Executive Summary

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) are undertaking a multimodal corridor level planning effort, centered on the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) and the East-West Tollway (I-88), known as the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study. The goal of this study is to identify the most effective and desired transportation solutions to improve mobility in this heavily-traveled portion of our region.

Consistent with the joint study approach set forth in the Program Management Plan, three successive, inter-dependent phases comprise the Cook-DuPage Corridor Study. They include:

1. Travel Market Analysis – assessing the nature, magnitude and need for corridor mobility improvement.
2. Options and Feasibility – examining a broad range of potential improvement options.
3. Alternatives Analysis – refining and evaluating the cost, benefit and impact of alternative major transportation investments.

The Travel Market Analysis report presents a comprehensive examination of travel patterns and mobility trends affecting the corridor. In Sections 2 through 4 of the report, key travel patterns are analyzed from a user-based perspective. Specifically, trips of similar purpose, direction and endpoints are grouped into nine predominant “travel markets.” In Section 5, the corridor’s primary travel markets are compared to existing services and facilities using both quantitative and qualitative measures. Section 6 concludes with an analysis of the fitness of the corridor’s surface transportation system – to illuminate where and why mobility improvements are most in need.

The Cook-DuPage Corridor generates a significant share of the region’s travel and its transportation system provides key linkages between DuPage County, the western communities of Cook County and the city of Chicago. Additionally, the 51 corridor municipalities include a number of major activity centers that attract workers from throughout northeastern Illinois.

Not counting pass-through trips, the Corridor’s existing highway and transit network—substantially unchanged over four decades—bears nearly 4 million trips per day. However, since 1970, corridor population has increased by 20% to 1.1 million in 2000 and employment has doubled to nearly 750,000 over the same period. With sustained population and economic expansions underway in western DuPage, Kane and Will counties, the Corridor’s important transportation role at the region’s center will likely continue. Regional and national trends, including the continued increase in dual-income households, the rise of the service sector and the decline in manufacturing are additional factors influencing Corridor travel.
The Corridor’s existing transportation infrastructure is extensive. The area is served by four key interstate facilities and a grid-pattern principal arterial system. Transit service includes three CTA Rapid Transit Lines, three Metra Commuter Rail Lines and over 100 Bus Routes operated by Pace and the CTA.

The most significant travel patterns compiled from the U.S. Census’ 2000 Journey-to-Work data are depicted in the following figure:

**Cook–DuPage Corridor Travel Markets**

Each of these travel patterns constitutes a unique, Corridor-level travel market. These travel markets vary in size, geography and mobility. Together, they comprise over one million daily work trips that largely occur during the morning and evening peak periods.

The Cook-DuPage *Traditional Commute* consists of work trips that originate in the western suburbs of Cook, DuPage and Kane counties and are collectively destined for the City of Chicago. It also includes significant travel that occurs entirely within the City of Chicago. This historical travel pattern is the single largest travel market affecting the corridor with over 426,000 daily trips to and from work.

The Cook-DuPage *Reverse Commute* comprises trips that originate east of Cicero Avenue in the City of Chicago and are destined for outlying areas of the city and the west suburbs of Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. The reverse commute is the second largest single travel pattern affecting the corridor with over 246,000 daily work trips.

The inter-suburban *Central DuPage* travel market is comprised of work trips that originate west of IL 53 in DuPage, Kane and northwestern Will counties, and are destined for east-central DuPage, including the Oak Brook major employment center. This travel market accounts for about 69,000 work trips each day.
The inter-suburban South Central Cook travel market originates in Cook County east of the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and south of the Metra Union Pacific-West Line. This travel market is destined for workplaces in east central DuPage County, and represents over 26,000 daily work trips.

The East Central DuPage travel market generates bi-directional north-south travel within the eastern two-thirds of DuPage County, as well as in northern Cook county and northwest Will county. Many of these trips are destined for the Oak Brook activity center. This is the largest inter-suburban travel market, with a total of over 113,000 daily work trips.

The Far West DuPage travel market originates in the western two-thirds of DuPage County and in northwest Will County. The destination of this travel market is west central DuPage and consists of over 34,000 daily work trips.

The North DuPage travel market includes trips originating in central and northern Kane County, far northwest Cook and northern DuPage counties with destinations in northern DuPage – which attracts over 52,000 work trips per day.

The North Central Cook travel market generates over 12,000 daily work trips from the far west and northwest sides of Chicago and the near-west suburbs of Cook county that are destined for suburban communities located south/southeast of O’Hare International Airport.

The West Central Cook travel market consists of north-south travel in Cook County that takes place between Mannheim Road and Cicero Avenue. This travel market consists of nearly 48,000 daily work trips.

Based on a detailed analysis of these nine travel patterns and the transportation facilities available to each, the most evident mobility needs for the Cook-DuPage Corridor are:

- Access by transit to major employment centers in DuPage and west Cook;
- Service quality of I-290;
- Service quality of bus transit in terms of efficiency and convenience, especially for trips in Cook County requiring connecting CTA and Pace services;
- Service quality of arterials.

The frequency of transit service, travel times, differences in service by time of day, service coverage, and accessibility for each travel pattern were examined.

Transit is well optimized for the majority of traditional commute trips since these trips correspond to the historical Suburbs-to-Chicago journey to work. However, for the more recent Intersuburban and Reverse Commute trip patterns, a different picture emerges. The following major employment destinations are unreachable by transit for many residents of the Corridor and the city of Chicago: 1) Ferry Road, Warrenville Road, Diehl Road and Butterfield Road, from IL 59 in to IL 53, in Warrenville, Naperville and Lisle; 2) 22nd Street/Butterfield Road between Yorktown in Lombard and Oak Brook, 3) between North Avenue and Lake Street, in
Addison and Elmhurst, 4) the Thorndale Avenue Corridor in Wood Dale and Itasca, 5) along IL 53/I-355/I-290 Extension in Schaumburg and 6) Loyola University Medical Center/Hines VA Hospital in Maywood.

While CTA and Pace bus coverage within central Cook County is generally high for many travelers, the utility of this transit option is diminished by operating boundaries, service frequencies and inconvenient schedules. In addition, several key north-south CTA routes are segmented, requiring one or two transfers in the same direction despite a single provider.

Performance of the highway network has been similarly impacted by shifts in corridor commuting patterns over time. Persistent congestion on I-290 in both directions impedes pass-through traffic and a number of corridor travel markets. Congestion on I-290 further degrades vehicle travel including bus transit on arterials that are used as an alternative to I-290 during peak periods. Also, closely spaced traffic signals and stop signs on key arterials prevail in the denser Chicago and central Cook County sections of the corridor. This intensely urban landscape which includes on-street parking, congested cross-streets and numerous curb-cuts combine to cause high travel times for bus, automobile and commercial traffic during peak travel periods. Similarly, at-grade rail/highway crossings and conflicting signal timings contribute to poor traffic flow on arterials in the Cook County portions of the corridor. Travel in the DuPage County sections of the corridor is restricted by high traffic volumes and discontinuous north-south arterials.

The Cook-DuPage Corridor’s transportation system is extensive—as are its growing mobility needs and proposed solutions. Of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan’s 48 major capital projects, 11 aim to address mobility improvements in the Cook-DuPage Corridor. Our region’s challenge is to accurately assess the most pressing mobility problems, to thoroughly examine the ideas along with a range of other potentially effective alternatives; and to propose the best solution or set of solutions.

This very important work will be undertaken in the remaining two phases of study: Options Feasibility and a formal Alternatives Analysis. In this way, Corridor communities anticipating major transportation investments will have the opportunity to explore a wide range of transportation options in partnership with the project implementers.