Corridor Planning Standards Overview

Corridor Planning Standards provide a whole new kind of local participation in the planning process for major new transportation system improvements. Corridor Planning Standards is something new to our region and is akin to context sensitivity in the planning rather than design phase of project development. Downers Grove is providing local leadership for this effort and Mr. David Barber is the Chair of the Corridor Planning Standards Working Group and Director of Public Works for the Village of Downers Grove.

The 52 communities in the Cook-DuPage Corridor share much in common, but are not the same. There are striking differences in community characteristics, local economies, and citizen values. Yet all of the communities in the Corridor are physically interwoven and connected by one thing – the transportation system. Communities in the Cook-DuPage Corridor are affected by both the travel patterns and the transportation system and anything new that gets built or added to the system. Transportation should be an asset for local communities and they need to be aware early in the process of all of the impacts of transportation. The potential impacts go far beyond mobility and so it is important to learn as much about the communities as we do about the travel patterns and transportation system. Continuous participation of a broad base of local leaders is required to develop meaningful and sustainable Corridor Planning Standards.

Some of the key issues for communities as they face choices and decisions about potential expansion of the transportation system in their area are: 1) resources and knowledge to participate effectively in the planning and decision making process, 2) enhancing community vitality and economic development, 3) selecting appropriate transportation solutions, 4) preserving and enhancing quality of life, and 5) understanding local mobility needs.

Since February 2006, corridor communities have been working together to establish their own collective vision, goals, values and preferences for the corridor transportation system and its integration with their towns. Key issues and local values were established using a variety of techniques and activities, such as a survey of mayors and presidents, U.S. Census research, a workshop with planners and other professionals representing a broad cross-section of Corridor communities and meetings with local leaders. Input from these activities provided the foundation for development of Corridor Planning Standards by the Planning Standards Working Group.

Corridor Planning Standards will be used along with traditional technical criteria to evaluate transportation system options in the current Options Feasibility Study; and are referenced in Goal 4 Objective 4 of the Goals and Objectives for corridor mobility improvements. Corridor Planning Standards will help ensure potential transportation solutions enhance community vitality, local character and values; and will provide a valuable framework for transportation investment decisions that will be made by the Policy Committee in early 2007. Corridor Planning Standards will help increase local awareness of the effects of transportation options before these decisions are made.