

Will County Transportation Blueprint 2019

Case Statement:

The Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) is committed to improving the quality of life for Will County residents and those individuals who work and travel in Will County, while also advocating a business climate supportive of the expansion and attraction of business and industry in 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 the CED has developed the Will County Transportation Blueprint that will serve as a guide for transportation planning and improvements throughout Will County through the year 2050.

2019 Will County Transportation Blueprint Guiding Principles

- **Recognize, embrace and communicate 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-connectivity.
 - Identify **priority** transportation infrastructure projects as part of the Blueprint and review annually.
 - Identify Will County Projects that are **Projects of Regional and National Significance** for state and federal planning and funding purposes.
 - Identify and support the required transportation investments for successful **business recruitment and expansion** for both the movement of goods and workforce supply.
 - Identify and support the expansion of public transit options for Will County residents and the labor force critical to Will County businesses.
 - Collaborate with organizations in the region that plan, fund, regulate and influence the maintenance and expansion of our transportation system.
- **Adequate funding is the most important element for plans and projects identified in the Blueprint:**
 - Identify and support traditional and **innovative funding** for transportation infrastructure projects.
 - Support an **equitable distribution** of infrastructure resources locally, regionally and nationally based on **performance criteria**.
 - **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.
 - Demand that public and private entities fulfill their commitments to Will County transportation projects.

- **Understand and communicate global economic trends and their impact on Blueprint priorities.**
- **Understand and communicate how the regulatory environment affects infrastructure development and redevelopment.**

2019 Will County Transportation Blueprint

Roads and Bridges

1. Recognition that the surface transportation situation is at critical point in Will County, affecting the entire Midwest region and the Nation.
2. Improvement of local and state roads and bridges to maximize the benefit to Will County as a result of completed and proposed regional projects such as I-355, expansion of the Inland Port, the Crete CXS Intermodal, the South Suburban Airport and the Illiana Expressway.
3. Elimination of surface transportation “choke points” that impede or threaten the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.
4. Identification of rights-of-way for future major local arterial routes, and adequate funding to protect them.

Rail and Transit

5. Identification and support of regional and local rail infrastructure projects to improve Will County’s position as a global rail port;
6. Support projects that reduce freight, passenger rail and automobile conflicts and improve safety throughout the region.
7. Support high-speed rail projects and service in the region.
8. Identification and support for multi-modal public transit projects, programs and transit-oriented developments which are necessary for continued economic growth in Will County and the region;

Water

9. Evaluation and improvement of the waterway system, including locks, dams, bridges and terminals to ensure the efficient movement of barge traffic. Support innovative funding for identified improvements.
10. Support programs and policies that improve the efficient interface between waterway and all other surface transportation modes.

Air

11. Continued support for the development of the South Suburban Airport (SSA).
12. Development of a Will County Aviation Plan that addresses land use, transportation, economic development and environmental protection issues for development and expansion of airports in the county.
13. Support the expansion of existing general aviation airports to serve the increasing corporate aviation demand throughout the Will County.

2019 Priority Transportation Action Steps

The Will County CED will...

1. Update the Will County Transportation Blueprint with specific project priorities every year.
2. Identify and support funding solutions for the Will County transportation system;
3. Continue to meet with the Governor's Office, state legislators, U.S. Senators and Representatives, and regional, state and federal transportation agencies for support of Projects of National and Regional Significance that positively impact the economic development of Will County, the region and the nation.
4. Continue to host events such as the Global Logistics Summit bringing together all of the stakeholders in the development of Will County as an Inland Port.
5. Establish support groups, committees, coalitions and lobbying initiatives to influence public decision making impacting the Will County transportation system.
6. Communicate the logistics and transportation story of Will County focusing on the economic benefits of being the Largest Inland Port in North America

Summary of Key Transportation Projects for Will County

A. Introduction

What follows is a compilation of transportation projects that 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 countywide, regional and national impacts.

A number of the projects identified in the first and subsequent Blueprints have been completed or started:

- Fund and build the I-355 Extension
- Construct a new interchange at I-55 and Arsenal Road
- Widen Route 59 from I-55 to the county line.
- 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.
- New interchange at I-294 & I-57
- Construct a new interchange at I-57 and Stuenkal Rd.
- Add lanes to Illinois Route 30 from Illinois Route 59 to I-55.
- Reconstruct the Rte. 6 and I-55 interchange.
- Reconstruct the I-55 & Weber Rd. interchange
- Illinois Route 7 (159th Street) from Interstate Route 355 to Cook-Will County Line
- Reconstruction of the Interstate Rte. 55 and U.S. Rte. 30 Interchange.

B. Funding

The public sector does 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 taxes, use of private funding through Public Private Partnerships, tolling, congestion pricing, use of federal loans and grants.

Federal: FAST Act

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or "FAST Act." It is the first law enacted in over ten years that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation, allowing States and local governments to move forward with critical transportation projects with the confidence that they will have a Federal partner over the long term. For the first time the FAST Act established both formula and discretionary grant programs to fund **critical transportation projects that would benefit freight movements**. These programs provide a dedicated source of Federal funding for freight projects, including multimodal projects. The Act emphasizes the importance of Federal coordination to **focus local governments on the needs of freight transportation providers**. It is critical that Will County governments do the necessary planning and preparation to qualify for these new freight infrastructure programs.

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

State:

<Insert new capital bill description>

Local

Will County, its municipalities and townships must work together and maximize use of local resources (state and local motor fuel taxes, RTA sales tax, dedicated road taxes) to bring the local networks to a state of good repair, improve accessibility and where needed, add capacity.
<insert wording on Will County gas tax opportunity>

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

New Construction

- Illiana Expressway connecting I-55/I-57/I-65 (IDOT)
- Houbolt Parkway Extension connecting I-80 with CenterPoint Intermodal Center (P3)
- Interstate Route 55 at Airport/Lockport Road and IL 126 (IDOT)
- Illinois Route 126 Re-route - 143rd Street Extension

Add Lanes

- Interstate Route 80 (Rte. 57 to I-294) (IDOT)
- Illinois Route 394/Illinois Route 1 from US Route 30 to the Illiana Expressway (IDOT)
- Widen I-55 south from I-80 to the county line
- Add managed lanes on I-55 from I-355 to I-90/94.

Capacity Improvements:

- Interstate Route 55 (Interstate Route 355 to Interstate Route 90/94) (IDOT)
- Illinois Route 53 channelization (US Route 52 to West Arsenal Road) (IDOT)

Reconstruct

- I-80 from Ridge Rd. to U.S. Rte. 30.
- I-55 south from Weber Road to I-80
- I-55 at Rte. 59 interchange
- I-55 and IL Route 129/Lorenzo Road interchanges

D. Local Road Projects

- Improve the local arterial roads along the I-355 corridor to handle new development along the corridor
- Improve primary county arterials, e.g. Laraway Road, Cedar Road, Wilmington-Peotone Road, Weber Road, etc. as identified in the County's 2040 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.
- Complete land acquisition for the SSA Inaugural Airport.
- Support the construction of the SSA.
- Identify and support infrastructure that will be required in the areas adjacent to the airport.

F. Local Aviation Projects

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

G. Rail/Transit Projects

- Illinois Route 53/Illinois Route 113 Intersection/Rail Crossing improvements (High Speed Rail).
- Support the development of intermodal and trans-load facilities on the CSX line at Crete
- Support the Chicago region CREATE rail program
- Increase Metra service along the Heritage Corridor
- Extend Metra service from Chicago Southland to the South Suburban Airport.
- 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 including keeping the inland waterway open to the Great Lakes.
- 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.