Background

The Cook-DuPage Corridor covers a critical portion of the Chicago metropolitan area incorporating six counties. It is centered on the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) and the Ronald Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) and extends approximately 30 miles west from Cicero Avenue (IL50) in the city of Chicago to the Kane-DuPage county line.

The Corridor is comprised of approximately 300 square miles, spanning 51 suburban municipalities in Cook and DuPage counties and a small portion of the west side of Chicago. A growing number of people chose to work, live or both in the suburbs. This area now has a population of over 1.1 million and approximately 750,000 jobs. Consequently, 800,000 work trips begin or end in the Cook-DuPage Corridor daily, and an additional 65,000 commuters pass through it.

As the area comprising the Cook-DuPage Corridor continues to flourish, transportation congestion has created increased pressure on commuters, citizens, businesses, and the environment. In order to alleviate this pressure, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), has partnered with other state, regional and local transportation agencies, elected officials, business and community leaders to conduct the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study.

The Cook-DuPage Corridor Study aims to reach a consensus on the most effective and sustainable transportation solutions that can meet the needs of the Corridor. The study, comprised of three phases, began in August 2003. The first phase, the Travel Market Analysis, was completed in December 2005 and provided essential data and analysis of Corridor travel patterns as well as a comprehensive picture of demographics, transportation options, and key mobility issues in the study area.

The second phase, the Options Feasibility study, began in January 2006 and was completed in June 2008. This phase of the program developed and examined potential transportation improvement options that address the key mobility issues. The options evaluated include new transit services, adding managed lanes on highways, and improving signal coordination on arterial roadways, as examples. Also in this study phase, local officials established a set of Corridor Planning Standards - specific measures addressing safety, mobility, efficiency and local values. These standards reflect a set of objectives for future Corridor transportation investments to enhance community values and goals.

During the third phase, the Alternatives Analysis, the system option resulting from the Options Feasibility Phase will be submitted for very detailed analysis. Corridor municipalities and regional planning bodies will ultimately select a preferred alternative based on results from computer modeling and overall cost effectiveness. Concurrent with technical analysis, the RTA will assist local communities in planning transit-supportive land use and development policies, as well as identifying financial sources for major transportation investments.

In order to move forward through the phases of the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study, the RTA has established a Policy Committee, a Technical Committee and a Citizens Advisory Committee to provide leadership, expertise and insight into the diverse interests within the Corridor. These committees, combined with public input via the Public Involvement Plan and public meetings, aim to facilitate a successful planning process and resulting transportation improvements that will benefit generations to come.