

JOLIET ARSENAL AREA LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



JOLIET ARSENAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
April 2004



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JOLIET ARSENAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



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Chicago Area Transportation Study

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	<i>page</i>	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		
INTRODUCTION		CHAPTER 1
1.1 Study Purpose	1	
1.2 Study Participants	1	
1.3 Study Area Background	2	
1.4 Study Area Description	2	
1.5 Subareas and Planning Horizons	3	
EXISTING CONDITIONS		CHAPTER 2
2.1 Transportation System	5	
2.1.1 Roadways	5	
2.1.2 Transit	10	
2.2 Land Use	10	
FUTURE CONDITIONS		CHAPTER 3
3.1 Growth Forecasts	13	
3.2 Transportation System	15	
3.2.1 Programmed Roadway and Transit Projects	16	
3.2.2 Planned and Proposed Projects	17	
3.3 Land Use	20	
3.4 Future Traffic Volumes	24	
TRANSPORTATION ISSUES		CHAPTER 4
4.1 Stakeholder Interviews	25	
4.2 Goals and Objectives	28	
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS		CHAPTER 5
5.1 Summary of Needs	30	
5.1.1 Correct Operational/Capacity Deficiencies	30	
5.1.2 Roadway Continuity	31	
5.1.3 Effectively Accommodate Growth	31	
5.1.4 Effectively Serve New Development	31	
5.2 Recommended Improvement Projects	32	
5.2.1 Regional Improvements	33	
5.2.2 Sub-regional Improvements	35	
5.3 Transportation Management Association	38	

IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

6.1 Keys to Implementation	40
6.2 Project Priorities	40
6.3 Project Phasing	42
6.4 Short-term Actions	42
6.5 Conclusion	43

CHAPTER 6

EXHIBIT A:	Study Area
EXHIBIT B:	Subarea Boundaries
EXHIBIT C:	Roadway Jurisdictions
EXHIBIT D:	Roadway Functional Classification
EXHIBIT E:	Traffic Volumes (1999)
EXHIBIT F:	Existing Land Use
EXHIBIT G:	Programmed & Committed Projects
EXHIBIT H:	Planned and Proposed Roadway & Transit Projects
EXHIBIT I:	Future Land Use
EXHIBIT J:	Projected Future Traffic Volumes (2020)
EXHIBIT K:	Recommendations

EXHIBITS

APPENDIX A:	Summary Characteristics of Existing Roadway Network
APPENDIX B	Analysis of Preliminary 2030 Population and Employment Forecasts by Township
APPENDIX C	Stakeholder Interviews
APPENDIX D	Comparison of Recommended Plan and Stakeholder Proposals
APPENDIX E	Project Evaluation Matrix

APPENDICES

1.1 Study Purpose

The Joliet Arsenal Development Authority (JADA) grew out of a recent trend of converting former military installations into peacetime use. During its peak in the 1940s, the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant (known locally as the Joliet Arsenal) was a major employer in Will County with more than 12,000 people working at the 23,500-acre site.

When the Federal Government declared the plant excess property in 1993, a coalition of federal, state and local officials was formed to reclaim portions of the site for new economic development and job opportunities. A key element to the success of economic development initiatives is transportation access.

Developing a long range plan is critical to ensure that the future transportation system ultimately:

- Serves the needs for the movement of both people and goods in the study area.
- Is coordinated, cohesive and balanced.
- Furthers the goals and objectives of Will County, Will County municipalities, the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority and the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Provides appropriate functions and levels of service.
- Is developed in a safe, efficient and cost-effective manner.



Joliet Army Ammunition Plant circa 1940s

JADA commissioned the preparation of this long-range transportation plan for the former Joliet Arsenal property and the surrounding area.

The overall purpose of this plan is to identify, evaluate and recommend the transportation strategies required to serve the existing and planned development in this area; and to recommend an implementation plan for these strategies. The study also identifies an institutional option to integrate the Arsenal redevelopment and other future projects into the local and subregional land use and transportation planning processes. This report brings together data on existing conditions with future developments and forecasts that will have implications on the future transportation system.

This study presents the recommended long-range transportation plan for the year 2020. Specific projects or actions were recommended for consideration that could realistically occur in the short-term (five- to seven-year timeframe), the mid-term (eight- to 15-year timeframe) and the long-term (15- to 20-year timeframe).



The Joliet Arsenal Area Long-Range Transportation Plan was sponsored by JADA, with financial support from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). In addition to the sponsors, local stakeholders (including Will County and the various municipalities within the study area) provided guidance and valuable input to the study and the recommended 2020 transportation network. Traffic forecasts for the year 2020 were provided by the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and Will County. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) provided 2020 socioeconomic forecasts. In addition, NIPC provided 2030 socioeconomic forecasts for the study team's use.



1.2 Study Participants

1 - INTRODUCTION

1.3 Study Area Background

Located in the southwest portion of Will County, near the villages of Elwood and Symerton and the City of Wilmington, the former Joliet Army Ammunition Plant was in operation for approximately 35 years before it was closed. On February 10, 1996, President Clinton signed the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 into law authorizing 23,500 acres from the former Joliet Army site to be converted to four distinct uses: the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie, a Will County landfill and two areas for industrial development.

The State of Illinois enacted legislation creating the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority (JADA) on July 1, 1995 to develop and market the two industrial sites. The JADA Act created a special district governing body for these industrial development sites. JADA's purpose is to replace and enhance the economic benefits generated by the site's former uses with diversified projects and land uses that will create new job opportunities and foster new economic development within the area. JADA may issue revenue bonds, acquire property, construct projects and enter into intergovernmental agreements that may be necessary to accomplish this purpose. The Will County Board appoints five of the nine members to the JADA Board of Directors. The Governor appoints the remaining members. All members must be residents of Will County.



The project study area includes all of the land under JADA's jurisdiction, as well as surrounding Will County territory (detailed map presented in *Exhibit A*). The boundaries for this study area are:

- I-80 to the north
- Wilmington-Peotone Road to the south
- I-55 to the west
- Cedar Road to the east

There are a variety of distinct features and land uses within this study area, including:

- **CenterPoint Intermodal Center.** *Within the Village of Elwood.* CenterPoint Properties is developing this 2,200-acre industrial park between I-55 and IL 53, south of Arsenal Road.
- **Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie.** *Operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service.* Midwin's 19,000 acres within the former arsenal site straddle both sides of IL 53.
- **Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.** *Operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – National Cemetery Administration.* The 982-acre cemetery was created in 1995. It is located west of IL 53, south of Hoff Road.
- **Island City Industrial Park** (1,100 acres). *To be annexed by the City of Wilmington.* CenterPoint Properties is under contract to purchase approximately 780 acres to develop an industrial park. The International Operating Engineers Union Local 150 has purchased and is developing a state-of-the-art training facility on 300 acres.

1.4 Study Area Description



Study Area
Source: RTA

- **Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway.** *Owned by Raceways Associates, LLC.* The Chicagoland Speedway opened in the summer of 2001 on a 930-acre site. The Route 66 Raceway opened in 1998 on an adjacent 240-acre site. Both facilities are east of IL 53, south of Laraway Road.
- **Will County Landfill (Prairie View Recycling and Disposal Facility).** *Owned by Will County and operated by Waste Management, Inc.* The landfill covers 455 acres, with about 223 acres attributed to the active landfill. The landfill is located east of IL 53, just north of the Island City Industrial Park.
- **Joliet Army Training Facility.** *Owned by the United States Government.* The U.S. Army operates a military training facility on 3,000 acres of the Arsenal site. The majority of the facility is north of Arsenal Road, west of IL 53.
- **ExxonMobil Joliet Refinery.** The ExxonMobil facility covers more than 700 acres east of I-55, on both the north and south sides of Arsenal Road. Access to the facility is from either Arsenal Road or the East Frontage Road.
- **Municipalities:** The communities of Channahon, Elwood, Joliet, Manhattan, New Lenox, Rockdale, Symerton and Wilmington are included in or immediately adjacent to the study area.



The six-county Northeastern Illinois Region is projected to grow from slightly over 8 million people in 2000 to over 10 million by 2030.

A significant portion of this growth, approximately 580,000 residents, is expected to occur in Will County. The employment projections for Will County are equally daunting. The region is projected to grow by approximately 1.2 million jobs, with 256,000 of them in Will County. The six townships in the study area will also experience a substantial portion of this growth.

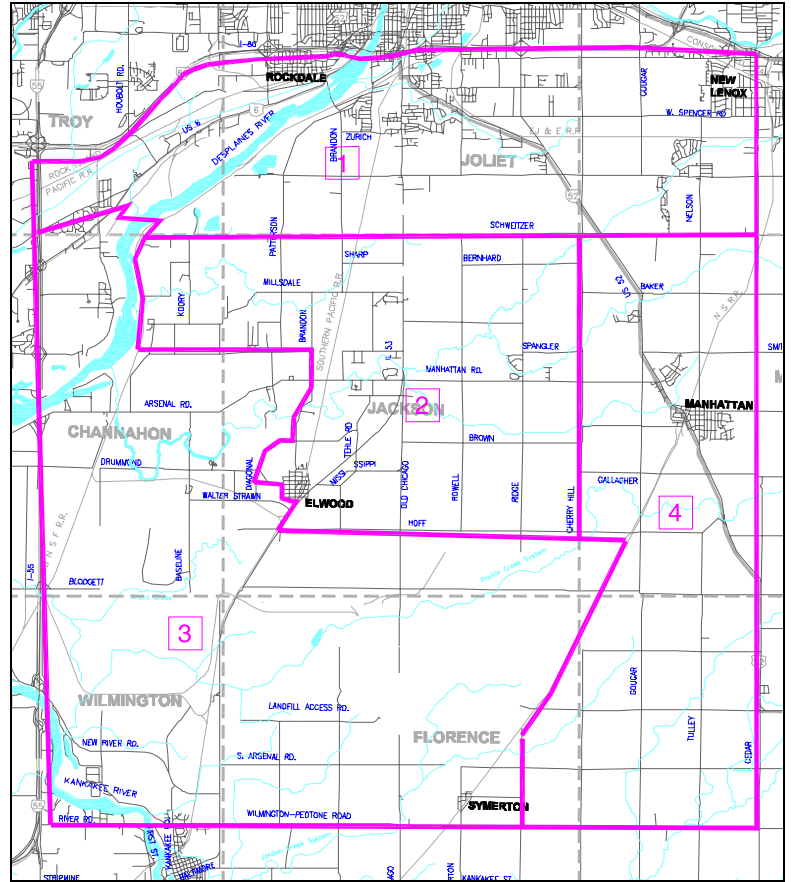
The intense industrial emphasis for the JADA site has significant implications for truck traffic and access to the interstate system. The need to balance the transportation needs of the projected growth with general land use policies and environmental issues reinforces the value of a thorough investigation of the transportation system.

The study area is divided into four zones, or subareas, to allow for detailed analysis based on specific land uses. These subareas are shown in *Exhibit B*. The use of subareas acknowledges that the study area is varied and that different areas may have different transportation needs. The use of subareas facilitates the discussion of the different land uses across the larger study area. By looking at each subarea, it becomes possible to assess specific problems and develop more refined, localized recommendations in addition to those problems occurring across the entire study area.

1.5 Subareas and Planning Horizons

The four subareas include:

- **Subarea 1 – Northern Border.** This subarea, representing the most suburban developed portion of the study area, includes the linear portion between I-80 and Schweitzer/Delaney Roads.
- **Subarea 2 – Mid-Section.** This subarea contains the middle portion of the study area, bounded on the west and south and by the Joliet Arsenal redevelopment projects, to the north by Schweitzer/Delaney Roads and to the east by Cherry Hill Road. This area transitions between the industrial developments on the west and the more open, less developed area to the east.
- **Subarea 3 – Western Border.** This subarea, primarily industrial and open land uses, contains the JADA redevelopment projects. It is bounded generally by Schweitzer Road to the north, I-55 to the west, Wilmington-Peotone Road to the south and the relative boundary of the Joliet Arsenal redevelopment projects to the east.
- **Subarea 4 – Eastern Border.** This subarea is bounded by Delaney Road to the north, Cherry Hill and Norfolk Southern Railroad to the west, Cedar Road and US 52 to the east and Wilmington-Peotone Road to the south. This area includes more low-density residential, agricultural and open land uses.



JADA Study Area showing Subareas 1-4

Introduction

Overall, the study area is well situated with respect to regional roadway facilities, including Interstate Highway 80 (I-80), Interstate Highway 55 (I-55), US Route 6 (US 6) and Illinois Route 53 (IL 53). These facilities play an important role in providing access to the significant industrial uses located along the northern and western portions of the study area. However, it is the network of county and local roads that accommodates most local travel within the study area. The principle findings from the evaluation of existing conditions are:

- The demands in the study area are extremely diverse: from significant industrial uses to major recreational facilities and growing suburban centers to low-density/rural residential areas.
- Overall, roadways in the study area have sufficient capacity to accommodate existing travel demand, although there are some isolated locations that experience peak period congestion.
- Lack of river crossings constrain travel and impact roadway continuity. The Des Plaines River is located in the northwestern corner, while the Kankakee River is located in the southwestern corner.
- The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie constrains roadway continuity.
- Significant arterial roadway discontinuities exist in both north-south and east-west directions of travel.
- Study area roadways are generally not constructed to standards that can accommodate trucks (e.g. turning radii, pavement thickness).
- Transit service to and within the study area is very limited.

The following sections present a detailed description of the existing environment, including roadways, traffic volumes, public transit and land uses.



The existing roadway system within the study area is a network of interstate, state, county and local facilities. Roadways are described below by jurisdiction and presented in *Exhibit C*.

State Roadways

Interstate Facilities

Interstate facilities provide for interregional travel for people and commerce moving through the county. I-55 serves the project study area on the west and I-80 on the north. The interstate routes play an important role by providing access to and from the study area, especially to the industrial areas, as these facilities are heavily used by commercial vehicles.

- *Interstate Highway 80:* Passes through Will County in an east-west direction and is located at the northern border of the study area. Interchanges on I-80 near the study area include I-55, Illinois Route 7 (IL 7), US 6, IL 53 and US Route 30 (US 30). In the study area, it carries between 34,000 and 40,000 vehicles per day, of which almost 25 percent are truck traffic.
- *Interstate Highway 55:* Connects St. Louis, Missouri, to northeastern Illinois and travels through the county from southwest to northeast. It is located along the western edge of the study area, where it provides north-south access. Interchanges on I-55 near the study area include I-80, US 6, Bluff Road, Arsenal Road and New River Road. In the study area, it carries between 36,000 and 50,000 vehicles per day, of which nearly 20 percent are truck traffic.

2.1 Transportation System

2.1.1 Roadways



*Interstate Highway 55,
Northbound at Des Plaines River*

Other State Facilities

Non-interstate highways provide for more regional travel, connecting between the interstate highways and county and arterial roadways. In Will County, the state highway system includes US, Illinois routes and unmarked state routes. Two major state highways in the study area are IL 53 and US Route 52 (US 52). Both routes travel throughout the study area and provide north-south access to and from the City of Joliet. Four unmarked state routes serve the area as follows: Hoff Road (between IL 53 and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St Paul & Pacific Railroad), Manhattan-Monee Road (from US 52 to east of US 45), Old Chicago Road (between Hoff Road and IL 53) and Mississippi Avenue (between IL 53 and Old Chicago Road).

- *Illinois Route 53* is in the center of the study area and provides access through the major development area of the former Joliet Arsenal site. It is a four-lane, divided highway from south of I-80 to north of Wilmington-Peotone Road, the southern project boundary. Signalized intersections are located at Laraway Road, Arsenal-Manhattan Road and Wilmington-Peotone Road. IL 53 carries between 10,000 and 15,000 vehicles per day. This road is designated as a Class II truck route (routes, other than interstates or access-controlled facilities that generally allow maximum truck dimensions of 80,000 pounds in weight, 8 feet, 6 inches in width and 65 feet in length), carrying about 7 to 10 percent truck traffic.
- *US Route 52* travels northwest-southeast. It is a two-lane, undivided roadway connecting Joliet with Manhattan and eventually connects to US Route 45 (US 45) for access farther south. A signalized intersection is located at Manhattan Road. US 52 carries between 4,000 and 10,000 vehicles per day, with the highest volumes occurring north of Manhattan-Monee Road. This road is designated as a Class II truck route, carrying about 10 to 12 percent truck traffic.
- *US Route 6* is located in the northwest corner of the study area, traveling southwest to northeast. This road carries about 10,000 to 13,000 vehicles per day. It is designated as a Class II truck route, carrying about 8 percent truck traffic.



Illinois Route 53 at Millsdale Road

County Roadways

County roadways provide connections between US and state roadways and the townships and municipalities. County roads, in conjunction with local and township roads, serve a large percentage of the trips within the study area. However, many of the county roadways are offset or do not provide continuous coverage throughout the county. These disconnects are reflected in *Exhibit C*.

- *Arsenal Road* is an east-west arterial with a posted speed limit of 55 mph. Unsignalized intersections connect Arsenal Road to the northbound/southbound ramps for I-55 and the two frontage roads. A signalized intersection provides access to the ExxonMobil Refinery located east of I-55. There are two railroad grade crossings separated by about 90 feet where Arsenal Road crosses the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) main lines. A 100-foot bridge crosses Jackson Creek just to the east of the rail crossings. The intersection of Baseline Road is currently not signalized. The roadway is classified as a Class II truck route for 1.4 miles between the I-55 East Frontage Road and Baseline Road.
- *Laraway Road* is an east-west road at the southern border of New Lenox. It is an undivided roadway with one travel lane in each direction, with gravel shoulders and an open-ditch drainage system. It carries between 9,000 and 11,500 vehicles per day. Intersections on Laraway Road with stop sign control are located at Cedar Road, Nelson Road, Gougar Road, Cherry Hill Road, US 52, Brandon Road and Patterson Road. A signalized intersection is located at IL 53. The intersection of Laraway Road and Rowell Road provides an entrance to the



Laraway Road at IL 53

Chicagoland Speedway complex. There are two railroad grade crossings where Laraway Road crosses the Norfolk Southern just east of Cedar Road and crosses the Union Pacific just west of IL 53. The roadway is classified as a Class II truck route between Brandon Road and IL 53.

- *Wilmington-Peotone Road* is an east-west road connecting IL 53 and US 52 at the southern border of the study area. It has one travel lane in each direction with gravel shoulders and an open-ditch drainage system. The intersection with IL 53 is signalized. It carries between 3,000 and 5,000 vehicles per day. This road currently has a 73,280-pound weight limit (maximum gross weight of vehicles not on the designated state highway truck route systems). Between IL 53 and I-55, this county route continues on New River Road and is classified as a Class II truck route.
- *Cedar Road* is located at the eastern border of the study area and provides for north-south travel. North of Laraway Road, Cedar Road carries over 5,000 vehicles per day, while volumes south of Laraway Road range from about 1,300 to 4,000 vehicles per day. This road currently has a 73,280-pound weight limit.
- *Manhattan-Monee Road* travels east-west through the center of the study area, from IL 53 to Illinois Route 50 (IL 50). Manhattan Road is offset in the Village of Manhattan where it travels along US 52. This road links the study area to the villages of Manhattan and Monee and then further east via Crete-Monee Road. This road currently has a 73,280-pound weight limit. It is an unmarked state roadway east of the Village of Manhattan.

The lower truck weight limits on the county and local roads is of particular concern given the expected heavy truck traffic generated by the various developments within the study area. Upgrades now occurring on South Arsenal Road between IL 53 and the new perimeter road at the Island City Industrial Park are examples of the improvements needed. South Arsenal road and the access road to the landfill are being constructed to 80,000-pound limits. Additional upgrades will be needed on other county and local roads to accommodate the heavier trucks.

An inventory of the characteristics for these major state (non-interstate) and county roadways was conducted for this study and is included in *Appendix A*.

Local/Township Roads

Roadways under the jurisdiction of the townships or municipalities typically serve shorter, more internal trips. Many are not continuous throughout a township or a municipality, but together, function as a local collector system. Generally, these roadways are one lane in each direction, have unimproved shoulders, have stop sign control at intersections and carry between 100 and 1,000 vehicles per day. Some of the more important local roads in the study area provide connections to the interstates or major land uses. These include:

- Baseline Road
- Walter Strawn Drive
- Bluff Road
- Drummond Road
- Millsdale Road
- South Arsenal Road
- Patterson Road
- Brandon Road
- Diagonal Road
- South Arsenal Road



Cedar Road



Brandon Road

- Cherry Hill Road
- Schweitzer/Delaney Road
- Mississippi Avenue

Exhibit A presents the existing study area roadway network.



Strategic Regional Arterials

The CATS 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the region's long-range plan for the transportation system, includes a system of strategic regional arterials (SRAs). The SRA system is a network of arterial roadways intended to augment the capacity of the freeway and tollway system. There are 1,412 designated miles of SRA routes in northeastern Illinois, of which 175 miles are located in Will County. The following facilities located within or near the study area are designated as SRA routes:

- IL 53 - US 30 to Wilmington-Peotone Road
- Manhattan-Monee Road - east of US 45 to Illinois Route 1 (IL 1)
- Wilmington-Peotone Road - I-55 to IL 1
- US 45

The continued development of the SRA system into high-capacity roadways will help Will County meet major travel corridor demands as it continues to grow. The 2030 RTP encourages local governments to develop land use plans that address development issues along each route. Such land use plans can ensure that transportation facilities and land development strategies can evolve in a mutually supportive manner.



Functional Classification

The roadway functional classification identifies the relative hierarchy of streets based on function. The classifications range from expressways to local streets and are generally based on the intended function within the overall transportation system of serving movement versus access. It is important to note that although criteria and values, including traffic volume ranges, have been developed for each classification, neither roadway volume or width determine the roadway's classification, but rather its function, continuity and land access.

Within the functional classification system, roadways are typically defined as one of the following:

- **Expressway** (includes freeways and tollways): Serves longer, regional trips through urban areas; carry high traffic volumes; focus is on through vehicle movements; full access-controlled facilities. Typically expected to carry over 40,000 vehicles per day.
- **Major Arterial** (includes strategic regional arterials): Serves moderate and longer trips; provides intercommunity connections to several communities and access to major activity centers. Typically expected to carry over 15,000 vehicles per day.
- **Minor Arterial**: Serves moderate trip lengths; generally provides intracommunity connections; more emphasis on land access than through movements. Although range of traffic volumes will vary depending on street continuity, should typically be expected to carry 5,000 to 15,000 vehicles per day.
- **Collector**: Provides land access and traffic circulation functions within neighborhoods, commercial centers and business districts. Typically expected to carry 2,000 to 5,000 vehicles per day.

- ➔ **Local Street:** Serves short distance trips; primary focus is land access; through-traffic movement is generally discouraged. Typically expected to carry less than 2,000 vehicles per day.

The roadways within the study area have been functionally classified as follows:

- ➔ **Expressways:** I-55, I-80
- ➔ **Major Arterials:** IL 53, Laraway Road, Manhattan-Monee Road, US 52 (north of Manhattan-Monee Road), US 6, Cedar Road (north of West Spencer Road), US 45
- ➔ **Minor Arterials:** Manhattan Road, Cedar Road (south of W. Spencer Road), Gougar Road (north of Laraway Rd.), Arsenal Road, New River Road, US 52 (south of Manhattan-Monee Road), W. Spencer Road, Wilmington-Peotone Road, Kankakee St., Houbolt Road
- ➔ **Collectors:** Diagonal Road, Brandon Road, Cherry Hill Road, Millsdale Road, Noel Road, Schweitzer/Delaney Road, Hoff Road, Bluff Road
- ➔ **Local Roads:** All Other Roads

This functional classification system of the area's roadways is illustrated in *Exhibit D*. It should be noted that this classification reflects current conditions. As growth and development may occur, the roadway function may also change. It will, however, provide a basis for evaluating future deficiencies and alternatives.

Traffic Volumes

Existing average daily traffic (ADT) volumes for the roads in and around the study area were obtained from several sources. These included IDOT, Will County, municipalities and various counts collected for traffic impact studies, such as for CenterPoint Properties. Truck traffic makes up a significant percentage of the ADT in the western portion of the study area as a result of the industrial and intermodal uses. The most recent traffic volumes, including percentage of truck traffic, are presented in *Exhibit E*. It should be noted that these are 1999 volumes. It is likely that with the continued development in the study area – particularly within the industrial parks – that the percentages today are even higher.



US Highway 52 North of Manhattan-Monee Road



Manhattan Road



Cherry Hill Road North of Manhattan Road

2- EXISTING CONDITIONS

Public transit service is limited to the northern portion of the study area. The low population and employment densities do not support traditional fixed route bus service in the remainder of the study area.

Rail Service

Metra operates two commuter rail services from downtown Chicago to Joliet's Union Station.

- The Rock Island District Service operates 23 inbound and 22 outbound trains, Monday through Friday, with 10 trains in each direction on Saturday and eight trains in each direction on Sunday. There are stations at New Lenox and Joliet with average daily boardings of 1,076 and 715 passengers respectively (2002).
- Metra's Heritage Corridor operates three inbound and three outbound trains Monday through Friday. There is no weekend service. The Joliet station served 313 average daily passengers in 2002.

The Joliet Union station is approximately eight miles due north of the Village of Elwood.

Regional Bus Service

Pace operates three fixed route services in the northern portion of the study area.

- Route #504, South Joliet, provides service along Chicago Street to Zurich Road, north of Laraway Road.
- Route #505, Rockdale/Lidice, serves the Rockdale Village hall, south of I-80.
- Route #506, East Washington/East Lenox, serves the southeast side of Joliet and New Lenox.

Other Bus Service

The Chicagoland Speedway provides shuttle service from Joliet's Union Station to the speedway on race days.



The transportation system should be an integral part of the county's environment, enhancing existing development and encouraging desired new land uses. It should provide adequate access without unnecessarily disrupting existing neighborhoods. Additionally, the scale of the roadway system should be appropriate to the surrounding land uses.

At the same time, economic development is very dependent on an efficient transportation system that provides connections between land use developments and roadway facilities. Components of the transportation system that should be considered along with land use plans include location, capacity, travel patterns, traffic control and access management.

The award-winning Will County Land Resource Management Plan identifies several development forms (or patterns) for the study area. Overall, the study area is within the rural area of the county. The CenterPoint Intermodal Center and the Island City Industrial Park are identified as Projects of Regional Impact. More information on these development forms can be found in the *Forms & Concepts Handbook* of the Will County Land Resource Management Plan, available at

www.willcountylanduse.com.

Existing land uses within the study area are described by subarea and presented in *Exhibit F*.

2.1.2 Transit



Joliet Union Station



New Lenox Station

2.2 Land Use



Will County Land Resource Management Plan

Subarea 1 – Northern Border

This subarea includes the linear portion of the study area north of Schweitzer/Delaney Roads, which is the more suburban developed portion of the study area.

- Within the subarea are the southern portions of the City of Joliet and the Village of New Lenox. It is primarily residential, neighborhood retail/commercial and smaller industrial parks such as Rock Run Business Park, Cherry Hills Business Park and Laraway Crossings Industrial Park.
- Metra's proposed EJ&E commuter rail line runs through this subarea, as does a portion of the proposed I-355 Corridor with a proposed interchange at Laraway Road. Currently, there are proposed stops on the EJ&E service at Joliet and New Lenox. The Des Plaines River runs through the western corner of this subarea.
- A major traffic generator within this subarea are the Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway. The Chicagoland Speedway opened in the summer of 2001 with grandstand seating for 75,000 spectators and parking for over 70,000 vehicles. The Route 66 Raceway is adjacent to the Chicagoland Speedway and opened in 1998. It is a 240-acre multi-purpose facility featuring a state-of-the-art drag strip, half-mile clay oval and stadium-style seating for 35,000. Currently, there are two major racing weekends (NASCAR and IROC in July and Indy Racing League and ARCA in September) per year and numerous other racing and a variety of music and other entertainment events throughout the year.



Chicagoland Speedway



Village of Elwood

Subarea 2 – Mid-Section

This subarea transitions between the industrial developments on the west and the more open, less developed area to the east. It includes the middle portion of the study area, including the Village of Elwood.

It is bounded on the west and south and by the Joliet Arsenal redevelopment projects, to the north by Schweitzer/Delaney Roads, and to the east by Cherry Hill Road.

The uses within this subarea are primarily residential. Commercial uses are located in the Village of Elwood.



Center Point Intermodal Center - BNSF Logistics Park

Subarea 3 – Western Border

This subarea is primarily industrial and open space uses and contains the JADA redevelopment projects. Specific uses in this subarea include:

- *CenterPoint Intermodal Center.* (Currently under development.) CenterPoint Properties is developing this 2,200-acre industrial park. When completed in the next 10 to 15 years, this park could have up to 12 to 15 million square feet of light manufacturing/warehousing/distribution facilities. This park includes a 621-acre BNSF intermodal rail and automixing facility that is projected to handle up to 2.2 million containers per year. A power plant is also planned within this development. CenterPoint Properties conducted a traffic impact study for the center that identified future 2020 traffic volumes and required roadway improvements.
- *Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.* Midewin includes 19,000 acres, which is the largest prairie restoration project east of the Mississippi River. In 2002, the Forest Service completed a Land and Resource Management Plan to guide the activities at Midewin over the next 10 to 15 years. The Prairie is currently open to the general public by appointment. There is a visitor's center and administrative offices on the site. The ongoing restoration will attract new visitors, although the extent of future attendance is not yet clear. The final



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

environmental impact statement for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie projects an estimated annual attendance of 540,000 visitors per year by 2007.

- *Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.* The cemetery was created in 1995 and dedicated in 1999. It is intended to serve veterans in the Chicago metropolitan area. When fully developed, the 982-acre cemetery will provide 400,000 burial plots.
- *Island City Industrial Park (1,100 acres).* To be annexed by the City of Wilmington. CenterPoint Properties is under contract to purchase approximately 780 acres to develop an industrial park. The International Operating Engineers Union Local 150 has purchased and is developing a state-of-the-art training facility on 300 acres. The balance of the site will be a small manufacturing campus developed by Joliet Equipment Corporation.
- *Will County Landfill (Prairie View Recycling and Disposal Facility).* The landfill site covers 455 acres, with about 223 acres attributed to the active landfill. It is expected to have an active life span of 20 to 23 years and is expected to have a capacity of 8-10 million tons of waste, of which 1-2 million tons will be from the former arsenal site (6 million tons of waste will be coming to the landfill from the arsenal, but approximately 4-5 tons will be recycled back out). Trucks will access the landfill from IL 53 and South Arsenal Road to the western border of the Island City Industrial Park site. Truck traffic is estimated at 100-200 trucks per day.
- *ExxonMobil Joliet Refinery.* The refinery is located in the northern portion of this subarea east of I-55 with property north and south of Arsenal Road. Access to the facility is from either Arsenal Road or the East Frontage Road. A significant amount of truck traffic is generated from the site. In addition, approximately 700 full-time and contract employees work at the facility.
- *Joliet Army Training Facility.* The facility is located in the northern portion of the subarea and covers 3,000 acres.
- A portion of the *City of Wilmington* and the *Kankakee River* are located at the far southwestern portion.



Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery



ExxonMobil Joliet Refinery



Village of Wilmington



Village of Manhattan

Subarea 4 – Eastern Border

This subarea is bounded by Delaney Road to the north, Cherry Hill Road and Norfolk Southern Railroad to the west, Cedar Road and US 52 to the east, and Wilmington-Peotone Road to the south. This area includes more low density residential, agricultural and open land uses.

- The municipalities of Manhattan and New Lenox and the hamlets of Symerton and Wilton Center are located in this subarea.
- The Metra Southwest Service Line extension to Manhattan (currently under construction) travels through this subarea, with a planned station in downtown Manhattan.
- The proposed I-355 Corridor (South Suburban Expressway between I-80 and I-57) also travels through this subarea, with a proposed interchange at Cedar Road.

Existing land uses are primarily residential with some neighborhood commercial located in the town centers and some industrial uses in and around the southern area of New Lenox.



Introduction

Future travel demand and trip-making behavior is directly related to demographic, economic, and land use changes. Potentially significant changes may occur in the study area between now and the year 2020 involving:

- Population and employment growth.
- New developments coming on-line that are currently in the planning or early implementation phase.
- Future growth and development including new residential subdivisions, commercial centers, and industrial uses.

Additionally, proposed transportation facilities such as the Peotone Airport and the I-355 extension (South Suburban Expressway), if implemented, could also result in increased travel demand.

With the projected population and employment growth plus major new developments, it is estimated that traffic volumes could increase by as much as 50 to 100 percent by the year 2020. The impact of the higher 2030 forecasts is likely to result in even larger increases. Increases in traffic volumes are anticipated to be more concentrated in the western half of the study area, given the new industrial developments and I-55 interchanges. As a major north-south route, volumes along IL 53 could increase quite significantly. Additionally, as Joliet and New Lenox continue to develop along their southern borders, traffic volumes will also continue to increase. This growth and future changes will result in the need for additional capacity via additional lanes on existing facilities and new facilities, including new segments to correct roadway discontinuities. As the area grows, opportunities for new transit service also increase.

The following sections describe the future changes anticipated for the study area that could impact travel demand.



Table 1: Area Population and Employment Growth Forecasts

Year	2000	2030	Percent Change 2000-2030
Population			
Six-County Region	8,091,720	10,034,835	24%
Will County	502,266	1,107,778	120%
Study Area*	25,131	130,669	420%
Employment			
Six-County Region	4,323,207	5,563,934	29%
Will County	169,317	443,370	162%
Study Area*	6,760	42,819	533%

Source: 2030 Forecasts, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. Endorsed September 30, 2003. * Study area demographics include Channahon, Jackson, Manhattan, Wilmington, Florence and Wilton Townships.

The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) is responsible for developing forecasts of population and employment for the six county northeastern Illinois region. In the fall of 2000, NIPC approved a revised set of forecasts for the year 2020. All projects are required to use these forecasts as the basis for planning and design activities. Subregional planning activities are also encouraged to use the NIPC forecasts as the starting point for more detailed investigations. NIPC prepared forecasts for 2030

3.1 Growth Forecasts

to support the development of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan. In August 2003, NIPC released a draft set of 2030 forecasts. NIPC staff held meetings around the region with local officials to receive input on these projections. A formal review and public comment period was conducted during August. The Commission endorsed regional, county and municipal 2030 forecasts on September 30, 2003. The 2030 traffic forecasts supported by the final 2030 population and employment forecasts will not be available until the end of 2003. For the purposes of this study, the 2020 traffic forecasts were used to determine deficiencies in the transportation system. *Table 1* shows the 2000 population and employment totals as well the endorsed 2030 forecasts for the entire region and the townships included in the study area. Since the new 2030 forecasts are substantially higher than the 2020 numbers, the resultant traffic forecasts will also be greater.

The growth in population shows a similar dramatic increase. County population increased nearly 145,000, growing from 357,313 to 502,266 during the 1990s. The preliminary forecasts project the county growing to over 1.1 million by 2030. In the six townships of the study area the population has increased by approximately 5,700 to 25,131 between 1990 and 2000. The 2030 forecasts show an increase to over 130,000 people.

The employment growth between 1990 and 2000 is an indication of the type of change currently underway in Will County. The county has experienced an increase from slightly over 99,000 jobs to nearly 170,000 during the past decade. Within the six townships included in the study area, jobs have increased from 3,236 to 6,760 during the same period. Nearly 43,000 jobs are forecasted by 2030.

The next three decades will be marked by dramatic increases in population and opportunities for employment in Will County. Interstate-55, I-80, Cedar Road, and Wilmington-Peotone Road outline this study area. The projected growth in population and jobs in the remainder of Will County will also impact the area. The problems and opportunities presented by the projected growth in specific Will County townships impact the entire region.

An analysis of population and job growth data for Will County is important to understand the needs of the study area. The future conditions of this region fall into three interdependent categories of 1) growth forecasts, 2) the transportation system, and 3) land use plans. Growth forecasts focus on growth in population and employment. Transportation system needs focus on planned/committed infrastructure changes and future traffic volumes. Land uses reflect the planned and potential opportunities for development in the immediate vicinity of the study area.

Table 2 summarizes the endorsed 2030 population and employment forecasts for Will County and the municipalities within the study area. A more detailed breakdown and discussion for the entire county by township is included in *Appendix B*. It is likely that the growth in and around the study area will put pressure on the transportation system. As we assess the capacity of the existing system, we need to consider how this adjacent growth will impact system performance.

Table 2: Comparison of 2030 Population and Employment Forecasts with 2000 Actual Statistics by Municipality in Study Area

Municipality	2000 Population	2030 Population	2000 Employment	2030 Employment
Channahon (Will County Only)	7,235	22,231	2,384	6,531
Elwood	1,620	20,036	12	18,045
Manhattan	3,330	39,750	1,018	8,932
New Lenox	17,771	101,725	5,270	25,998
Symerton	106	1,602	0	35
Wilmington	5,134	23,333	328	1,729

Source: Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, September 30, 2003

Long Range Transportation Plan

The Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) develops the region's long range regional transportation plan (RTP), using travel demand models based on land use and socio-economic forecasts produced by NIPC. The CATS approved the 2030 RTP on October 9, 2003. The 2030 RTP is a coordinated multimodal surface transportation plan to maintain the existing transportation investments and serve the future travel needs through 2030. The 2030 RTP identifies regional improvements to the interstate system, the SRA system, the bicycle and pedestrian system, and the public transportation system, which includes the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Pace networks. The 2030 RTP is implemented through the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for northeastern Illinois, also developed by CATS. The RTP is updated every three years.

Roadway Jurisdictions

Future changes to the roadway system involve three key jurisdictions:

- State/Regional – Illinois Department of Transportation
- County – Will
- Local – Municipalities

The State of Illinois plans, programs, finances, and implements major transportation projects throughout the state. The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a five-year program of projects, with projects identified annually as part of the Annual Element (AE) or as in the Multiyear Element.

Municipalities and counties plan, design, construct, operate and maintain local transportation facilities. Municipalities and counties participate in the regional planning and programming process through the CATS Council of Mayors which allows for some municipal and county projects to be considered for federal funding. Will County identifies a need for additional capacity and improved roadways throughout the county, which may include state, county, or local roads. The basis for these improvements is the Land Resource Management Plan, which links transportation with land use patterns. Municipalities make improvements to collector or arterial roads within their borders. These improvements may not necessarily be coordinated with neighboring communities.



3.2 Transportation System

Programmed/Committed Projects

The future scenario for the transportation system in the study area is based on proposed projects that are already in the planning process, including projects that are committed, funded, included in the CATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or included in IDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The CATS TIP is northeast Illinois' agenda of surface transportation projects. The TIP lists federally funded projects and regionally significant, non-federally funded projects planned for implementation in the upcoming six-year period. CATS approved a new Fiscal Year (FY) 2004-2009 TIP on October 9, 2003. The IDOT STIP is a five-year program of projects and is developed every year in the spring as part of the overall state budget process. The current STIP covers Fiscal Years 2004-2008.

Programmed and/or committed roadway and transit projects are shown in *Exhibit G* and identified below by jurisdiction.

Roadway Projects

➡ *State of Illinois, Illinois Department of Transportation*

- *I-55 at Arsenal Road.* The IDOT 2004-2008 Highway Improvement Program includes the reconstructed I-55/Arsenal Road interchange, including bridge replacement, land acquisition, lighting, and engineering work. The first phase, a 2003 project, is site development and construction engineering at Arsenal Road. The proposed project consists of relocating the existing Arsenal Road interchange approximately 2,000 feet south. Along with the new interchange will be a frontage road upgrade along the east side of I-55 to Arsenal Road. This work is programmed for 2005. This work is being done in conjunction with the development of the CenterPoint Intermodal Center.
- *I-55/New River Road (Wilmington Road).* Bridge replacement project. IDOT 2003 project.
- *I-55/Kankakee River.* Bridge substructure and deck repairs. Programmed for 2004-2008.

➡ *Joint State of Illinois and Local Projects*

- *Drummond Road from Baseline Road to east of Center Industrial Park Drive.* Reconstruction of the roadway. Programmed in 2004.
- *Drummond Road from east of Center Industrial Park Drive to Diagonal Road.* Construction of new roadway. Programmed in 2004.
- *Mississippi Avenue from Diagonal Road to Chicago Avenue.* Reconstruction of roadway. Programmed in 2004.
- *Mississippi Avenue from Union Pacific RR to Chicago Avenue.* Reconstruct roadway, including intersection and RR crossing improvement. Programmed in 2004-2008.
- *Manhattan Road from Baseline Road to IL 53.* Reconstruction of roadway. Programmed in 2004-2008.

➡ *Will County, Highway Department*

- *Arsenal Road/Baseline Road.* Widen Arsenal Road from I-55 to Baseline Road, and Baseline Road from Arsenal Road to one mile south of Arsenal Road. The Arsenal Road/BNSF Railroad crossing is to be grade-separated. Construction is expected to start in February 2004.

3.2.1 Programmed Roadway and Transit Projects



Baseline Road at Arsenal Road

- *South Arsenal Road.* Upgrade the IL 53 and South Arsenal Road intersection and the access road to the Will County landfill to accommodate 80,000-pound weight limit. Programmed for 2003.
- *Cedar Road.* At Laraway Road/Jackson Creek. Bridge rehabilitation. Programmed in 2004.

➡ Local

- *Village of Elwood: Walter Strawn Drive.* Construction of new two-lane road extension from Deer Run Drive to IL 53, including a signalized intersection at IL 53, is underway.
- *JADA: South Arsenal Road.* Upgrade from landfill access road, east to Old Chicago Road. Construction is scheduled in 2004.



Walter Strawn Drive Extension to Illinois Route 53

Transit Projects

➡ Metra

- Extension of Metra's Southwest Service line from Orland Park to Manhattan is currently underway. The service is expected to be in operation by 2005 with new stations at Laraway Road and Manhattan.

➡ Pace

- Pace and JADA executed a Memorandum of Understanding to initiate transit service to southwest Will County, CenterPoint Intermodal Center and the Village of Elwood. The service will begin March 1, 2004 and will operate six days a week.

A number of projects are **planned** for the next five to 10 years. In some cases substantial planning, design and environmental work has already been completed. While not programmed in the current TIP they are more advanced than other projects in the regional plan. These projects are shown in *Exhibit H*.

3.2.2 Planned & Proposed Projects

Roadway Projects

➡ State of Illinois/Illinois State Toll Highway Authority- Illinois Department of Transportation

- *Extension of I-355 from I-55 to I-80.* This project is included in the CATS 2030 RTP. The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority (ISTHA) and IDOT are currently studying the feasibility and alignment options of extending sI-355 from its current terminus at I-55 south to I-80 in New Lenox. This project is supported by the study participants.

➡ Will County 2020 Transportation Framework Plan

The Will County 2020 Transportation Framework Plan was prepared to guide transportation improvements through the year 2020. Specific recommendations that are included in this plan located in or near the study area are described below.

- *US Route 6.* Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes with mountable or barrier median, from US 52 to the Grundy County line. Traffic demands in this corridor are projected to increase to 15,000 – 20,000 vehicles per day by 2020.
- *Cedar Road.* Upgrade Cedar Road to a 4-lane facility with a mountable or barrier median that would accommodate left turn lanes from the Cedar Road

SRA segment (Bruce Road to IL 7) south to Francis Road. 2020 projected traffic volumes on Cedar Road are 10,000 – 15,000 vehicles.

- *Laraway Road.* Since traffic volumes are expected to double by 2020 (to 15,000 vehicles per day), Laraway Road should be improved between IL 53 and IL 43. Improvements would include a 5-lane cross-section, access control measures, and signalized major intersections.
- *Gougar Road.* With anticipated growth and development, traffic volumes on Gougar Road, south of US 6, are expected to increase to 18,000 vehicles per day by 2020. The Framework Plan includes two recommendations. First, Gougar Road should be upgraded and widened to a 4-lane facility with a mountable or barrier median accommodating left turn lanes at intersections between US 6 and Laraway Road. Second, as growth continues, Gougar Road should be extended south of Laraway Road to Baker Road (at US 52), designed as the same 4-lane cross-section as the first segment.
- *Ridge Road.* A one-mile extension of Ridge Road between Laraway and Schweitzer Road is proposed to improve continuity and circulation opportunities around the Chicagoland Speedway. This road would be built to a 3-lane cross-section.

The Framework plan proposes a number of intersection improvements to correct road misalignments, which break up the road grid system. Those improvements located in or near the study area include: Gallagher Road at Cedar Road, Kankakee Street at Manhattan-Monee Road, and Hoff Road (Zeisner) Road and Watkins Road at US 52.

Transit Projects

➡ *Metra*

- Phase II improvements to Metra's Southwest Service Line include a number of projects to provide a connection to the Rock Island District Line at 75th and Loomis in the City of Chicago. This new connection will allow the Southwest Service Line to move from its current downtown Chicago terminal (Chicago Union Station) to the less congested LaSalle Street Station and increase service.

There are a number of *proposed* roadway and transit projects that are considered to be much more long-term, generally at least 10 or more years out. These include future Will County roadway projects that were not officially included in the Will County Transportation Framework Plan, but were identified as potential future, long-term projects, site-specific roadway improvement recommendations, or roadway and transit projects included in the CATS Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) as multimodal corridors needing further study. The 2030 RTP did not indicate whether these corridors are needed by 2030 or whether they are post-2030. These corridors represent individual or sets of projects for which there is not yet a preferred alternate or multi-modal recommendation. These projects are also shown in *Exhibit H*.

Roadway Projects

➡ *State*

- *Extension of I-355 from I-80 to I-57 (South Suburban Expressway).* This project is identified in the CATS 2030 RTP. The ISTHA has conducted some preliminary studies for this project. The eastern segment of the extension (South Suburban Expressway) would travel through the study area to I-57, with proposed interchanges at Laraway Road.

- *Additional Lanes on I-55 from Naperville Road to south of US 6 continuing south to Arsenal Road.* This project is included in the 2030 RTP.
- *Additional Lanes on I-80 from US 45 to I-55 continuing to the Will County Line.* This project is included in the 2030 RTP.

➡ **Will County**

The 2020 Will County Transportation Framework Plan addressed improvements that, although not included as projects, should potentially be included in the next update to the County's Transportation Plan. These projects could be necessitated by future land use changes. These include:

- *Arsenal Road and Manhattan Roads.* To accommodate Arsenal redevelopment plans, widen Arsenal and Manhattan Roads to four lanes, from I-55 to US 52, with signalization of the Baseline Road and IL 53 intersections.
- *Gougar Road.* Designate as an SRA route, from IL 7 to Manhattan-Monee Road.
- *Manhattan-Monee Road.* As the Arsenal site develops, east-west access to the property will emphasize the importance of the Arsenal Road/Manhattan-Monee Road corridor between I-55 and I-57. Widen Manhattan-Monee Road between Manhattan and I-57. Additionally, the Manhattan-Monee Road SRA designation should be extended west from US 45 to I-55 via Arsenal Road.
- *I-55.* Widen I-55 south of I-80 to Wilmington/Braidwood area.
- *Laraway Road.* Widen Laraway Road from IL 53 west to the Des Plaines River with a new bridge connection to Houbolt Road.
- *Schweitzer Road, Ridge Road, Rowell Street, and Briggs Street.* Various improvements such as pavement and intersection reconstruction.

Site-Specific Roadway Improvement Recommendations

➡ **CenterPoint Intermodal Center**

Based on the CenterPoint Properties traffic impact analysis, the following recommendations are made for the roadway network:

- Four lanes on Arsenal Road from I-55 to Baseline Road, with auxiliary turn lanes at intersections.
- Four lanes on Drummond Road from Baseline Road to Deer Run Drive, with auxiliary turn lanes at intersections and two lanes further east on Mississippi Avenue to IL 53.
- Six lanes on Baseline Road from Arsenal Road to Walter Strawn Drive.
- Signalized intersections at I-55/Arsenal Road (east and west ramps); Baseline Road/Arsenal Road; Main Street (Mississippi Rd.)/IL 53 and Baseline Road/Drummond Road.
- Grade separation of Arsenal Road at BNSF railroad crossing.
- At I-55/Arsenal Road interchange, dual left turns are needed along Arsenal Road for northbound and southbound I-55 traffic, while dual right turns are needed for the exit ramps.
- Add left turn lanes at all intersections along the following roads: Manhattan Road, Main Street and Arsenal Road.

➡ **Island City Industrial Park**

Transportation needs identified in the Island City Industrial Park Market Assessment are listed below.

- Improvements to South Arsenal Road including reconstruction to design standards for 80,000-pound trucks, turn lanes and a signalized intersection at IL 53.
- Improvements to Old Chicago Road including pavement reconstruction and geometric improvements to handle heavy truck traffic.
- Detailed study to identify new interior roadway systems including separate entrances for the landfill and the industrial park. The study should evaluate other off-site improvements that may be necessary.

Transit Projects

➡ *Outer Circumferential Rail*

The 2030 RTP identifies new passenger rail service along the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway right-of-way passing through the northern part of the study area. The service would have connections with the Rock Island District Service in Joliet, the Heritage Corridor Service in Joliet and the southwest Service in New Lenox. Metra and the affected communities are currently conducting a feasibility study for the corridor. The 2030 RTP includes a portion of this service corridor between Hoffman Estates and Joliet for the new STAR Line.

➡ *Southwest Service*

A further extension of Metra’s Southwest Service Line from Manhattan to Midewin is included in the 2030 RTP. The extension is included in the Will County 2020 Transportation Plan.

➡ *Heritage Corridor*

An extension of the Heritage Corridor Line service from Joliet to Wilmington was identified in the 2020 RTP Strategic Regional Transit System as a “rail extension opportunity” but no feasibility study has been initiated. The project was not submitted for consideration during the 2030 RTP development process. The project is included in the Will County 2020 Transportation Plan with new stations in the study area in Elwood and Wilmington.



Identifying future land use scenarios provides a context in which to identify transportation needs and develop recommendations. The projected future development scenarios presented for the study area were derived from several sources, including key stakeholder interviews, municipal comprehensive plans, Will County, and development proposals.

As noted in *Section 3.1 – Growth Forecasts* – and summarized in *Table 1* on *Page 3-1*, the next three decades are projected to see increases in population and employment in the study area, with 2030 forecasts of about a 420 percent increase in population and a 533 percent increase in employment. These increases will have a direct impact on the transportation system. Generally, population growth results in increased traffic generation, while employment growth increases the amount of traffic that is “attracted” by employment centers.

3.3 Land Use

Subarea 1 – Northern Border

This subarea includes the linear portion of the study area between I-80 and Schweitzer/Delaney Roads, and includes the southern portions of Joliet and New Lenox, the Village of Rockdale, as well as the Chicagoland Speedway. Three major infrastructure changes are proposed for this area, including:

- I-355, with a potential interchange at Laraway Road, just west of Gougar Road.
- Outer Circumferential Commuter Rail Service along the EJ&E Railroad, with potential stations in Joliet and New Lenox.
- Extension of Metra Southwest Service with a potential joint station with the EJ&E station in New Lenox.

Land uses in and near the City of Joliet that are within the study area are expected to be industrial. Currently, all land annexed into the City to the south is zoned I-5, and that is expected to continue for any future annexations. According to Will County, a large regional retail development is planned for the southeast quadrant of I-80 and I-55.

The Village of Rockdale does not anticipate any new significant developments or population increases, given their landlocked location.

The Chicagoland Speedway facility opened in 2001 plans to expand seating capacity from 75,000 to 125,000. Little ancillary growth generated by the Speedway is anticipated. The major challenge for the Speedway will continue to be traffic management. Traffic management plans are in place for each specific type of event and planned in conjunction with local and state police forces.

In the southern portion of the Village of New Lenox, few significant commercial or manufacturing developments are anticipated, although there could potentially be new “big box” retail/commercial developments. A million-square-foot Dollar Tree facility is under construction southwest of IL 53 and Laraway Road. Redevelopment of the Howell Airport (at Laraway Road, east of Cedar Road), includes 160 acres and could include some commercial development. The New Lenox Comprehensive Plan includes the following items for the area south of I-80 and west of Cedar:

- Primarily residential uses.
- Commercial and neighborhood retail at potential I-355 interchanges and potential new Metra stations.
- Potential I-355 full interchanges at Laraway Road (just west of Gougar Road) and Cedar Road (just south of Baker Road).
- New Metra stations at the junction of the Southwest Service and EJ&E (south of Spencer Road and east of Cedar Road), and at Baker Road on the Southwest Service.

Several new business/industrial parks are under development in this subarea, as listed below:

- Cherry Hill Business Park, Village of New Lenox, at Gougar Road and I-80, 200 acres with build-out by 2017.
- Laraway Crossings, City of Joliet, at Laraway Road and IL 53, 352 acres with 6.5 million square feet, build-out within 20 years.



Laraway Crossing



Dollar Tree



Cherry Hill Business Park

- Oak Leaf Business Park, City of Joliet, at Joyce Road and I-80, 70 acres with 3 million-square-foot buildout within 20 years.
- Rock Run, City of Joliet, at Houbolt Road and I-80, 311 acres with 13 million square feet, build-out by 2007.
- Sharp Commercial/Industrial Park, City of Joliet, at Mound Road and I-80, 30 acres.

Residential permits for municipalities in this subarea over the past five years have generally increased, with Joliet averaging 1,500 to 2,000 permits per year and New Lenox averaging 310 to 370 permits per year.

Subarea 2 – Mid-Section

This subarea includes the center of the study area. The Village of Elwood is the only municipality within this subarea. The Village of Elwood, given its prime location adjacent to the CenterPoint Intermodal Center, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, is anticipating significant population increases. According to the Village, 10 to 15 percent of the CenterPoint Intermodal Center employees are expected to come from adjacent communities. Future developments anticipated by the Village include:

- New residential development north of the village, west of IL 53. This is currently being planned for 1,100 units.
- 1,400 acres adjacent to the Village of Elwood, north of Mississippi Avenue on both sides of IL 53, are being pursued for new development, but specific land uses have not yet been determined.
- Commercial uses are planned along IL 53, clustered at major roads and surrounded by mixed-use residential development.

Annual residential building permits for the Village of Elwood range from 25 to 50 permits per year.

The Village of Elwood is forecasted to significantly increase in population, possibly to over 20,000 by the year 2030. With this population growth, the developing adjacent industrial uses, and the proximity of Elwood to major arterials including IL 53 and Arsenal/Manhattan Road, and proximity to I-55, traffic impacts to the transportation system through this subarea will be significant. Employment is expected to exceed 18,000 by 2030. According to the CenterPoint traffic impact study, 25% of the traffic destined to the industrial park will be traveling on IL 53 and accessing the intermodal center via Manhattan Road, Mississippi Road/Main Street, or Hoff Road.

Subarea 3 – Western Border

This subarea is comprised primarily of industrial uses and open spaces uses. The City of Wilmington is located in the southwest corner of the subarea, and the Village of Channahon is located to the west, primarily on the west side of I-55. The western section of the Village of Elwood, including the CenterPoint Intermodal Center, is located in the eastern portion of the subarea. As noted in *Chapter 2 – Existing Conditions*, the major industrial uses currently under development include:

- CenterPoint Intermodal Center, 2,200-acre industrial park, which includes a 621-acre BSNF intermodal rail facility and a power plant. The expected absorption period is estimated at 10 to 15 years. Traffic impacts estimate an increase of 24,000 average daily vehicles and a 2,500-vehicle increase in peak hour traffic.



Potlatch Corporation (CenterPoint Intermodal Center)



DSC Logistics (CenterPoint Intermodal Center)

- Island City Industrial Park, 1,100 acres, including a 300-acre training facility and an 800-acre warehouse distribution park.
- Prairie View Recycling and Disposal Facility, over 200 acres with a capacity for 8 to 10 million tons of waste. Truck traffic estimated at 100-200 trucks per day. The landfill is expected to open in 2004.

Other business/industrial parks under development in this subarea include:

- Channahon Business Park, Village of Channahon, at I-55 and US 6, 230 acres with 4 million square feet.
- Riverside Industrial Park, Village of Channahon, at Northwest Frontage Road, 14 acres with build-out by 2006.
- Meritex, the former Johnson & Johnson facility at Peotone Road and IL 53 in Wilmington. Originally 143 acres with 430,000 square feet of facility. Has leased 150,000 square feet.

The Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery estimates that there could be as many as 10,000 burials per year, although it currently only has about seven to eight interments per day. Each burial is accompanied by a procession of approximately 10 cars.

The Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie includes about 19,000 acres. The Final Environmental Impact Statement projects an annual attendance of 450,000 visitors per year by 2007.

The Village of Channahon is located on the western edge of the subarea. The Village has seen a significant increase in building permits, from about 100 per year in 1995 to over 200 in 2001 and 2002. Land uses specified in the Village's Comprehensive Plan call for primarily office/research/industrial along the I-55 corridor. Commercial uses are designated for the I-55/US 6 interchange area. The Village's population is projected to triple between 2000 and 2030, to over 22,000.

A portion of the City of Wilmington is located in this subarea. The City of Wilmington Comprehensive Plan calls for the following land uses:

- Research/light industrial along IL 53, north of Wilmington-Peotone Road
- Industrial along both sides of South Arsenal Road (Quigley Road). The Island City Industrial Park is located on the north side of South Arsenal (Quigley) Road.
- Open space between the Kankakee River and New River Road, west of Kankakee Street.

Wilmington averaged between 15 and 25 residential building permits annually since the mid- to late-1990s.

Subarea 4 – Eastern Border

This subarea is bounded generally by Delaney Road, Cherry Hill Road, US 52, and Wilmington-Peotone Road. The communities of Manhattan and Symerton, and Wilton Center are located in this subarea. Two major proposed infrastructure changes will travel through this subarea. The Metra Southwest Service extension will include a station in Manhattan. The I-355 extension between I-80 and I-57 has potential interchanges at Cedar Road just north of Manhattan and at US 45, east of Manhattan.



Dow Chemical-Meritex

The Village of Manhattan’s population is projected to increase from 3,330 in 2000 to nearly 40,000 by 2030, according to NIPC. A new housing development with about 650 units is being developed, with build-out over the next 8 years. Generally, residential development is seen northward, from Manhattan Road to Laraway Road. The Manhattan Comprehensive Plan designates the following land uses:

- Overall, residential uses are low-density.
- Industrial uses south of the intersection of US 52/Southwest Service Line/Brown St./Gougar Road.
- Industrial uses east of US 52 near Hoff Road.
- Commercial uses along US 52 near Manhattan-Monee Road.

Annual residential permits in Manhattan have remained steady at about 40 permits per year. Building permit data was not available for Symerton or Wilton Center however the total number of permits for Wilton Township averaged fewer than 10 permits per year over the last seven years.

Impacts to the transportation network due to changes within the subarea will generally reflect the implementation of I-355 between I-80 and I-57 and new residential developments centered along Cedar Road. However, the transportation network could be impacted by the projected developments in the other subareas, particularly the industrial parks in New Lenox and Joliet.

Exhibit I shows some of these major planned developments in the four subareas.



Major new developments and future growth in population and employment will generate higher volumes of traffic, including much higher levels of truck traffic. The Will County 2020 Transportation Framework Plan states that by 2020, traffic volumes on key state highways such as I-55, US 6, US 52, US 45, and IL 53 will increase by about 50%. Future traffic volumes were generated based on data provided by CATS, Will County, study area municipalities, and development-related traffic impact studies. *Exhibit J* presents future levels of average daily traffic and percent of truck traffic. It should be noted that when the 2020 traffic projections were developed using 1990 census data, neither the Arsenal redevelopment plan nor the racetracks were included in the assumptions. It is likely that the new 2030 traffic projections will reflect greater increases in both overall traffic and truck traffic.



3.4 Future Traffic Volumes

This chapter presents a summary of stakeholder interviews and relevant goals and objectives that guide the overall study. The purpose of the key stakeholder interviews was to collect information on existing conditions, any planned/proposed changes, and concerns or insights regarding the transportation system. This input also provided information on potential improvements to the transportation system, such as needed capacity increases, safety issues, connectivity and improvements needed to accommodate truck traffic.

The second part of this chapter includes a list of relevant goals and objectives obtained from Will County. This review provided direction for conducting the study as well as a framework for understanding the balance between transportation and land development issues.



With assistance from JADA, stakeholders were identified and interviewed for input to the study. Key stakeholders representing municipalities, Will County, roadway authorities, transit agencies, and new developments were interviewed. A list of stakeholders is included in the *Appendix C*.

The following summarizes the major issues identified in the interviews categorized by transportation mode (highway, transit), land use, congestion, safety, accessibility and other.

Highways

- I-55 will be primary western access road serving CenterPoint Intermodal Center.
- IDOT plans to relocate the Arsenal Road exit off I-55 south and construct a full interchange in 2005-2006.
- Will County will begin the upgrade of Arsenal Road with a new overpass at the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF RR) during 2003.
- Add lanes on I-55 south of Naperville Road to I-80.
- Add lanes on I-55 south of I-80 to Arsenal Road and further then south to New River Road.
- Extension of I-355 between I-55 and I-80.
- Extension of I-355 between I-80 and I-57 (South Suburban Expressway).
- Extension of Laraway Road west to Houbolt Road.
- Expansion of Patterson Road or Brandon Road.
- Extension of Briggs Road south to tie into IL 52.
- Add lane on IL 53.
- Improve Wilmington-Peotone Road and extend it to the New River Road intersection.
- Add dual exit lanes from I-80 to southbound IL 53. Viaduct and bridge constrains implementation of the project.
- Add at least 1 or 2 additional lane in each direction on Laraway Road.
- Add 1 lane in each direction on New River Road.
- Improve Manhattan Road Corridor between I-55 and I-57.
- City of Monee is studying Manhattan Road Corridor east of I-57.
- Village of Rockdale's long-range plan is to upgrade Moen Avenue from Larkin Road west.
- Add Gougar Road from IL 7 south to Manhattan-Monee Road to SRA system.
- Will County will update transportation plan to 2030 in the next year or two.

Introduction

4.1 Stakeholder Interviews

- Construct new bridges over DesPlaines River and I&M Canal where Laraway Road connects.
- Designate Arsenal Road/Manhattan Road a strategic regional arterial from US 45 to I-55.
- Construct the Prairie Parkway.
- Improve connection between I-55 and I-57 south of I-80.
- Phase I study for widening of I-55 south to I-80 is underway by IDOT.
- Will County is currently widening Baseline Road north to Drummond Road. Continue north to Arsenal Road in 2003 (5 lanes).
- Widen Arsenal Road west to I-55 in 2003. Upgrade Arsenal Road to tie in to the new I-55 interchange in 2004.
- Cedar Road, Wilmington-Peotone Road and Manhattan Road have 73,280-pound load limits. Not designed for heavy trucks. Need for upgrades as arsenal site is built out.
- Will County to upgrade access road in 2003 to Prairie View landfill.
- IDOT is upgrading Arsenal Road Interchange in 2005.
- Addition of third lane on I-55 from the truck weight station south to Weber Road is in 2003 IDOT program.

Transit

- Extension of Metra Southwest Service from Manhattan to Midewin.
- Implementation of Pace bus service to CenterPoint Intermodal Center.
- Extension of Metra Rock Island Service from Joliet to Wilmington.
- Implementation of the Outer Circumferential Commuter Rail Service along the EJ&E Railroad.
- Extension of Southwest Service to Manhattan by 2005.
- Add a Metra station at junction of EJ&E and Metra Southwest Service line between West Spencer Road and Laraway and east of Cedar Road.
- Add Pace service on US 30.
- Village of New Lenox plans a new Metra parking lot and platform in 2005 and a new station by 2008 on the Rock Island District Service.
- Will County Forest Preserve District is talking to Metra about a land swap in Manhattan to allow for a bike path extension to the southwest.
- Pace works with areas to tailor services to local needs.
- Pace demand-responsive service is one option available to developments.
- Pace vanpooling has been successful in other areas and could be in JADA properties.
- Pace will work with the oversight agency that has responsibility for coordinating transit services to develop specialized services.
- IDOT is sponsoring a pilot project to study land use, development and transportation issues in the Metra Southwest Service Corridor to Manhattan.

Land Use

- Total CenterPoint Intermodal Center build-out will be approximately 12 to 15 million square feet. Seventy-five percent will be distribution and 25 percent will be manufacturing.
- A large expansion of ExxonMobil is in the planning stages.
- New Prairie View landfill to open first quarter 2004. When in full operation will have 100 to 200 trucks a day.

- Land annexed or planned for annexation south of the City of Joliet is zoned I-5.
- Major 1,100-unit subdivision is planned west of the Village of Elwood on west side of IL 53. Planned build out is over ten years.
- An additional 1,400 acres is under consideration for development in Elwood.
- Village of Elwood plans for commercial development along IL 53 with residential development north of the village and northwest of IL 53.
- Chicagoland Speedway plans to expand incrementally from a 75,000-person capacity to 100,000 to 125,000.
- Village of New Lenox plans to redevelop the 160-acre Howell Airport site for commercial use.
- No water and sewer exists north of I-80 in the Village of New Lenox. New wastewater treatment plant is planned north of I-80 in near future.
- Village of New Lenox is adding 1,000 new housing units a year.
- Village of Manhattan plans 650+ unit subdivision over the next eight years.
- Develop a cargo terminal with FedEx near the proposed Peotone Airport site.
- A large regional retail development is planned for the Southeast corner of I-80 and I-55.
- An old trailer park in the Village of Channahon has been identified as an industrial park.
- Meritex site at Peotone Road and IL 53 is a prime development target.
- A significant development is in the early planning stages near the Grundy County line at I-55.

Congestion

- Year 2008 is the peak year for WWII veterans. In last three years, there were interments of 1,418, 1,552 and 1,800 respectively.
- River Road will experience increased usage once the Midewin Visitors/ Interpretive Center is completed in 2010-2015.
- Challenge Park in Joliet draws large crowds over an extended period of time.
- Increased traffic on IL 53 from Prairie View Recycling and Disposal Facility.
- Increased truck traffic from Center Point Intermodal Center.

Safety

- Turning conflicts at IL 53 and Hoff Road.
- Increased rail freight traffic on Union Pacific line.
- Improve IL 129 and I-55 interchange because it is a high accident location.
- Truck traffic traveling through the Village of Manhattan to access I-57, avoiding weigh stations on I-80 between Harlem Avenue and I-57 and on I-57 north of Manhattan-Monee Road.

Accessibility

- Family members of interred veterans need alternate travel modes to sites, especially since many may have mobility limitations and/or will be coming from long distances.
- Chicagoland Speedway has developed a traffic plan for race days that provides driving and parking lot instructions to ticket holders.

Other

- Midewin intends to develop a trail system within the Prairie borders. Will County Forest Preserve District plans to develop trails along rivers and creeks throughout the county.
- Will County Forest Preserve District has 45 Resource Plans for locations throughout the county with more planned. Designate an economic development zone around CenterPoint Properties.



Transportation improvements for the study area should further the goals and objectives of key agencies such as Will County. The goals were used to develop evaluation criteria as a means for ensuring that the transportation solutions are appropriate and implementable.

The following section presents transportation-related goals from Will County's 2020 Transportation Framework Plan.

4.2 Goals & Objectives

Will County 2020 Transportation Framework Plan

➤ Mobility and Access

Goal: The transportation system should offer convenient travel opportunities and an integration of travel modes that will allow people to travel to a variety of places according to the needs of their own lifestyle.

➤ Transportation and Land Development

Goal: The transportation system should support existing and future patterns of land development, as guided by the Will County Land Resources Management Plan.

➤ Transportation Performance

Goal: The transportation system should provide efficient quantity and quality of service with needed capacity, reasonable speed, convenience, and safety for all users.

➤ Non-Motorized Travel

Goal: The transportation system should enhance the quality of life in Will County by providing a system of interconnected and safe bicycle paths, pedestrian facilities, and equestrian trails.

➤ Economic Development

Goal: The transportation system should support and stimulate economic development within the region.

➤ Environment and Natural Resource Protection

Goal: The transportation system should be sensitive to the environmental resources of the region and minimize environmental impacts in such area.

➤ Interagency Coordination

Goal: In conjunction with the transportation plan, a spirit of commitment to interagency coordination and cooperation should be established in the region.

➡ Financial Feasibility

Goal: The development of the transportation system should use financial resources efficiently and be financially attainable.

➡ Commitment to Implementation

Goal: The transportation plan should be supported by a commitment to implement the recommended improvement according to an identified schedule.

These goals are consistent with the transportation-related issues identified through the stakeholder interviews. These goals can now be translated into evaluation criteria. These criteria will assist in the evaluation and selection of the strategies needed to develop and implement transportation projects that further the goals of these stakeholders.



The transportation improvement projects and strategies presented in this chapter were developed based on the analysis of the existing conditions, growth trends, study area goals and forecasts for future conditions. The development of these projects and strategies takes into account planning activities at the regional and subregional level, including the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, Strategic Regional Arterial System, I-355 Corridor and Will County plans. Traffic impacts from the Arsenal redevelopment plans and other new developments have also been considered, including the potential increase in truck traffic.

Overall, users of the existing transportation system experience low levels of traffic congestion. The greatest need is for a more balanced system in terms of roadway function and improved continuity of arterials and collectors. Mobility on east-west facilities is constrained by both I-55, the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and the Des Plaines River.

Looking ahead, with significant anticipated growth in population and employment, traffic growth is predicted on almost all routes, regardless of jurisdiction or functional classification. Therefore, recommended actions include widening of existing facilities, expansion and/or construction of new facilities and improved connectivity and continuity. Successful implementation of these varied recommendations will require a coordinated approach and cooperation between the various public and private stakeholders in the area. To provide the most effective mechanism for achieving a well conceived, timely and efficient implementation strategy, a recommended action is to explore the feasibility of a Transportation Management Association (TMA).



The analysis of existing conditions and future growth projections form the basis for identifying roadway and transit alternatives that address existing deficiencies and accommodate future needs. Existing deficiencies and impacts from future growth and development are summarized in the following section.

Data on existing conditions show that, overall, the existing roadway network handles current traffic volumes satisfactorily, with the exception of temporary traffic slowdowns during peak periods.

- Links along IL 53 and US 45 currently operate over capacity during peak periods. The IL 53 crossing over the Kankakee River in Wilmington presently operates near capacity. IDOT traffic accident reports show high accident rates occur along US 52 between the Village of Manhattan and the west side of Joliet.
- Additionally, many of the roadways in the study area were not constructed to accommodate heavy trucks. Constraints on turning movements and pavement deterioration are examples of the problems experienced on these county and local roads.
- Due to the opening of the Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway, traffic congestion is experienced on I-55, I-80, US 52, IL 53 and many local roads during events at these venues.



Introduction

5.1 Summary of Needs

5.1.1 Correct Operational/ Capacity Deficiencies

Within the study area, there are a number of breaks in the roadway grid system, typically referred to as “roadway discontinuity.” Roadway discontinuities negatively impact mobility by breaking circulation patterns, preventing the ability to provide efficient access and eliminating alternate access routes. Specific examples of facilities where continuity improvements are needed include:

➡ East-West streets:

- Baker Road/Millsdale Road
- Smith Road/Spangler Road/Bluff Road (across Des Plaines River)
- Hoff Road at US 52
- Kankakee Street between Phillips Road and Symerton Road
- Laraway Road (across Des Plaines River to Houbolt)
- Schweitzer Road (across Des Plaines River and at US 52)
- Mississippi Avenue/Wood Road/Gallagher Road/Bruns Road

➡ North-South streets:

- Ridge Road/Briggs Street
- Gougar Road between Baker Road and Laraway Road
- Brandon Road south of Millsdale Road
- Patterson road south of Noel Road
- Cherry Hill (at US 52 and Hoff Road)



The study area is projected to see increases in population and employment, with conservative 2020 forecasts of about a 160 percent increase in population and a 180 percent increase in employment. The 2030 forecasts project even greater increases. These increases will have a direct impact on the transportation system.

Overall, the employment impact by CenterPoint Intermodal Center and Island City Industrial Park could exceed the job increase for the year 2030 that is projected by NIPC. In addition, the other industrial developments that are anticipated for the area could push the employment numbers above the current NIPC projections.

Much of the projected growth in New Lenox Township to the north of the study area is expected to occur in the southwest quadrant of the township, particularly along Laraway Road. This will place increased pressure on the east-west roadways in that particular area.

Population growth in townships just to the east of the study area is forecast to triple between 2000 and 2030. This increase will also place pressure on the east-west highway infrastructure in the study area, particularly on the Wilmington-Peotone Road and perhaps Manhattan-Monee Road.



New development projects are underway within the study area that will have a significant impact on the transportation system. Two of the projects (CenterPoint Intermodal Center and Island City Industrial Park) have been identified by Will County as “Projects of Regional Impact”. Traffic impacts associated with the Joliet Arsenal redevelopment and other developments indicate that additional capacity improvements may be necessary. Several major industrial developments are described below.

➡ **CenterPoint Intermodal Center**

5.1.2 Roadway Continuity



Laraway Road at Des Plaines River



Cherry Hill Road at Hoff Road

5.1.3 Effectively Accommodate Future Growth

5.1.4 Effectively Serve New Development

The existing roads leading from the west to the CenterPoint Intermodal Center development are not sufficient to support full-scale development. While there are substantial improvements being made to the current roadway network (Walter Strawn Drive, Baseline Road and Deer Run Drive), many remain narrow, single lane per direction and in fair to poor condition and as a result, cannot handle truck traffic. Existing bridges are also narrow and not designed to carry trucks.

All of the proposed improvements included in the CenterPoint traffic study will be needed. The intermodal center development will continue to place pressure on Arsenal Road and the intersection at Arsenal Road and I-55. The primary access road to the intermodal center is via Arsenal Road to Baseline Road.

As the intermodal center develops, there may also be a need for a second access route. While Blodgett Road would be a good candidate, it would require access through the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, an unlikely prospect. A more detailed examination of possible options may be needed.

➤ **Island City Industrial Park**

Existing roads in the Island City Industrial Park were not built to accommodate truck traffic. Existing bridges are also narrow and not designed to carry trucks. The developments within this park will place pressure on the River Road/IL 53 intersection, on the New River Road/IL 53 intersection, as well as on New River Road. South Arsenal Road from IL 53 to the new landfill access road would need to be reconstructed. Eastern access to the site will be via Old Chicago Road, which will require upgrading for truck traffic.

➤ **Laraway Crossings**

This business/distribution park, located at IL 53 and Laraway Road (across Laraway Road from the Chicagoland Speedway), is currently under development. With 352 acres and just over 6 million square feet, build out is projected in the next 10 to 20 years. This site will benefit from the infrastructure improvements recommended to serve the Speedway and surrounding area. As roadways are added or upgraded, they should be designed to accommodate truck traffic.



The projects and strategies recommended in this section were developed to address existing deficiencies and anticipated future transportation needs. These recommendations are focused on improving transportation system efficiency and mobility through actions such as expansion of existing facilities, new facilities and improved connectivity and continuity. The specific project recommendations are displayed in *Exhibit K*. A comparison between these recommendations and the proposals submitted by stakeholders is included as *Appendix D*.

Given the identified mobility needs, primary emphasis was placed on the upgrade and expansion of the overall existing arterial system rather than site-specific impacts or more regional travel issues. Focusing on the arterial network allows for a comprehensive analysis of transportation needs while taking into account other considerations, to identify projects that provide improved mobility, develop alternative routes for local travel, increase capacity where needed, improve safety and reduce potential congestion.

The recommended plan addresses regional, sub-regional and local facilities, as each type of facility serves the travel needs to, through and within the study area. Improvements to the regional facilities of I-80 and I-55 are focused on access to the study area, addressing the widening of facilities and new or improved interchanges.



Baseline Road at Walter Strawn Drive



South Arsenal Road at IL 53

5.2 Recommended Improvement Projects

Improvements to subregional arterial corridors address state and county routes that provide travel across and within the study area. Emphasis is placed on strategic regional arterial routes (existing and proposed), capacity increases, roadway upgrades (especially for truck traffic) and intersection improvements, as needed. Improvements to local facilities address continuity, accessibility and alternate travel routes through improvements such as roadway extensions, upgrades and misalignments.

Recommended improvement projects are identified below by type of improvement. Note that some recommendations may address several improvement categories but will not be listed more than once.



Several roadway and transit improvements to existing regional facilities and potentially new regional facilities have been proposed by IDOT, the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority (ISTHA) and Metra, as described below.

- **I-55:** The CATS 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) includes an additional lane in each direction on this facility between Naperville Road and US 6. An additional project is proposed from US 6 to Arsenal Road. Widening should also be considered south to the Wilmington area. Improvements may also be needed to frontage roads.

Additionally, IDOT has initiated work to reconstruct the I-55/Arsenal Road interchange. The first phase, a 2003 project, is site development and construction engineering. The second phase consists of relocating the existing Arsenal Road interchange to approximately 2,000 feet south. Along with the new interchange will be a frontage road along the east side of I-55 to Arsenal Road. This work is programmed for 2005.

- **I-80:** The 2030 RTP includes an additional lane in each direction between I-55 and US 45. The Will County Transportation Framework Plan also includes widening of this facility. A new interchange is also recommended, although a specific location has not yet been identified (pending the results of on-going studies).
- **I-355 Extension from I-55 to I-80:** The 2030 RTP includes this facility.
- **I-355 Extension (South Suburban Expressway):** The 2030 RTP includes this facility as a corridor needing further study. The ISTHA started a study of this extension to determine the specific alignment and interchange location, which generally extends from I-80 to I-57. The projected demand for this facility, based on the 2020 socio-economic forecasts, is between 11,000 and 39,000 vehicles per day. Interchanges have been considered for Laraway Road, Cedar Road and US 45.
- **Metra Heritage Corridor Extension to Wilmington:** This extension opportunity was in the Strategic Regional Transit System component of the 2020 RTP but is not included in the 2030 RTP. Stations were proposed for Elwood and Wilmington. It is recommended that this project be included in the JADA long-range plan as a future opportunity and the right-of-way should be preserved for a transit facility. A feasibility study for this route should be initiated. Significant service upgrades to the Heritage Corridor between Chicago and Joliet are included in the 2030 RTP. These service upgrades may make the Wilmington extension more viable for the 2030 RTP update.
- **Metra Southwest Service Extension from Manhattan to Midewin:** This extension opportunity is a continuation of the Southwest Service extension from Orland Park to Manhattan, which is currently underway. The current extension will include stations at Laraway Road and Manhattan. Phase II of the service

5.2.1 Regional Improvements



Hoff Road at Illinois Route 53 –
Potential location for Metra stop at Midewin National
Tallgrass Prairie

enhancements to the Southwest Service Line, including connection to the Rock Island District Line, relocation to Chicago Union Station and increased service, are included in the 2030 RTP.

A further extension from Manhattan to Midewin is recommended. It is included in the 2030 RTP. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) owns the former Norfolk Southern Railroad right-of-way south of Gallagher Road and leases it to the Will County Forest Preserve District (FPD). While some of the track has been removed, the FPD is currently leaving the right-of-way undeveloped to allow for the possible extension. While willing to explore the feasibility of the project, the FPD has not committed the use of the right-of-way to the extension. It is recommended that Metra initiate the feasibility studies, and that the right-of-way be maintained for a future transit facility.

- **Metra Outer Circumferential Rail Line (E.J.& E.):** This new suburb-to-suburb commuter rail line would be more than 100 miles long, connecting Waukegan, Illinois, to Gary, Indiana. It is included in the 2030 RTP.

Proposed stations in the study area include Joliet and New Lenox. A Phase I feasibility study has been completed and Phase II is currently underway. The Phase II study should be completed in 2005.

The communities along the corridor are also developing land use plans around the proposed stations in support of the facility. As part of the 2030 RTP a subsection of this project between Hoffman Estates and Joliet has been proposed as part of a new “STAR Line.” It is recommended that the entire EJ&E corridor should remain in the long-range plan, and the right-of-way preserved.

- **Pace Service:** While the population and employment densities may still not be high enough to support traditional fixed-route service, public transit is needed in the area.

In 2003, an agreement was executed between Pace and JADA for new transit service from Joliet to CenterPoint and Elwood. This service will begin March 1, 2004. Additional corridors should be identified for similar opportunities. Additionally, Pace has a Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP) that should be explored. The Employer Shuttle program has direct applicability to the CenterPoint and Island City industrial parks. Several other Pace VIP options may meet the transit needs of the communities within the study area.



5 – TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Operational/Capacity Improvements

To address existing deficiencies, capacity and/or operational improvements may be needed, such as roadway widening and new and/or improved intersection control. These types of improvements are needed for the following roadways as described below.

- **IL 53:** Although currently a four-lane divided roadway, some segments currently experience peak period congestion. Additionally, existing industrial development and the future growth of the Village of Elwood may warrant the need for future improvements. Improvements may include widening from Arsenal/Manhattan Road to Blodgett Road, use of frontage roads in commercial areas, or other improvements as recommended by the SRA study report.
- **US 52:** Widen from two lanes to four lanes from I-80 to Wilmington-Peotone Road. This should be divided into two phases – from I-80 to Manhattan-Monee Road and from Manhattan-Monee Road to Wilmington-Peotone Road. The first phase is needed to address existing safety and capacity issues. The second phase should occur when future demands dictate.
- **US 6:** Widen from two lanes to four lanes, from west of I-55 to US 52. Will County projects average daily traffic to increase to 15,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day by 2020.

Balanced Transportation System (Functional Hierarchy)

The transportation network should be developed as a comprehensive system that provides accessibility and is supportive of land uses. This concept is especially critical for the study area given the forecast for significant increases in traffic volumes. To provide a more balanced system of arterials, collectors and local streets, including the designation of new SRA routes, extensions, enhancements and/or improvement are recommended for the following roadways:

Major Arterials

- **Wilmington-Peotone Road:** Implementation of SRA study recommendations to add an additional lane in each direction and make related intersection improvements.
- **Arsenal Road/Manhattan Road:** Arsenal Road is the major access road to the CenterPoint Intermodal Center. This roadway should be widened from two lanes to four lanes from I-55 to US 52. Traffic signals are needed at IL 53. IDOT has initiated work on the relocation of the I-55/Arsenal Road interchange (see regional projects). Manhattan Road will also need upgrading similar to Arsenal Road to meet the expected increases in traffic. Given the importance of this corridor, Arsenal Road/Manhattan Road should be designated an SRA route. The portion of the route between I-55 and US 45 is included as a potential SRA addition in the 2030 RTP. The preliminary evaluation recommended by the RTP should be initiated.
- **Laraway Road:** This road is a major east-west arterial connecting Joliet and New Lenox to Frankfort and is a proposed interchange location with I-355. Traffic volumes are expected to nearly double to 15,000 vehicles per day by 2020. Laraway Road also serves the Chicagoland Speedway. This road should be widened from two lanes to four lanes from IL 53 to US 45 with access controls and signalized intersections as needed. Additionally, Laraway Road should be extended west with a new bridge over the Des Plaines River, connecting at Houbolt Road.

5.2.2 Sub-Regional Improvements



Schweitzer Road at US 52



Baker Road at Cherry Hill Road



Drummond Road east of Baseline Road



Gougar Road at Laraway Road

Minor Arterials

- ➔ **Gougar Road:** Gougar Road can serve an important cross-county function connecting US 6 to Laraway Road and to US 30. The I-355 extension to I-80 could double or triple travel demand, from about 5,000 to 10,000 to 18,000 vehicles per day. Gougar Road should be upgraded and widened to a four-lane facility from I-80 to US 52, including an extension from its current terminus at Laraway Road to Baker Road (US 52). Additionally, the Will County Transportation Framework Plan recommends Gougar Road be considered for SRA designation. The designation will add SRA coverage in this growing part of the county. Gougar Road between I-355 and Wilmington-Peotone Road is included as a potential SRA addition in the 2030 RTP. The preliminary evaluation recommended by the RTP should be initiated.
- ➔ **Cedar Road:** Cedar Road is an important north-south facility, connecting New Lenox to US 52 and Wilmington-Peotone Road. Cedar Road will also be an important connection to the proposed I-355 extension. This road should be widened from two lanes to four lanes from Francis Road in New Lenox to Manhattan-Monee Road, with access control measures and signalized intersections as warranted.
- ➔ **Cherry Hill Road:** Cherry Hill Road serves north-south travel from New Lenox to Hoff Road. This road should be widened from two lanes to a minimum of a three-lane cross-section, depending on the implementation of Gougar Road improvements. Intersections should be signalized as needed. In addition, the offset intersection with US 52 should be improved.

Collector Roads

- ➔ **Schweitzer/Delaney Road:** These roads provide an alternate east-west travel route, connecting US 45 to IL 53 and provide major access to the Chicagoland Speedway. Operational improvements such as intersection control and left turn lanes should be implemented. Additionally, Schweitzer Road should be extended west from Brandon Road to Patterson Road, which can provide an alternate access route to Center Point Intermodal Center. The offset intersection at US 52 should also be improved.
- ➔ **Ridge Road/Briggs Street:** These roads should be extended between Manhattan Road and W. Spencer Road, with a connection to Briggs Street to improve continuity and circulation around the Chicagoland Speedway. The Will County Transportation Framework Plan proposed a three-lane cross-section.
- ➔ **Rowell:** Similar to Ridge Road, this road provides continuity within the county and access to Chicagoland Speedway from the south. It should be upgraded to a three-lane cross-section between Schweitzer Road and Manhattan Road.
- ➔ **Brandon Road:** Brandon Road is an important route, as it connects the study area to Joliet and Rockdale, via its Des Plaines River crossing and connection to US 6. Significant growth in traffic is projected, particularly if other river crossing alternatives, such as Houbolt Road, are not moved forward. Capacity improvement will be needed to accommodate this growth, which could include widening the bridge over the Des Plaines River.

System Continuity

Road grids provide a logical and easily understood system of roads that provide direct linkages. This grid is broken in several locations in the study area due to roadway discontinuities and intersection offsets/misalignments. The proposed future roadway network anticipates the addition of several new roadway segments or street additions as well as intersection improvements to complete and/or improve the existing grid system. Completing a comprehensive east-west and north-south network of streets can improve mobility through improved traffic circulation, improved safety and the provision of alternate travel routes. Roadway links should be included for the following facilities:

- **Wilmington-Peotone Road:** Extend from IL 53 to New River Road.
- **Baker Road:** Extend from Cherry Hill Road to IL 53.
- **Hoff Road:** Realign to connect into Walter Strawn Drive.
- **Intersection realignments:** Cedar Road/Bruns Road; Hoff Road/US 52; Mississippi Avenue at IL 53; Mississippi Avenue at Brown, and Delaney/Schweitzer at US 52.

New Development Accommodations

Improvements are recommended to accommodate specific development projects, such as upgrading and widening, for the new developments listed below.

➤ **CenterPoint Intermodal Center**

Several studies have been previously conducted to develop roadway improvement recommendations specific to the CenterPoint Intermodal Center and several of those recommendations are already being implemented. Those recommendations are included in this plan with little additional analysis conducted. Improvements to the following roads, per the CenterPoint traffic impact study:

- Four lanes on Arsenal Road from I-55 to Baseline Road, with auxiliary turn lanes at intersections.
- Four lanes on Drummond Road (also marked as Mississippi) from Baseline Road to Deer Run Drive, with auxiliary turn lanes at intersections.
- Six lanes on Baseline Road between Arsenal Road and Drummond Road.
- Signalized intersections at: I-55/Arsenal Road (east and west ramps), Baseline Road/Arsenal Road and Main Street (Mississippi Rd.)/IL 53.
- Grade separation of Arsenal Road at BNSF railroad crossing.
- At I-55/Arsenal Road interchange, dual left turn lanes are needed along Arsenal Road for northbound and southbound I-55 traffic, while dual right turn lanes are needed for the exit ramps.
- Add left turn lanes at all intersections along the following roads: Manhattan Road, Main Street and Arsenal Road.

➤ **Island City Industrial Park and Prairie View Recycling & Disposal Facility**

- South Arsenal Road: Upgrade South Arsenal Road to accommodate truck traffic. The intersection of South Arsenal Road and IL 53 should be upgraded and signalized.
- Improvements/upgrade to Old Chicago Road, including widening and intersection improvements.

➤ *Chicagoland Speedway*

Improvements to Ridge, Laraway, Schweitzer and Brandon will help to improve access, connectivity and circulation for traffic destined to the Chicagoland Speedway, as previously described under Collector Roads.



These improvements recognize the relationship between land uses and transportation facilities and need to be developed in a coordinated and integrated manner. Within the study area there is an opportunity to coordinate land use development and transportation improvements with JADA providing leadership. However, there are other mechanisms to coordinate planning efforts. One such mechanism is a Transportation Management Association (TMA).

A TMA can serve as a clearinghouse for information, monitor traffic activity and provide a forum for consensus building and coordination of planning and development efforts. All of the stakeholders identified various development activities planned over the next several years. Integrating these activities to ensure the timely implementation of needed infrastructure and services significantly improves the likelihood that these projects will benefit all of the communities and businesses in the entire study area.

A TMA can promote transit alternatives by brokering transit services, by coordinating delivery of services or serving as direct providers of service. The agreement between Pace and JADA is an example of this type of initiative.

A TMA can be an advocate for project implementation at all levels of government. A number of the projects identified by various stakeholders may require additional funding or special designation in transportation legislation.

There are several examples of successful TMAs and transportation management activities in Northeastern Illinois.

➤ *The United Parcel Service (UPS) Program*

The UPS facility in Hodgkins has grown from 200 employees when it first opened over ten years ago to approximately 9,000 people today. UPS has a transportation manager that works with Pace, the Chicago Transit Authority and employees to implement transit service to the site. When the transportation manager position was created in 1998, there were only two bus routes serving the facility. In 2001 there were seven Pace routes and one CTA route. Together, these routes serve 3,650 employees per day. One of the successes of this program is the expanded labor pool for UPS. People who once considered UPS inaccessible now comprise a large portion of its work force.

➤ *The TMA of Lake-Cook Program*

The Lake-Cook Corridor has experienced over a 100 percent increase in employment over the past two decades. The rapid development along this corridor has resulted in significant traffic congestion. In recognition that something needed to be done to address the transportation needs of employees, the Lake-Cook TMA was formed in 1989. In 1996 the TMA received Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funding to initiate the Lake-Cook Shuttle Bug, a shuttle service between the Metra commuter rail station on Lake-Cook Road and the businesses within the corridor. In 2001, there were 10 routes providing about 800 passenger trips per day.

5.3 Transportation Management Association

The TMA has also worked with the Village of Deerfield to implement a sidewalk program linking the Metra station with neighboring developments. The TMA has also been a strong advocate in support of improvements to Lake-Cook Road, the widening of IL 22 and the extension of IL 53.

JADA is well positioned to be the cornerstone for the development of a TMA. There already is recognition by many businesses and local governments in the area that coordinated planning is necessary. The Strategic Management Plan and this study have identified some of the development conditions and transportation issues to be addressed. A series of questions should be answered to assess the feasibility of a TMA for this area:

- *What would the TMA service area include?*
- *What transportation-related problems do people in the area experience? (Much of this information is contained in this report).*
- *Which of the problems can the TMA address and in what ways?*
- *What transportation strategies should be implemented?*
- *How would the TMA be funded? (Funding commitments from the private sector will be needed)*
- *Is a TMA the most appropriate organization?*
- *Private sector interest?*



As discussed in *Chapter 1*, the overall purpose of this plan is to identify, evaluate and recommend the transportation alternatives required to serve the existing and planned developments in and around the former Joliet Arsenal and to recommend an implementation plan for these alternatives. Developing a plan to direct the future development of the transportation system is critical to ensure that the system:

- Serves the needs for the movement of both people and goods in the study area.
- Is a coordinated, cohesive and balanced system.
- Furthers the goals of Will County, Will County municipalities and the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority.
- Provides appropriate functions and level of service.
- Is developed in a safe, efficient and cost-effective manner.

Based on the recommended improvements identified in *Chapter 5*, the next step in the planning process is to prioritize the improvement projects and develop an action plan.



Several important actions are the keys to successful implementation of the recommended improvement projects:

- Most importantly, implementation will require cooperation and coordination from the various study partners and implementing agencies. Projects with such cooperation and coordination are not only more likely to be implemented, but can also move forward more quickly. Establishing a Transportation Management Association could be an effective mechanism for accomplishing this effort.
- Addressing future needs requires a balanced approach between land use, growth policies and transportation improvements. A balanced transportation system supports all modes of transportation. Generally, projects that integrate roadway and transit improvements are viewed more favorably by the public, decision-makers and implementing agencies.
- Finally, opportunities for increased funding should be pursued consistently. Some projects may be high priority to address immediate needs and thus rank higher for funding commitments. However, other projects may extend beyond the 20-year horizon of this study and involve many years of planning and engineering studies. Funding opportunities for these studies require commitment and coordination between study partners. In other cases, such as establishment of a Transportation Management Association, identifying funding sources may involve less traditional sources as well as private sector funds.



To evaluate and prioritize potential projects, evaluation criteria were developed based on the study goals as well as the overall potential benefits to the transportation system. These criteria are based on a more subjective evaluation, rather than a quantitative approach using modeling techniques.

The criteria established for this study include:

- **Function:** Relates to connectivity, land access and system cohesiveness.
- **System continuity.** Facilitates linkages between facilities across and through the study area.
- **Capacity.** Addresses existing and projected future deficiencies, as well as overall system effectiveness.
- **Regional access.** Addresses connections to regional transportation facilities.
- **Improved safety.** Addresses geometric design and operational improvements.

Introduction

6.1 Keys to Implementation

6.2 Project Priorities

- **Balance:** Evaluates the overall composition of the transportation system, including supporting all modes and the coordination between land uses and transportation decisions.

Each recommended project has been evaluated using these criteria presented in *Appendix E - Improvement Project Evaluation*.

From this evaluation, each recommended improvement project has been identified as a high, medium or low priority. These rankings are based on the number of criteria each project meets. Additionally, priority was placed on projects that address maintenance of the existing system or address existing safety or critical capacity needs. Projects that are contingent upon projected growth to occur, or opportunities that may arise in the future, were considered lower priorities.

High Priority Actions

As a result of this evaluation, the following are recommended as high-priority actions:

- *Complete IDOT programmed projects at I-55 and Arsenal Road*
- *Complete IDOT and local programmed projects on Drummond Road, Mississippi Avenue and Manhattan Road*
- *Complete Will County programmed projects on Arsenal Road, Baseline Road, South Arsenal Road and Cedar Road.*
- *Complete Metra Southwest Service Line extension to Manhattan*
- *Construct I-355 between I-55 and I-80*
- *Widen IL 53 between Arsenal Road and Wilmington-Peotone Road*
- *Widen US 52 between I-80 and Wilmington-Peotone Road*
- *Implement SRA-related improvements on Wilmington-Peotone Road between IL 53 and US 45.*
- *Designate Arsenal/Manhattan Road from I-55 to US 45 as an SRA*
- *Widen Laraway Road between I-80 and Cedar Road and add new Des Plaines River crossing at Houbolt Road*
- *Designate Gongar Road from Wilmington-Peotone Road to the proposed I-355 extension as an SRA*
- *Widen Cedar Road between Francis and Manhattan-Monee Road*
- *Widen Brandon Road between US 6 and Schweitzer Road*
- *Explore feasibility of a Transportation Management Association*
- *Add lanes on I-55 Naperville Road to US 6*
- *Metra Projects: Construct STAR Line; extend Southwest Service line from Manhattan to Midewin*
- *Outer Circumferential sections in the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan: Begin required feasibility studies and preserve right-of-way.*
- *Begin required feasibility studies and preserve right-of-way for Heritage Line extension to Wilmington so it can be included in the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan Update.*
- *Preserve rights-of-way for all future highway and transit projects that are identified in the 2030 RTP and the Will County Transportation Framework Plan Update.*

Initiating discussions with implementing agencies and undertaking of further detailed studies are recommended actions for immediate pursuit.



With any new roadway or transit project, implementation will take considerable time, effort and money. Generally, activities such as Feasibility Studies, Phase I Engineering, Phase 2 Engineering/Final Design must be completed. In some cases, environmental impact statements (EIS) may be required. After completion of these studies, land acquisition is usually required. This means that short-term implementation activities will primarily involve the initiation of these studies, while actual construction would not occur until much later.

Appendix E presents an evaluation matrix as a means for establishing priorities among the recommended projects. It is important to recognize that projects designated as high priority could actually take the longest to implement. For example, a high-priority project is a new river crossing at Houbolt Road. This project could involve years of planning, including location and environmental studies, require significant resources and then take two to three years for construction. Projects that could be implemented in the short-term are typically intersection improvements to address capacity deficiencies, safety-related improvements or improvements focused on peak period congestion “hot spots.”

Three implementation time periods were identified for this study:

- Short-term (five to seven years)
- Mid-term (eight to 15 years)
- Long-term (16 to 20 years)

However, this study is based on a “planning level” of analysis. Further detailed analysis will be required to determine the feasibility and direction of the proposed project, including order of magnitude cost estimates. This is needed in order to match projects with anticipated funding levels, which then would translate into an implementation plan. In addition, most of the projects would be the responsibility of an agency other than JADA. Coordination and consultation with Will County, ISTHA, Metra, Pace and IDOT is a prerequisite for inclusion in each implementing agency’s capital program.

For this study, only short-term actions can more accurately be identified.



There are a number of activities that should take place in the short-term.

- Develop detailed action plan, in coordination with study partners to assign responsibilities and develop schedules for each proposed project.
- Further develop recommended high priority improvement projects, including conducting detailed traffic analysis and order-of-magnitude costs.
- Pursue funding opportunities for each project that include traditional as well as innovative public and private strategies.
- Preserve/acquire right-of-way as needed, or as available for new roadways and transit facilities.
- Work with IDOT and ISTHA to promote completion of I-355 extension from I-55 to I-80.
- Continue to work with IDOT to widen I-55 south to I-80.
- Work with Pace and Metra on pursuing transit service expansion projects.
- Work with local municipalities to encourage transit oriented development (TOD) around new train stations or transit facilities.
- Explore feasibility of a TMA. Work with regional agencies and employers to encourage use of alternative travel modes and support roadway improvement projects.
- Initiate corridor studies for proposed new SRA routes, including Arsenal/Manhattan Roads and Gougar Road.

6.3 Project Phasing

6.4 Short-Term Actions

- Continue efforts with Center Point Intermodal Center and Island City Industrial Park regarding implementation of site-specific road improvements.



This long-range transportation plan has been prepared as a guide for future transportation improvement projects, serving JADA developments, area municipalities and Will County. It is intended to provide guidance to implementing agencies regarding the priorities and needs in the study area and as input to future regional and county planning efforts such as the Will County 2030 Framework Plan. Additionally, this document should be considered as part of an on-going process and should be updated and refined as conditions change.



6.5 Conclusion