

Will County Transportation Blueprint 2013

Approved 11-16-2012

Case Statement:

The business leadership of Will County through the Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) is committed to improving the quality of life for Will County residents and those who work and travel in Will County, while also advocating a business climate supportive of the expansion and attraction of business and industry to the County.

The emergence of Will County as a Global Transportation Center has dramatically increased Will County's positive economic impact on the economy of the Chicago Region, the State of Illinois and the Nation.

To this end, working with key stakeholders in furthering this critical economic activity, the CED has updated the Will County Transportation Blueprint that will serve as a guide for transportation planning and improvements throughout Will County through the year 2030.

Will County Transportation Blueprint Guiding Principals

Recognize and embrace that Will County is a global leader in multi-modal transportation

- The CED should continue to play a **leadership role** in the transportation planning for Will County:
 - ↳ Our transportation system planning needs to be **multi-modal**: air, highway, rail, water and transit with an understanding of their inter-connection
 - ↳ Identify **priority** transportation infrastructure projects as part of the Blueprint and review annually.
 - ↳ Identify key Will County Projects that are **Projects of Regional and National Significance**
 - ↳ Identify the required transportation investments for successful **development of Target Industry Clusters**

- **Adequate funding** is the most important element for plans and projects identified in the Blueprint;
 - ↳ Identify and support **innovative funding** for infrastructure
 - ↳ Demand an **equitable distribution** of infrastructure resources
 - ↳ **Raise awareness** among Will County leaders and residents regarding the significance of an adequately and properly funded regional transportation system:
 - Present **unified, clear and consistent messaging** to elected officials, agencies and the public at large
 - Promote **effective collaboration** with governmental units on transportation issues
 - Develop **strong political allies and partnerships** at the Federal, State and local levels to influence transportation planning and funding

- Understand how the **global economy** supports elements of the Blueprint;

- Understand how the **regulatory environment** affects necessary infrastructure development

Will County Transportation Blueprint

The Will County Center for Economic Development calls for...

Roads

1. Recognition that the surface transportation situation is at critical point in Will County, potentially affecting the entire Midwest region and the Nation;
2. Public and private entities to fulfill their commitments to Will County transportation projects;
3. Improvement of local and state roads to maximize the benefit to Will County that has come with the regional projects such as I-355, the Inland Port, the South Suburban Airport and the Illiana Expressway;
4. Elimination of surface transportation “choke points” that impede or threaten the safe and efficient movement of goods and people;
5. Identification of rights-of-way for future major local arterial routes, and adequate funding to protect them;
6. Evaluation of how the region’s public transportation agencies can best serve the needs of Will County;

Rail/Transit

7. Identification of regional and local rail infrastructure projects to improve Will County's position as a Global Rail Port;
8. Support of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) to reduce rail and motorist congestion and improve passenger rail service;
9. Identification and support for transit initiatives which are necessary for continued economic growth in the region;

Water

11. Evaluation of the waterway system, including locks, to ensure adequacy for the efficient movement of barge traffic. Support funding for identified improvements;
12. Adoption of a strategic approach to the efficient interface between waterway and all surface transportation;

Air

13. Continued support for the completion of the Environmental Impact Study and land acquisition leading to construction of the South Suburban Airport;
14. Insistence that Will County control ownership and operation of the South Suburban Airport;
15. Insistence that the Will County transportation plan includes adequate access to the airport while accommodating the needs of all modes of local transportation.
16. Support the expansion of Lewis University Airport and other area general aviation airports to serve the increasing corporate aviation demand throughout the County.

2013 Priority Transportation Action Steps

The Will County CED will...

1. Update the Will County Transportation Plan with specific project priorities;
2. Identify funding solutions for the Will County Transportation System;
3. Continue to meet with the Governor's Office, state legislators, U.S. Senators and Congressman and transportation officials for support of Projects of Regional and National Significance that positively impact the economic development of Will County;
4. Continue to host annual Global Logistics Summits bringing together all of the stakeholders in the development of Will County as an Inland Port.;
5. Tell the logistics and transportation story of Will County and the economic benefits of being the Largest Inland Container Port in North America

Summary of Key Transportation Projects for Will County

A. Introduction

What follows is a compilation of transportation projects which the CED sees as essential for the economic development future of Will County. The projects identified in no way represent all of the transportation projects that Will County and its municipalities need for their future economic success. The intent is to identify projects that will have county-wide, regional and national impacts.

A number of the projects identified in the first Blueprint were successfully completed or started:

- Fund and build the I-355 Extension
- Construct a new interchange at I-55 and Arsenal Road
- Widen Route 59 from Shorewood to Plainfield/I-55.
- Add lanes on I-80 from Harlem Ave. to Rte. 30
- Construct a new interchange at I-55 and Route 59.
- Widen Route 30 from Joliet to Harlem Avenue.
- Interchange at I-294 & I-57

B. General Issues

While Congress has passed a twenty-six month transportation funding reauthorization bill (MAP-21) there is no increase in funding for the State of Illinois between FY2012 and FY2014. Continued funding for high speed rail and modest increases in transit funding will benefit Will County.

The "Illinois Jobs Now" \$32 billion capital bill signed by Governor Quinn in 2009 has suffered from court challenges, lagging electronic poker revenues and high borrowing costs due to the State's bond rating downgrades. IDOT's FY13 highway construction program is expected to drop by as much as 50% -- from \$2.9 billion in FY12 to only \$1.4-\$1.7 billion.

Will County has a dedicated revenue stream ("Build Will") from the RTA sales tax for a long term road capital funding program for county road construction and maintenance.

As a result of Will County's emergence as the largest inland container port in North America, a number of the transportation projects needed in Will County are projects of regional and national significance.

The public sector will not have adequate funding to complete many of the projects identified in the Blueprint. The CED believes all infrastructure funding options must be utilized including increasing the federal and state motor fuel income taxes, use of private equity funding through Public Private Partnerships, congestion pricing, use of federal TIFIA funding, etc.

C. State/Federal Road Projects *(priority is based on next best available funding source)*

- Add lanes to I-80 from Rte. 30 west to the Will County line including the I-80 and Rte. 53 interchange;
- Complete the EIS for the Illiana Expressway, acquire necessary right of way and construct the highway connecting I-65 with I-55 along the preferred B-3 alignment;
- Initiate Phase I engineering and land acquisition to widen I-55 south from I-80 to the county line, including the DesPlaines Bridge;
- Reconstruction of the Rte. 6 and I-55 interchange;

- Houboldt bridge connecting I-80 with CenterPoint Intermodal Center;
- I-55 interchange at I-55 and Weber Road;
- I-55 Interchanges at Lorenzo Road and IL 129;
- Interchange at I-57 and Stuenkel Rd;
- Construct full interchanges at I-55 and Lockport Road and I-55 and Route 126;
- IL 394 Add lanes from US 30 to IL 1;
- Improve state highways that feed into the I-355 Extension;

D. Local Road Projects

- Improve arterial roads along the I-355 corridor to handle the influx of traffic.
- Improve primary county arterials, e.g. Laraway Road, Cedar Road, Wilmington-Peotone Road, Weber Road, etc. as identified in the County's 2030 Transportation Plan.
- Continue work on planning critical corridors such as the Caton Farm Road/Bruce Road corridor.

E. State and Federal Aviation Projects

- Complete airport master plan and Tier II EIS for South Suburban Airport.
- Create the Will County Airport Authority to build and operate the airport.
- Identify and provide infrastructure that will be required in the areas adjacent to the airport.

F. Local Aviation Projects

- Support safety and capacity improvements at all general aviation airports in the county.
- Work with Lewis Airport for development of air traffic control tower and ILS equipment

G. Rail/Transit Projects

- Support additional intermodal and trans-load facilities along Class 1 railroads in Will County
- Support the Chicago region CREATE rail program
- Increase Metra service along the Heritage Corridor
- Extend Metra service from Chicago Southland to Will County.
- Support Pace in their planning to improve bus service throughout the region.
- Identify and promote non-traditional transit alternatives such as van/carpooling, Arterial Rapid Transit and locally based bus service.

H. State and Federal Water Projects

- Support funding for needed improvements to the lock and dams on the Des Plaines and Illinois Rivers.
- Identify other issues that may negatively impede the flow of commerce on the rivers such as the management of invasive species encroaching into the Great Lakes.
- Support the expansion of barge terminal facilities to increase the movement of commodities.