Environmental Considerations

Reduction of adverse environmental impacts is one of seven goals for mobility improvements in the Cook DuPage Corridor. All major capital investments identified in each of the eleven options that are currently under consideration for the Cook-DuPage Corridor are located within existing transportation corridors. While it is not anticipated that the options will significantly change the existing urban nature of these corridors or the general characteristics of the communities they traverse, understanding and awareness of potential environmental issues associated with major transportation investments, is an important part of metropolitan planning and project development.

Major capital investments resulting from the Cook DuPage Corridor Options Feasibility Study that are recommended to proceed to more detailed study will be subject to detailed environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This would occur as part of a federal Alternatives Analysis for transit projects that are considered for funding under the Federal Transit Administration’s New Starts program, or as part of Phase I engineering for highway projects. At that time, study of site-specific resource locations would be conducted to identify the magnitude of impacts and the feasibility of avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation of negative environmental impacts. Additionally, major capital investments that are forwarded for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan (a prerequisite for federal funding) or included in the region’s Transportation Improvement Program will be subject to regional air quality conformity analysis.

At this stage of planning through the Cook DuPage Corridor Study process, the focus is on developing a desirable set of projects within a regional system framework that meet local and regional mobility goals. While alignments and modes for various options have been proposed, conceptual engineering designs including plan and profile, typical cross-sections and location with respect to right-of-way have not.

To consider potential environmental issues in the decision making process at the current concept level of project definition, existing and available data was obtained on the location of important natural and historic resources along the proposed alignments. Potentially affected resources are described qualitatively in this Options Feasibility study based solely on proximity (100 foot buffer from planning level centerline) to the currently assumed alignment of the major capital projects. The occurrence, type and severity of impacts can not be determined at the current stage. The geographic-based ‘corridor analysis’ approach is consistent with the level of evaluation appropriate for the scope and intent of this Options Feasibility Study.

Data collection included review of secondary source materials and available mapping for the following resources:

- Floodplains - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Q3 digital floodplain 1996 data
- Wetlands - Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) wetland 1996 data
- National Historic Landmarks - National Park Service (NPS) National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), 2007
- Parklands / Open Space - NIPC 2001 Land Use data
- Sensitive Receptors (Churches / Schools) – United States Geological Survey (USGS), Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) 2006 data
- Sensitive Receptors (Hospitals) – Health Forum, L.L.C., ESRI 2006 data

This data represents known important resources occurring in the study area, and identifies features of potential concern that may warrant protection, require resource agency coordination, and/or that may offer opportunity for mitigation of environmental impacts to be analyzed in future phases of study. A summary of the environmental consideration for each option is provided below.

**Main Line System Option 1** Approximately 10 acres of wetland and 37 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the five major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the DuPage J line. The wetland acreage is located in the Ned Brown Preserve (Busse Lake) along I-290/IL 53 portion of the route, Salt Creek along the Thorndale Avenue portion, and the West Branch of the DuPage River along the Diehl Road portion. Floodplain acreage includes the Busse Lake area in the Ned Brown Preserve (I-290/IL 53), Salt Creek (Thorndale Avenue and IL 83), East Branch of the DuPage River (I-88), West Branch of the DuPage River (Diehl Road) and various locations along the IL 59 portion of the alignment.

There is approximately 80 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the five major capital projects. Again, it appears that the majority of the open space/parkland is attributable to the DuPage J Line. The specific locations are along the I-290/IL 53, IL 83 and I-88 portions of the alignment including the Ned Brown Preserve, Cricket Creek Forest Preserve, Morton Arboretum and McDowell Grove Forest Preserve.

Three national historic landmarks, five churches, and four schools fall within 100 feet of either side of the five major capital projects. The national landmark sites are attributable to the I-290 HOV / I-290 BRT in the Eisenhower Expressway corridor. One of the landmarks is the portion of the Gunderson Historic District located north of I-290 in Oak Park, and the others are Columbus Park in Chicago and the Oak Park Conservatory.

**Main Line System Option 2** Approximately eight acres of wetland and 37 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the four major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the DuPage J line. The wetland acreage is located in the Ned Brown Preserve along the I-290/IL 53 portion of the DuPage J. Floodplain acreage includes the Busse Lake area in the Ned Brown Preserve (I-290/IL 53), Salt Creek (Thorndale Avenue and IL 83), East Branch of the DuPage River (I-88), West Branch of the DuPage River (Diehl Road) and various locations along the IL 59 portion of the alignment.
There is approximately 66 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the four major capital projects. Again, it appears that the majority of the open space/parkland is attributable to the DuPage J Line. The specific locations are along the I-290/IL 53, IL 83, I-88 and Diehl Road portions of the alignment including the Ned Brown Preserve, Cricket Creek Forest Preserve, Morton Arboretum and McDowell Grove Forest Preserve.

There are no national historic landmarks that fall within the 100 foot buffer of any of the major capital projects. However, there are three churches and three schools located in close proximity to this option.

**Main Line System Option 3** Approximately eight acres of wetland and 37 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the four major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the DuPage J line. The wetland acreage is located in the Ned Brown Preserve along the I-290/IL 53 portion of the DuPage J. Floodplain acreage includes the Busse Lake area in the Ned Brown Preserve (I-290/IL 53), Salt Creek (Thorndale Avenue and IL 83), East Branch of the DuPage River (I-88), West Branch of the DuPage River (I-88) and various locations along the IL 59 portion of the alignment.

There is approximately 81 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the four major capital projects. Again, it appears that the majority of the open space/parkland is attributable to the DuPage J Line. The specific locations are along the I-290/IL 53, IL 83, I-88 and Diehl Road portions of the alignment including the Ned Brown Preserve, Cricket Creek Forest Preserve, Morton Arboretum and McDowell Grove Forest Preserve.

Three national historic landmarks, six churches and three schools fall within 100 feet of either side of the four major capital projects. The historic landmarks are attributable to the Union Pacific Intersuburban Plus. Two of the sites are historic districts that straddle the railroad including the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District in Oak Park and River Forest Historic District in neighboring River Forest. The other is the former Maywood Fire Department building located at St. Charles Road and 5th Avenue in Maywood.

**Main Line System Option 4** Approximately eight acres of wetland and 37 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the six major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the DuPage J line. The wetland acreage is located in the Ned Brown Preserve along the I-290/IL 53 portion of the DuPage J. Floodplain acreage includes the Busse Lake area in the Ned Brown Preserve (I-290/IL 53), Salt Creek (Thorndale Avenue and IL 83), East Branch of the DuPage River (I-88), West Branch of the DuPage River (Diehl Road) and various locations along the IL 59 portion of the alignment.

There is approximately 68 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the six major capital projects. Again, it appears that the majority of the open space/parkland is attributable to the DuPage J Line. The specific locations are along the I-290/IL 53, IL 83, I-88 and Diehl Road portions of the alignment including the
Ned Brown Preserve, Cricket Creek Forest Preserve, Morton Arboretum and McDowell Grove Forest Preserve.

There are no national historic landmarks that fall within the 100 foot buffer of any of the major capital projects. However, there are three churches and three schools located in close proximity to this option.

**Main Line System Option 5** Approximately eight acres of wetland and 40 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the four major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the DuPage J line. The wetland acreage is located in the Ned Brown Preserve along the I-290/IL 53 portion of the DuPage J. Floodplain acreage includes the Busse Lake area in the Ned Brown Preserve (I-290/IL 53), Salt Creek (Thorndale Avenue and IL 83), East Branch of the DuPage River (I-88), West Branch of the DuPage River (Diehl Road) and various locations along the IL 59 portion of the alignment.

There is approximately 103 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the four major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the open space/parkland is attributable to the DuPage J Line and the Cermak Road BRT. The specific locations involving the DuPage J are along the I-290/IL 53, IL 83, I-88 and Diehl Road portions of the alignment including the Ned Brown Preserve, Cricket Creek Forest Preserve, Morton Arboretum and McDowell Grove Forest Preserve. Locations attributable to the Cermak Road BRT include Millers Meadows and Westchester Woods.

There are no national historic landmarks that fall within the 100 foot buffer of any of the major capital projects. However, there are three churches and two schools located in close proximity to this option.

**Concentric System Option 1** Approximately 72 acres of wetland and 63 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the eleven major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the I-355/I-290 BRT + HOV with additional acreage attributable to the 1st Avenue BRT. The wetland and floodplain acreage is located in some of the same areas: Busse Lake/Ned Brown Preserve adjacent to I-290/IL 53, Churchill Woods Forest Preserve / East Branch of the DuPage River adjacent to I-355, and McDowell Woods Forest Preserve / West Branch of the DuPage River adjacent to Diehl Road. Floodplain acreage also includes the Salt Creek area at I-290 and Kingery Highway attributable to the IL 83 BRT and the East Branch of the DuPage River near IL 53 and I-88 in Lisle.

There is approximately 155 acres of open space and parklands that fall with 100 feet of either side of the eleven major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the open space is attributable to the 1st Avenue BRT, I-355/I-290 BRT+HOT and the I-290/I-88 BRT+HOT. The parkland and opens space acreage includes: Schiller Woods, Fullerton Woods, Thatcher Woods, Millers Meadows and McCormick Woods of the Cook County Forest Preserve along 1st Avenue, Ned Brown Preserve adjacent to I-290/IL 53 and the Morton Arboretum adjacent to I-88. Seven national historic landmarks, six churches, and three schools fall within 100 feet of either side of the major capital projects. The
national landmark sites are attributable to the I-290 portion of relevant BRT/HOV projects, the 1st Avenue BRT and the IL 83 BRT. Specific locations include (1) the portion of the Gunderson Historic District located north of I-290 in Oak Park, (2) Oak Park Conservatory, (3) Riverside Landscape Architecture District bordering 1st Avenue in Riverside, (4) two private residences on 1st Avenue in Maywood, (5) Columbus Park adjacent to I-290 in Chicago and (6) Peabody Estate in the Mayslake Forest Preserve located adjacent to IL 83 in Oak Brook.

Concentric System Option 2 Approximately 62 acres of wetland and 58 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the seven major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the I-355/I-290 BRT + HOV. The specific locations of the wetland acreage are Ned Brown Preserve adjacent to I-290/IL 53 and Churchill Woods Forest Preserve / East Branch of the DuPage River adjacent to I-355. The floodplain acreage includes these same areas and McDowell Woods Forest Preserve / West Branch of the DuPage River adjacent to Diehl Road.

There is approximately 26 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the seven major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the open space is attributable to the I-355/I-290 BRT+HOT and the I-290/I-88 BRT+HOT. The parkland and opens space acreage includes: Ned Brown Preserve adjacent to I-290/IL 53 and the Morton Arboretum adjacent to I-88. There are no national historic landmarks in close proximity to this option, however three churches, and one school fall within 100 feet of either side of the major capital projects.

Concentric System Option 3 Approximately 14 acres of wetland and 14 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the currently assumed alignment of the six major capital projects. The wetland acreage appears to be about equally attributable to all of the projects except the Mid City Transitway AGT which has none. It appears that the majority of the floodplain acreage is attributable to the IL 83 AGT and the tollway portion of the I-290/I-88 AGT. The floodplain acreage is located in the vicinity of Cricket Creek Forest Preserve / Salt Creek and in the vicinity of McDowell Woods Forest Preserve / West Branch of the DuPage River adjacent to I-88.

There is approximately 148 acres of open space and parklands that fall with 100 feet of either side of the six major capital projects. It appears that the majority of the open space is in the Cook County Forest Preserve along the 1st Avenue AGT and the tollway portion of the I-290/I-88 AGT including the Morton Arboretum and McDowell Woods Forest Preserve. Four national historic landmarks, six churches, and two schools fall within 100 feet of either side of the major capital projects. The national landmark sites are attributable to the 1st Avenue AGT and the IL 83 AGT. Specific locations include: (1) Riverside Landscape Architecture District bordering 1st Avenue in Riverside, (2) two private residences on 1st Avenue in Maywood and (3) Peabody Estate in the Mayslake Forest Preserve located adjacent to IL 83 in Oak Brook.
floodplain acreage occurs along the I-355/I-290 BRT/HOT specifically involving the Ned Brown Preserve, Churchill Wood Forest Preserve and East Branch of the DuPage River. Substantial wetlands and/or floodplains also exist along the western portions of the Milwaukee District West Line and Union Pacific West Line. Specific locations include the West Branch of the DuPage River and Brewster Creek/Pratt’s Wayne Woods along the MD-W; and the east and west branches of the DuPage River and Lincoln Marsh Natural Area in Wheaton, along the UP-W. A small amount of floodplain is attributable to the IL 83 BRT and is located at Salt Creek and the Cricket Creek Forest Preserve.

There is approximately 211 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the ten major capital projects. The majority of the open space - 169 acres is attributable to the three Metra commuter rail lines – Milwaukee District West, Union Pacific West and Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Specific locations include Lincoln Marsh Natural Area, West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve, Winfield Mounds Forest Preserve and West Chicago Prairie along the UP-W; Pratt’s Wayne Woods along the MD-W; and Douglas Park along the BNSF in Chicago. A lesser amount of open space is attributable to the I-355/I-290 BRT including Ned Brown Preserve, Campbell Slough Forest Preserve, Churchill Woods and the Morton Arboretum.

Ten national historic landmarks, no churches, and no schools fall within 100 feet of either side of the major capital projects. Six of the national landmarks are attributable to the Metra Lines. These are: (1) Austin Historic District in Chicago, (2) Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District in Oak Park, (3) River Forest Historic District, (4) former Maywood Fire Department building along the UP-W; and (5) Riverside Landscape Architecture District and (6) LaGrange Village Historic District along the BNSF. The other national landmarks are attributable to the I-290 HOV and IL 83 BRT. Specific locations are: Columbus Park in Chicago, the Gunderson Historic District in Oak Park and the Oak Park Conservatory next to I-290 and the Peabody Estate/Mayslake on IL 83 in Oak Brook.

**Radial Reliant System Option 2** Approximately 70 acres of wetland and 67 acres of floodplain that fall within 100 feet of either side of the assumed alignment of the seven major capital projects. It appears that the majority of both the wetland and floodplain acreage occurs along the I-355/I-290 BRT/HOT specifically involving the Ned Brown Preserve, Churchill Wood Forest Preserve and East Branch of the DuPage River. Substantial wetlands and/or floodplains also exist along the western portions of the Milwaukee District West Line and Union Pacific West Line. Specific locations include the West Branch of the DuPage River and Brewster Creek/Pratt’s Wayne Woods along the MD-W; and the east and west branches of the DuPage River and Lincoln Marsh Natural Area in Wheaton, along the UP-W. A small amount of floodplain acreage is attributable to the IL 83 BRT and is located at Salt Creek and the Cricket Creek Forest Preserve.

There is approximately 208 acres of open space and parklands that fall within 100 feet of either side of the seven major capital projects. The majority of the open space – 169 acres - is attributable to the three Metra commuter rail lines – Milwaukee District West, Union Pacific West and Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Specific locations include: Lincoln Marsh Natural Area, West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve, Winfield Mounds Forest Preserve and West Chicago Prairie along the UP-W; Pratt’s Wayne Woods along the MD-W; and Douglas Park along the BNSF in Chicago. A lesser amount of open space is

Ten national historic landmarks, no churches, and no schools fall within 100 feet of either side of the major capital projects. Six of the national landmarks are attributable to the Metra Lines. These are: (1) Austin Historic District in Chicago, (2) Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District in Oak Park, (3) River Forest Historic District, and (4) former Maywood Fire Department building along the UP-W; and (5) Riverside Landscape Architecture District and (6) LaGrange Village Historic District along the BNSF. The other national landmarks are attributable to the I-290 HOV and IL 83 BRT. Specific locations are: Columbus Park in Chicago, the Gunderson Historic District in Oak Park and the Oak Park Conservatory next to I-290 and the Peabody Estate/Mayslake on IL 83 in Oak Brook.

**Radial Reliant System Option 3** Approximately 71 acres of wetland and 73 acres of floodplain fall within 100 feet of either side of the assumed alignment of the six capital projects. It appears that the majority of both the wetland and floodplain acreage is attributable to the I-355/I-290 Express Bus specifically involving the Ned Brown Preserve, Churchill Wood Forest Preserve and East Branch of the DuPage River. Substantial wetlands and/or floodplains also exist along the western portions of the Milwaukee District West Line and Union Pacific West Line. Specific locations include the West Branch of the DuPage River and Brewster Creek/Pratt’s Wayne Woods along the MD-W; and the east and west branches of the DuPage River and Lincoln Marsh Natural Area in Wheaton, along the UP-W. A small amount of floodplain acreage is attributable to the IL 83 Express Bus and is located at Salt Creek and the Cricket Creek Forest Preserve.

There is approximately 213 acres of open space and parklands that fall with 100 feet of either side of the six capital projects. The majority of the open space - 169 acres is attributable to the three Metra commuter rail lines – Milwaukee District West, Union Pacific West and Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Specific locations include: Lincoln Marsh Natural Area, West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve, Winfield Mounds Forest Preserve and West Chicago Prairie along the UP-W; Pratt’s Wayne Woods along the MD-W; and Douglas Park along the BNSF in Chicago. A lesser amount of open space is attributable to the I-355/I-290 BRT including Ned Brown Preserve, Campbell Slough Forest Preserve, Churchill Woods and the Morton Arboretum.

Ten national historic landmarks, no churches, and no schools fall within 100 feet of either side of the capital projects. Six of the national landmarks are attributable to the Metra Lines. These are: (1) the Austin Historic District in Chicago, (2) Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District in Oak Park, (3) River Forest Historic District, and (4) former Maywood Fire Department building along the UP-W; and (5) Riverside Landscape Architecture District and (6) LaGrange Village Historic District along the BNSF. The other national landmarks are attributable to the Eisenhower Expressway portion of the I-290 Express Bus and the IL 83 Express Bus. Specific locations are: Columbus Park in Chicago, the Gunderson Historic District in Oak Park and the Oak Park Conservatory next to I-290 and the Peabody Estate/Mayslake on IL 83 in Oak Brook.