arterials and interstate facilities within the county will be needed to handle the projected growth in travel. The availability of both transit and non-motorized improvements will be important in providing alternative modes of transportation.

Many municipalities within Will County have completed plans that include the addition of collector roads. An efficient and continuous collector road network would benefit the county. The collectors would be effective in removing local traffic from the arterial roads, thereby providing for enhanced mobility on the arterials. Collector roads would provide safe access to abutting residential areas and would help control access onto the arterials. Also, the collector roads would provide an alternative route should an incident occur.

10.2.2 Transportation and Land Use

The 2020 Land Resource Management Plan is the framework for land use within Will County. This plan establishes forms, or categories of land use, with specific development goals and criteria. The plan emphasizes maintaining farming as a viable land use and also preserving open space by promoting higher residential densities. It is acknowledged that communities are beginning to implement new approaches to transportation planning, such as better coordination of land use and transportation; increasing the availability of high quality transit service; creating redundancy, resiliency, and connectivity within the transportation networks; and ensuring connectivity between pedestrian, bike, transit, and road facilities.

The CATS 2030 RTP recommends that special emphasis be placed on the land principles of TOD. The purpose of TOD is to build active and convenient communities that link people to jobs as well as to commercial, retail, and entertainment centers. The RTP encourages communities to embrace TOD principles to support existing transit service and to encourage transit investment.

10.2.3 Funding of Transportation Projects

The county's needs are funded from several major sources such as property tax, the SMFT, and federal subsidies. Additionally, the RTA levies a ¼ percent sales tax within the county

to support public transportation. Will County's recommended transportation plan has identified more needs than current revenues can support.

10.2.4 Context Sensitive Solutions

Implementation of the recommended transportation plan should be guided to a large extent by principles that are sensitive to the context of each project.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is among the most significant concepts to emerge in highway project planning, design, and construction in recent years. Also referred to as "Thinking Beyond the Pavement," CSS reflects the increasingly urgent need to consider highway projects as more than transportation. CSS recognizes that a highway or road itself, by the way it is integrated within the community, can have far-reaching impacts (positive and negative) beyond its traffic or transportation function. The term CSS refers to as much an approach or process as it does to an actual outcome. ¹

Context Sensitive Solutions asks questions first about the need and purpose of the transportation project, and then equally addresses safety, mobility, and the preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic, environmental, and other community values. Context Sensitive Solutions involves a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach in which citizens are part of the design team. ²

Inclusion of CSS principles in the Will County project development process will ensure stakeholder participation in the development of the transportation system. It will also assist in maintaining aesthetic and environmental values as land use changes occur in rapidly developing areas of the county.

10.3 Congestion Management

Traffic congestion and travel delay are among the most visible manifestations of an area's transportation problems. Drivers experience congestion for the most part as a personal annoyance, although traffic congestion is a problem that wastes time, consumes energy resources, and contributes to deficient air quality. Businesses are adversely affected by congestion if it discourages potential clients or customers or diminishes the reliability of goods shipments.

Typically, traffic congestion is confined to the morning and evening peak hours of travel, but a large proportion of daily travel normally occurs during these peak periods. Expanding the capacity of roadways is not the sole solution to congestion. Congestion also may be alleviated by actions taken to improve both the supply side and demand side of the transportation equation. These measures are referred to as Travel Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM).

The process of transportation management follows a similar course as the laws of supply and demand, which are applied in business management. TSM relates to improving the supply side of transportation through strategies such as building and widening roads or

¹ NCHRP Report 480, *A Guide to Best Practices for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions*, Transportation Research Board, 2002.

² FHWA, *Flexibility in Highway Design*, 1998.

improving signal timing. TDM is directed at increasing the passenger capacity of the transportation system by reducing the number of vehicles on the roads, particularly during peak travel periods. This is accomplished through a variety of strategies aimed at influencing mode choice, frequency of trips, trip length, and route traveled.

10.3.1 Travel Demand Management

TDM is not one action, but rather a set of actions or strategies, the goal of which is to encourage travelers to use alternatives to driving alone, especially at the most congested times of the day. The term TDM encompasses both alternative modes to driving alone and the techniques or strategies that encourage use of these modes.

The CATS 2030 Regional Transportation Plan supports the ongoing development and implementation of the region's congestion management plan, including TDM. Examples of TDM strategies that would reduce the demand for peak period, single occupant vehicle travel are as follows:

- Parking Management
- HOV Parking
- Rideshare Programs
- Employer Tax Incentives
- Flextime
- Telecommuting

The plan states the following:

These strategies are intended to better manage the demand placed on a fixed transportation supply. The strategies are aimed primarily at encouraging alternatives to traveling alone by auto with emphasis on more efficient travel planning with private vehicle use. The intended benefit is to contribute to reduced congestion and auto emissions. These strategies are typically voluntary in nature, and often rely on market-based or employer incentives to increase participation.

As indicated above, the success of any of these TDM strategies in reducing peak period traffic congestion will depend largely on the level of employer participation or encouragement. Rideshare programs, for example, may reasonably be expected to reduce vehicle trips by approximately 2 percent to 5 percent for a particular traffic generator, if given a moderate degree of outside support such as a larger employer.

TDM alternatives may also include "alternative work hours," program options that reduce the number of days commuters need to travel to and from work during peak times of the day. Some such programs are flexible work schedules, compressed workweek, and telecommuting.

The primary goal of most TDM programs is to reduce commute trips in a particular area and/or at a particular time of day. Program effectiveness varies widely by program type, by site, and by the TDM strategies chosen. In general, the success of a TDM program depends heavily on the extent to which individual employers support the program.

10.3.2 Transportation Management Associations

Over the next 25 years, the rate of job growth in the county is projected to increase sharply, with significant concentrations created near the SSA, around the Center Point Intermodal Facilities, and in expressway corridors (e.g., I-55, I-355). Coordinating transportation investments with the growth of employment has been the focus of numerous roadway projects.

Most of the existing public transportation system in the county is focused on transporting residents to and from jobs outside of the county (e.g., Chicago CBD). Yet as the county's employment base develops, often in areas difficult to access from the fixed public transportation system, innovative methods for meeting the transportation needs of employers and employees should be explored.

Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) have been created in many suburban employment areas to shuttle employees to and from jobs. A successful example of such a program in the Chicago region is the Lake-Cook TMA, where a group of employers in the Lake-Cook Road Corridor sponsor shuttles that transport employees, many of them reverse commuters living in Chicago, from a nearby Metra station.

This service has helped to support the corridor as a major employment center in the region, and should be regarded as a model for serving the transportation needs for developing employment centers in Will County that are difficult to access with the existing public transportation system. Assembling a TMA requires strong leadership and a solid knowledge of employer needs, a role which could potentially be taken on by an organization such as the Will County Center for Economic Development.

10.3.3 Transportation System Management

TSM is the concept of more efficiently using existing transportation systems by means other than large-scale construction. Just as TDM strategies are aimed at managing transportation *demand*, TSM strategies are directed at managing the transportation *system*. Some categories of actions that comprise TSM are as follows:

- Physical improvements to the roadways, intersections, and interchanges such as lane or shoulder widening, channelization, grade separation, and removal of restrictive segments that prevent full utilization of capacity
- Traffic control and surveillance systems
- Preferential or exclusive lanes for transit and/or HOVs
- Provisions for parking and loading
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Traffic calming

Existing TSM programs within Will County include traffic signal interconnection and the Tollway's I-Pass electronic toll system.

10.4 Effect of Land Use Policies on Transportation

A number of studies have shown a relationship between population density and per-capita auto travel, with less per-capita vehicle travel and more public transportation usage/pedestrian activity at higher densities.

In the interests of transportation efficacy and impact mitigation, land use patterns and site design features can be shaped to meet transportation objectives such as the following:³

- Reductions in VMT, pollutant emissions, and energy consumption
- Increased transit use and productivity
- Increased amount of pedestrian travel in activity centers

There is wide disparity as to the potential transportation effect that could be achieved by land use. One study reported that doubling population density would result in localized travel reduction from 5 percent to 10 percent. Yet another study concluded that doubling suburban density might produce 25 to 30 percent less VMT (per household or per capita) if urban transportation alternatives are provided (Holtzclaw, 1990 and 1994). Regardless of the magnitude of the effect, however, there is general consensus regarding the positive relationship between land use density and transportation.

10.4.1 Transit-Oriented Design

Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) is the design and development of land around transit stations and bus stops that encourage people to use public transportation.⁴ A TOD possesses elements such as pedestrian-friendly design, good transit service connecting the TOD to the region, and good land use mix, intensity, and activity.

The CATS 2030 RTP recommends that special emphasis be placed on the land principals of TOD. According to the RTP, the purpose of TOD is to build active and convenient communities that link people to jobs as well as to commercial, retail, and entertainment centers. The RTP encourages communities to embrace TOD principals to support existing transit service and to encourage transit investment.

The Will County Land Resource Management Plan also encourages land uses that foster transit usage in hamlets, towns and urban areas. The plan also specifically refers to encouraging TOD in its discussion of multi-family complexes.

Two communities in Will County have recently developed TOD plans as part of a regional planning program lead by the RTA:

- In University Park, the area around the existing Metra Electric station is primarily undeveloped land, and the plan recommends the creation of a new residential community oriented toward the train station.
- Similarly, New Lenox is planning for the creation of a new, mixed-use residential/commercial community around a new station on the Southwest Service line near Laraway Road. Currently, the station site is surrounded by agricultural land.

³Transit Cooperative Research Program [TCRP] Report 95, Transportation Research Board, Washington D.C., 2003.

⁴ NIPC, Transit Oriented Development, January 2001.

See Section 2.9 for more details on the above plans.

10.4.2 Historic Preservation

The Will County Land Resource Management Plan references the 1976 Will County Cultural and Historic Preservation Plan. This plan identifies the following key issues:

1. Promotion of an awareness of the need to maintain such intangible amenities as aesthetic quality, a sense of heritage, and important cultural traditions.
2. Outline of a proposed continuing preservation program appropriate for the needs of Will County.
3. Development of a “tool chest” of preservation techniques which may be utilized to implement established goals.
4. Advancement of recommendations for specific sites or activities in order to demonstrate the potential use and impact of preservation, where appropriate.

This program, which empowers the County to protect and enhance buildings, structures, objects, and sites (including landscapes and natural features) that have historic significance, is another important tool that should be retained and applied in the development of the recommended transportation plan.

10.5 Summary

The implementation of the recommended transportation plan requires an ongoing process of evaluating how future projects conform to the goals and objectives set forth in this plan. Several future planning opportunity strategies have been discussed that should be considered in the implementation of the plan. With the needs far exceeding the projected revenues, the County should examine methods to increase funding for transportation projects. An emphasis in the planning process has been the interaction of transportation planning and land use.