Policy Committee Update

The Cook DuPage Corridor Study has achieved significant progress since its inception. We went from gaining an understanding of corridor travel patterns and key mobility issues to applying this knowledge to identify potential transportation solutions that can make a real difference for reverse commuters and suburb to suburb commuters to major corridor employment centers. To date, we have held ten public meetings and numerous agency and committee meetings to gather input from our stakeholders on the potential development of three transportation system options.

Now the study has reached an important milestone. The Policy Committee unanimously agreed on a future transportation system to serve the more than 1 million residents and over 750,000 workers of the Cook DuPage Corridor. Our decision is preliminary and was subject to public comment during the month of March. After careful consideration of the public input, we will revisit or finalize our decision in May.

We expect to continue working with Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) as they begin the next phase, System Alternatives Analysis. In this phase, the recommended projects will be further refined and evaluated to narrow down the options and determine which alternatives are best. The Policy Committee will then make a final recommendation of a preferred transportation scenario to pursue for eventual construction.

This innovative planning process involving regional and local consensus speaks to the uniqueness of the area and the complexity of the travel challenges facing the Corridor.

Whether considering extending the Chicago Transit Authority’s Blue Line to Lombard or possibly enhancing parts of the Eisenhower Expressway or some combination of these ideas, we had to think “outside the box;” to conceive options that took into consideration the existing transportation system yet inspired new choices that would accommodate transportation needs far into the future.

As we continue the Cook DuPage Corridor Study, we encourage you to stay informed, involved and engaged in the process, as this is the most effective way for you to participate. We welcome your comments, ideas, concerns and questions.

With your help and continued participation, the RTA will be better equipped to implement change and enable construction of long-term, sustainable transportation solutions that will benefit the communities the Corridor serves.

Sincerely,

Paul Fichtner, Chair, Policy Committee for Cook DuPage Corridor Study and Board Member for DuPage County Board, District 1
Goals and Objectives

Conducting a study the magnitude of the Cook DuPage Corridor takes more than just identifying the problem and finding a solution. It takes thoughtful consideration of other transportation elements and issues that need to be resolved as part of an integrated set of strategies for the Corridor. To do that, several goals and objectives were drafted by the RTA and reviewed by the Policy, Technical and Citizen Advisory Committees. They were also unveiled to the public in a series of meetings to determine which were of greatest importance.

Input on issues of importance from elected officials, community and agency stakeholders, and the general public were compiled and synthesized to form mobility goals and objectives for the Cook DuPage Corridor. During the Options Feasibility phase, the goals and objectives have served as the strategic framework for the development and evaluation of the recommended set of transportation improvements.

Several goals were drafted by the RTA and reviewed by the Policy, Technical and Citizen Advisory Committees and unveiled to the public.

1. **Increase Availability and Efficiency of Transit for Reverse Commuters to Major Suburban Employment Centers**
   For reverse commuters, the goal seeks to increase transit access to existing and potential employment centers; to increase connectivity between employment centers and residential locations; to increase the opportunity to serve multiple travel markets and non-work trips; and to reduce the number of transfers.

2. **Increase Availability and Efficiency of Transit for Intersuburban Commuters to Major Suburban Employment Centers**
   For intersuburban commuters, the goal seeks to increase transit access to existing and potential employment centers; to increase connectivity between employment centers and residential locations; to increase the opportunity to serve multiple travel markets and non-work trips; and to reduce the number of transfers.

3. **Improve Roadway and Transit Service Quality in I-290 Travel Corridor**
   For both intersuburban and reverse commuters, the goal seeks to reduce travel times on I-290 (eastbound and westbound) for auto and transit users; to reduce travel times for multi-modal/multi-vehicle trips; and to improve the travel experience and safety of transportation system users.

4. **Increase Community and Corridor Benefits**
   The goal seeks to reduce adverse impacts on and promote positive benefits to existing communities, neighborhoods and people; to enhance economic development/redevelopment opportunities; to consider extent of and minimize adverse impacts of land acquisition; and to achieve Corridor Planning Standards that reflect shared local values and preferences.

5. **Increase Regional Benefits**
   The goal seeks to increase the use of and integration with regional transportation system; to ensure consistency with regional goals presented in the 2030 RTP and 2040 Regional Framework Plan; and to reduce negative impacts and increase access for disadvantaged communities and populations.

6. **Reduce Adverse Environmental Impacts**
   The goal seeks to ensure that all applicable air quality standards are met; to reduce operating noise and vibration levels; and to avoid and reduce adverse impacts to wetlands; floodplains, critical habitats, sensitive land uses, historic properties and open space.

7. **Increase Cost Effectiveness**
   The goal seeks to increase potential benefits, compatibility with and capacity of existing, local, state, and federal funding sources for both capital and operating costs; and to reduce construction costs and long term operating costs.
The Main Line System was identified as the transportation scenario that will best serve the mobility needs of the intersuburban and reverse commuters in Cook DuPage Corridor.

Key benefits of the Main Line System include: connectivity to all six employment centers; strong interface with CTA; and the Blue Line alternative in the I-290 corridor offers greater service reliability for reverse commuters.

There are a few potential disadvantages that would have to be addressed through further public dialogue and technical analysis, in particular the I-290 widening may require acquisition of additional right of way, primarily near Oak Park interchanges.

The Main Line System option will advance to the third and final phase, System Alternatives Analysis. In this phase, the Main Line System will undergo further analysis including computer modeling and additional public participation to increase the understanding of regional and local impacts.

Preliminary Recommendation

The Main Line System recommendation focuses investment in a central main line corridor in the vicinity of I-290 between west Cook and east DuPage counties. A bus rapid transit line at each end of the Main Line is further recommended for collection and distribution. The major projects included in the proposed Main Line System are:

- Elgin-O’Hare Expressway East Extension to O’Hare
- DuPage J Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Mid-City Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- I-355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Inner Circumferential Rail Line (from Midway to O’Hare)
- I-290 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes
- I-290 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Blue Line Extension to Yorktown

The total size of the Main Line System is approximately 112 to 132 linear miles.

The Policy Committee decision is considered preliminary until input from the public is fully considered. The Policy Committee will meet again in May to review the public comments and to make their final decision.
The complexity of the Main Line System recommendation requires the ongoing support, cooperation and coordination of many government agencies and local jurisdictions within Cook DuPage Corridor. Realizing this, the RTA developed a set of supporting recommendations that describe the local policies, investments, and strategies necessary to successfully implement the transportation improvements in the corridor:

**Policy Issues**
Examples of policy issues to be addressed include managed lanes, pricing policies, public/private partnerships, bus shoulder riding, local and regional transportation and land use integration, and creation of a seamless transportation system.

**Major Capital Investments**
Examples of planning, evaluation and design principles for future major capital investments include: determining potential impacts on the existing regional transportation system, local road network, regional air quality, environmental justice communities, and the social, cultural, and natural environment; undertaking community development and land use planning; and ensuring continued application of the Corridor Planning Standards.

**Smart Corridors**
Smart Corridors are key arterial roadways where information technology, intersection improvements and traffic management strategies will enhance travel flow for all users: auto, transit, commercial, and truck. Examples of these types of improvements are signal coordination, real time transit information, transit vehicle priority at traffic signals, intersection improvements and access control. The supporting recommendation is to prioritize the smart corridors, identify the specific treatments and improvements needed, and develop an implementation plan.

**Connector Services**
Connector Services are new north-south and east-west bus services with limited stops that provide an essential and basic grid of public transportation throughout the Cook DuPage Corridor. The supporting recommendation is to prioritize the connectors, establish service standards, and develop an implementation plan.

**Circulation and Distribution Services**
To provide safe and convenient access to work, transit users need transit, bicycle, and pedestrian systems within each of the six major employment centers in Cook DuPage Corridor. The supporting recommendation is to further develop and refine employment center distribution areas and service assumptions.

**Strategic Roadway Improvements**
Strategic Roadway Improvements are minor capital improvements (less than $100 million each) that will significantly enhance connectivity and relieve traffic bottlenecks for the existing roadway network.

The recommended strategic roadway improvements are:

1. Eola Rd - extend through Fermilab property to IL 38
2. IL 59 - widen to 3 lanes in each direction
3. Elgin O'Hare Expressway - extend one interchange west to County Farm Road
4. Fullerton Ave/Grand Ave - extend west to Main Street (Glen Ellyn) and east to Grand Ave
5. 22nd St - widen to 3 lanes in each direction
6. IL 83 (Kingery Hwy) - intersection improvement at Riverside Dr, widen to 3 lanes in each direction
7. Franklin Ave - improve interchange with Mannheim Rd
8. Wolf Rd - extend over Union Pacific Railroad Proviso Yard
9. 25th Ave - widen to 2 lanes in each direction
10. I-290 major rehabilitation - Mannheim Rd to Cicero Ave
11. Central Ave - extend over BNSF Cicero Yard
Public Comment

The Cook DuPage Corridor Study is being carried out in an open and cooperative process that actively engages the public, local officials and various stakeholders. Citizens were invited to take part in shaping the solution to the Corridor’s mobility issues, and to learn more about the transportation options that the Policy Committee finds most promising and why.

A public comment period was provided from March 1, 2008 through March 31, 2008 as RTA neared completion of the Options Feasibility phase of the Cook DuPage Corridor study. Public comment forms were distributed at five public meetings held March 10-18, 2008 and were available on line at: www.cookdupagecorridor.com/getting_involved.html.

Comments were also submitted in the following ways:

E-mail: lenskiw@rtachicago.org
US Mail: Regional Transportation Authority
Attn: Mr. Bill Lenski
175 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1550
Chicago, IL 60604
Telephone: (312) 913-3200
Fax: (312) 913-3206

Citizens were encouraged to download and utilize the official Public Comment Form, but other formats such as personal letters and e-mail were also accepted. All formal comments were due to the RTA by March 31, 2008. A total of 145 individuals and 8 organizations commented on the Cook DuPage Corridor Study. These comments will be reviewed by the Policy Committee prior to a final decision.
Next Steps

The RTA has made significant strides toward consensus on a future transportation scenario for the corridor through a number of project activities including in-depth discussions and committee meetings with local elected officials, business and community leaders, and government agencies responsible for transportation in the Cook DuPage Corridor and surrounding area. At the conclusion of the public comment period and after careful consideration of the public input, the Policy Committee will meet again in May to make a final decision on the transportation improvements that will advance to the next phase of study, System Alternatives Analysis.

This summer, in close coordination with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, affected transportation agencies, communities, and our corridor committees, the RTA anticipates initiating the System Alternatives Analysis phase of the Cook DuPage Corridor Study.

You can continue to stay informed by making sure you are receiving regular updates and information about the study. Visit the web site www.cookdupagecorridor.com or send an email with your name, mailing address, phone number and email address to Bill Lenski at lenskiw@rtachicago.org.

Stay Involved! Your voice is an important part of the future of the Cook DuPage Corridor.