HONORABLE TONI PRECKWINKLE, PRESIDENT
COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



JUNE 2016

CONNECTING COOK COUNTY

2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To the Residents of Cook County:

From roads and canals, to railways and airplanes, advances in transportation have shaped our nation and driven our economic presence in the world. Cook County's economic health depends in no small part on our ability to provide systems that reduce the transportation costs for our families and businesses and improve commerce by more efficiently getting people to jobs and goods to markets. Transportation is an investment in our economic future.

In Cook County, we have the distinct advantage of being at the center of our nation's transportation infrastructure. With two major airports, ten interstate expressways, and the largest freight hub in the nation, our transportation system is one of our region's most important assets—key not only to our economic prosperity, but to the well-being of our residents.

Yet, in the 70 years since the County's last strategic transportation plan, the commitment and investment in our infrastructure has declined. Our transportation system has aged and fallen behind those of similar regions across the globe.

For too long, Cook County sat back while others made decisions affecting our residents and businesses. It's time Cook County not only had a seat at the table, but also played a leadership role in creating a modern transportation system that meets changing consumer needs and responds to the demands of a twenty-first century economy.

Cook County has more than half of the metropolitan region's population, jobs, and businesses and is uniquely vested in the health and sustainability of our transportation system. For these same reasons, we are also uniquely positioned to lead the charge.

Connecting Cook County is a call to action—a framework to promote the strategic partnerships and investments that strengthen our economy and lead to more livable communities.

Connecting Cook County includes input from the public and private sectors, issue experts, and community members who rely on our transportation system every day. It will allow us to achieve a better understanding of our current landscape as well as to prepare for the challenges and opportunities on the horizon.

Sincerely,

Toni Preckwinkle, President
Cook County Board of Commissioners



2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

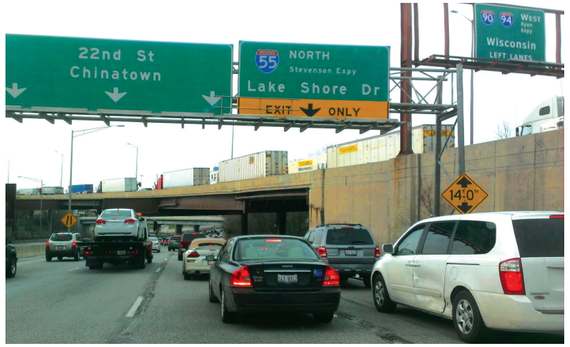
NEEDS

CHAPTER ONE

COOK COUNTY'S TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Cook County's transportation system is one of its greatest assets, having a central—even dominant—role in the national and international movement of people and goods. As this plan *Connecting Cook County* will outline, this competitive advantage is being threatened by the actions other regions are taking, as well as the Chicago region's own limits in confronting significant challenges. Many of these impediments are evident today. Other impediments and opportunities will emerge as new technologies are adopted, as consumers express new preferences, and as the economy continues to transform itself.









Connecting Cook County provides the framework through which County officials, under the leadership of President Preckwinkle, can plan for the future, advocate for sound transportation policies, and—most importantly—take action.

The findings and recommendations of *Connecting Cook County* are based on these realities:

- The purpose of transportation is to support the economy and create livable communities. Transportation is meant to get workers to work, shoppers to stores, students to school, and products to consumers. Good transportation systems help create stronger economies, reduce transportation costs, and create better, more livable communities.
- Transportation systems are multi-purpose and multi-modal. Airports generate truck and auto traffic. Passenger rail services compete with freight transportation. Cars and trucks share the same highways. The various components have to be designed and managed as an integrated system, rather than as distinct silos.
- The current transportation system involves hundreds of public agencies working with private sector institutions to provide transportation assets and services. Effective transportation planning and management requires intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships with the private sector.

This chapter of *Connecting Cook County* begins with a description of the users of the transportation system and the reasons they need these services. It then describes the trends that will shape future preferences and alter the way transportation services are delivered.

Transportation supports the economy and creates livable communities by getting workers to work, shoppers to stores, students to school, and products to consumers.

The Current Need for Transportation Services

Every day Cook County residents use various transportation services to get to work, school, family, and friends. Businesses use it to receive raw materials, ship finished products to customers, or fly across the world to finalize a deal. People and businesses from other areas also depend heavily on the County's transportation system, whether they are going to work, visiting a museum, or passing through on their way from Indianapolis to Milwaukee. All of these millions of daily trips fulfill some economic or social purpose. The users of the system are looking for the least expensive, most convenient, most reliable, and safest ways to reach their destinations.

Transportation is not an end in itself. It is a means by which people and businesses fulfill their objectives. And yet, agencies responsible for transportation too often report progress in terms of the number of trains run per day, the condition of road pavement, or the miles of bike lanes installed. These measures are important, but the users of the transportation system only care if it will allow them to achieve their goals in a reasonable amount of time, at a reasonable cost, and preferably with multiple options.

Toward those ends, the County's transportation system serves three interrelated purposes. First, it must support the businesses and families that reside in the County. Second, it must accommodate the demands that come with being the hub of the metropolitan area, including those of commuters from the surrounding counties, regional freight, and visitors wishing to take advantage of all that the region has to offer. Third, the system must perform a crucial function as both the nexus of North American freight distribution and a linchpin of the global freight network. The first and second of these are common to all major urban areas, but Cook County's transportation system is forced to confront the demands imposed by all three on a daily basis.

Demands from Within the County

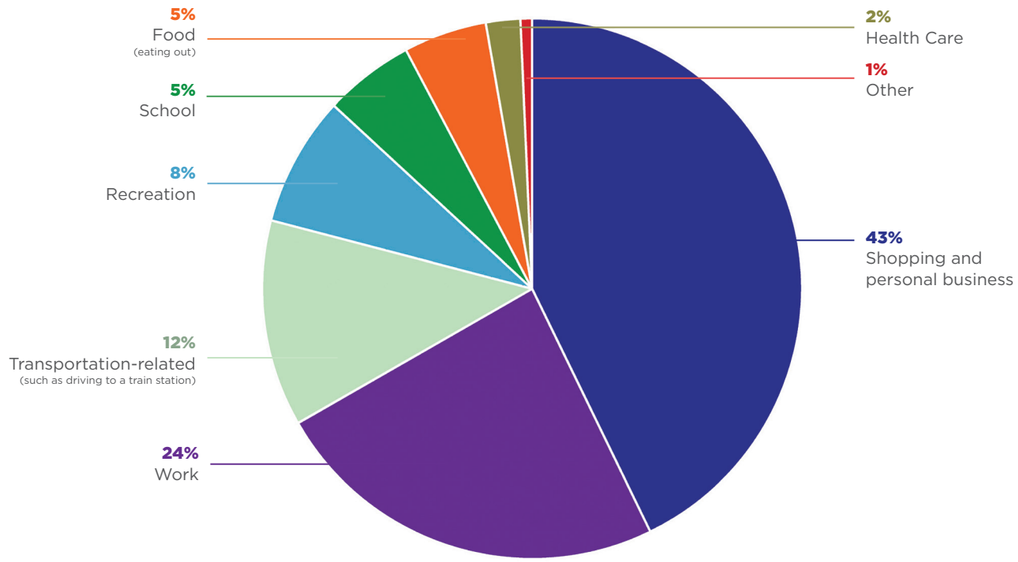
Residents

The largest and most obvious source of demand for transportation services within Cook County comes from its residents. As the center of the nation's third largest metropolitan area, the County is home to nearly two million households and more than five million residents. While it makes up less than a quarter of metropolitan Chicago's land area, its residents represent roughly sixty percent of the region's population. Nationally, Cook County is among the densest urban areas and is the second most populous county.

FIGURE 1.1 PURPOSE OF TRIPS TAKEN BY COUNTY RESIDENTS

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Analysis of 2008 Travel Tracker Survey, 2010

Total Number of Trips = 19.1 million



Nearly half of all trips taken by Cook County residents are made for shopping and personal business. Work-related trips account for slightly less than one-quarter of all trips.

During a 24-hour workday, residents take more than 19 million trips. The peak evening rush hour sees more than one million residents traveling at any given moment, of which less than half of these are commuters coming home from work. Data for the number, purpose, and mode of trips within Cook County and the region comes from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) 2008 Travel Tracker Survey. More recent data is not available, but the order of magnitude and character of those trips are not likely to have changed materially. Figure 1.1 illustrates the purposes of these various trips.

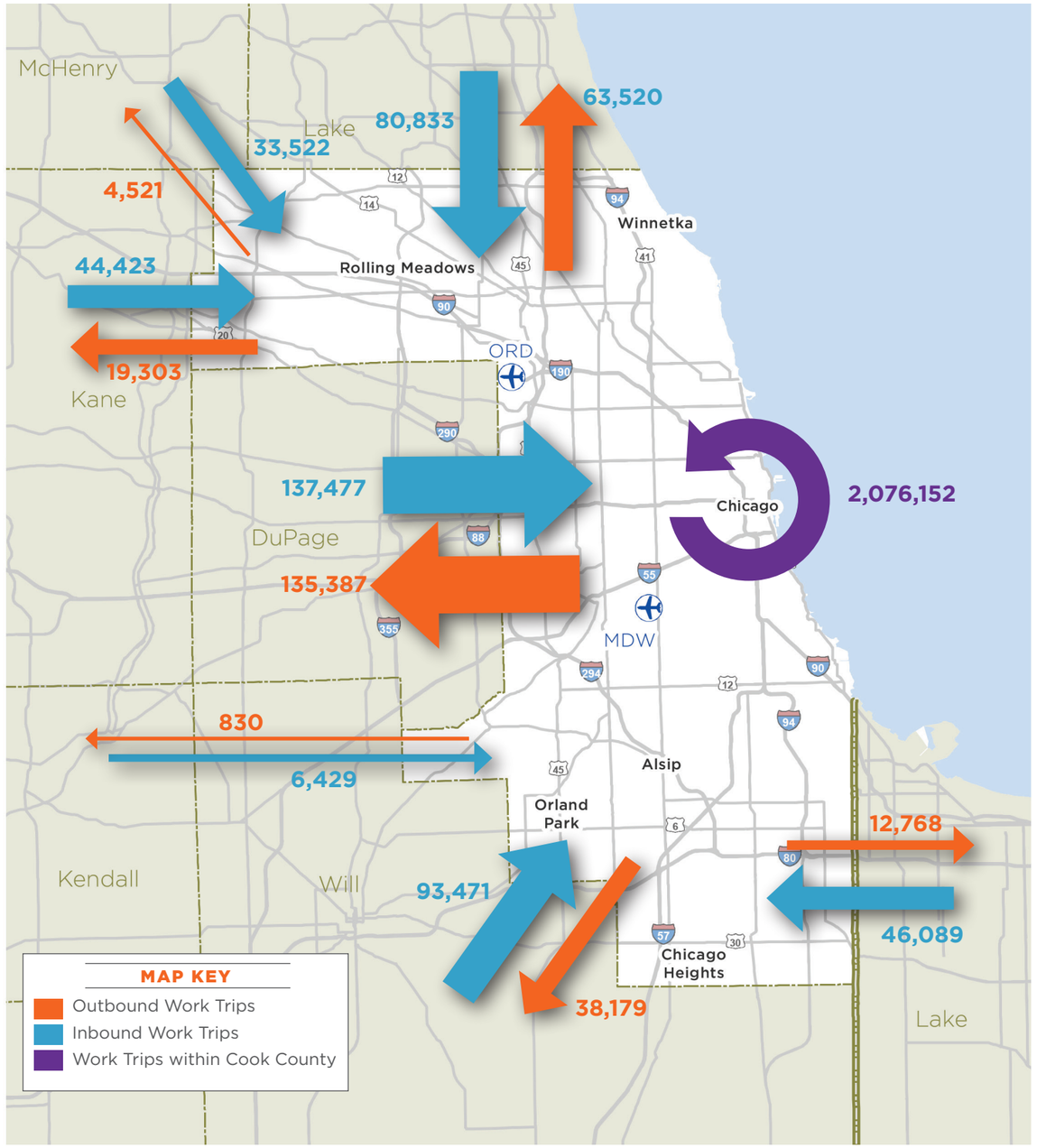
While the commute to and from work—perhaps the most commonly discussed trip purpose—represents a significant portion of these trips, it is actually surpassed by trips made for shopping and personal business, and nearly matched by trips made for recreation or transportation-related functions. Certainly, residents rely on the transportation system for far more than getting to work. Commuting, though, plays an outsized role in the need for transportation services in two ways. First, the distances and destinations of these commutes matter. The average round-trip for work taken by a Cook County resident ranges from less than 13 miles in central Chicago to nearly 24 miles in the southern suburbs, significantly longer than the average round-trip for other purposes (roughly six to 10 miles, depending on purpose and point of origin). Indeed, while many residents live and work within the County, a large percentage travel significant distances. Hundreds of thousands more commute into a neighboring county each day. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of these patterns.

FIGURE 1.2 DAILY WORK TRIPS — COOK COUNTY

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Total Number of Work Trips = 2,792,904

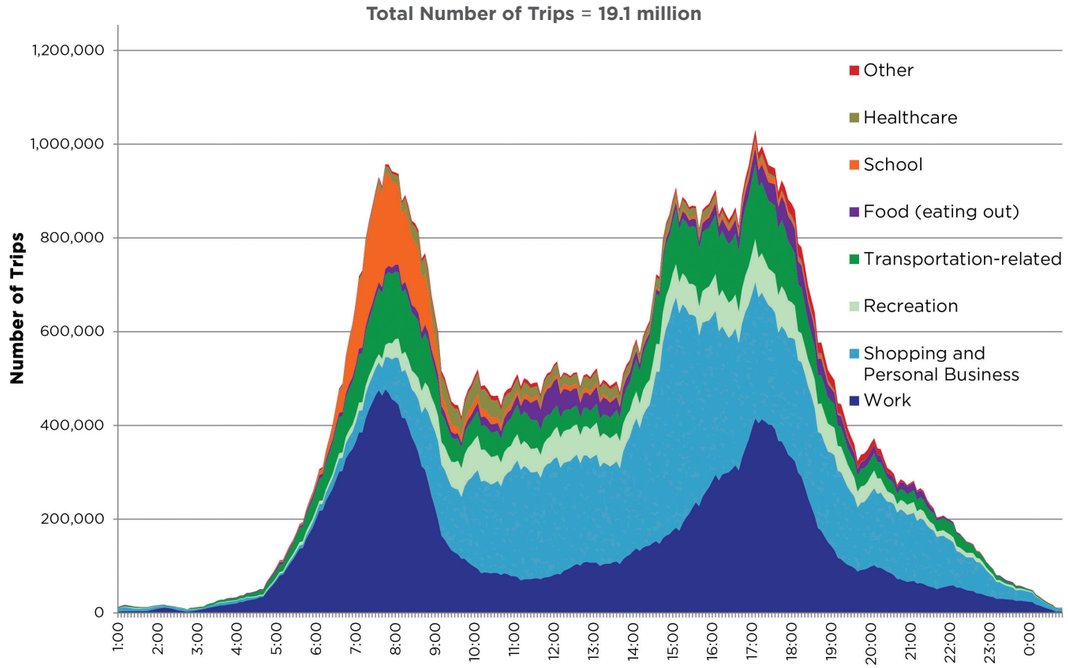
Includes work trips for the CMAP region, and Lake County, Indiana



Two million work trips begin and end in Cook County every day. Another 274,000 Cook County residents travel to neighboring counties for work and 442,000 collar county residents travel to Cook County for work. The vast majority of these trips are made by car in both Cook County (71.8 percent) and the region (80 percent). Regions must offer workers alternatives for getting to their jobs, and also anticipate growth, changes in commuting patterns, and demographic and technological trends.

FIGURE 1.3 COOK COUNTY WEEKDAY TRIPS BY PURPOSE

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Analysis of 2008 Travel Tracker Survey, 2010



While trips peak during the morning and evening rush hours, they remain substantial throughout the day.

Peak commuting hours during the morning and evening rush hours represent the times of day when the existing transportation system is most in demand. Figure 1.3 charts the daily fluctuation in County trips over the course of the day.

While most of these trips are by personal automobile (the County's 5 million residents have collectively registered nearly 2 million vehicles), many occur on bikes, buses, trains, and foot. Figure 1.4 illustrates the variety in mode type by trip.

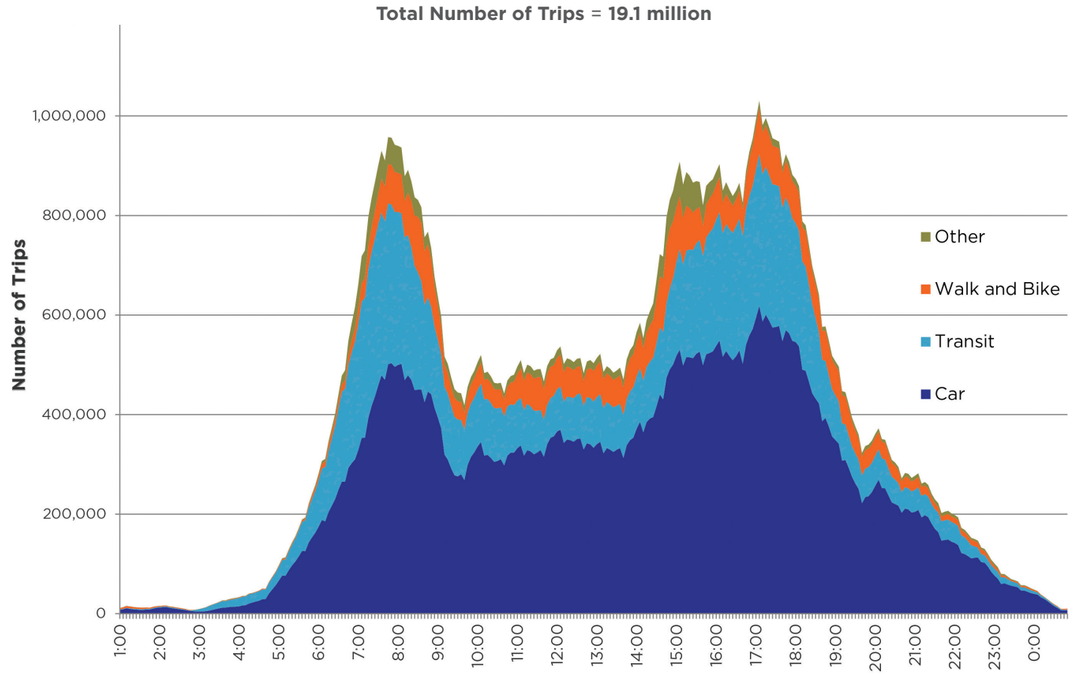
Between each of these various transportation options, individuals spend a substantial and increasing amount of their income on transportation services. The Center for Neighborhood Technology estimates that the typical Cook County household spends $10,459 on transportation, but this varies widely throughout the County, from as low as $5,700 to as high as $15,400. In aggregate, this amounts to more than $20 billion per year in spending by County families clearly indicating the high value placed on transportation. In return, transportation providers must ensure that these crucial services remain accessible and affordable.

Businesses

The 128,722 businesses operating within the County collectively employ roughly 2.2 million individuals who place significant requirements on the transportation system. Businesses also have their own transportation needs.

FIGURE 1.4 COOK COUNTY WEEKDAY TRIPS BY MODE

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Analysis of 2008 Travel Tracker Survey, 2010



At peak hours, car travel accounts for approximately half of the trips taken by Cook County residents.

Manufacturers depend upon the efficient delivery of parts or raw materials, as well as the ability to quickly and economically ship products to customers around the globe. Professional services firms must be able to traverse the region, the country, and even the globe in order to be competitive and effective. Businesses of all kinds need a transportation system that can bring them the supplies needed to support their day-to-day operations. Each of these needs places demands on the transportation system. If the system cannot accommodate them, businesses might very well move to a region with a system that can.

Demands from the County's Role as the Regional Hub

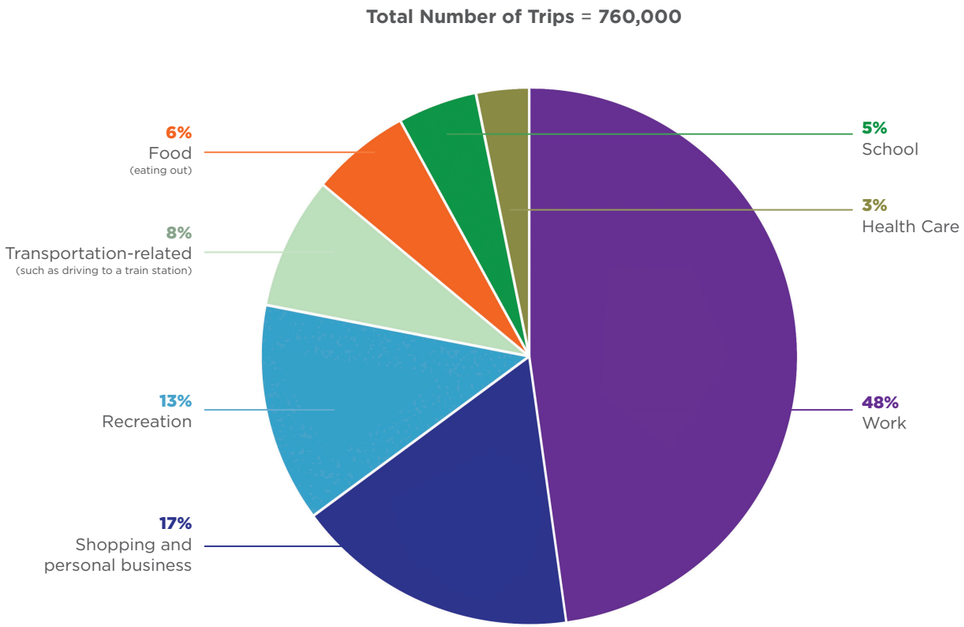
Regional Residents and Businesses

Cook County's transportation system accommodates hundreds of thousands of residents from the surrounding counties, including from outside of Illinois. Many of these trips are made for work. Others are taken to enjoy cultural attractions, sports facilities, visit friends, or shop. In total, regional residents make more than 750,000 trips into Cook County every day.

As the hub of the metropolitan area, Cook County is also impacted by the needs of businesses throughout the region. In particular, much of the region's freight movement, serving these very businesses, comes into, out of, or through Cook County on its way elsewhere within the region or country.

FIGURE 1.5 TRIP PURPOSE FOR REGIONAL VISITORS TO COOK COUNTY

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Analysis of 2008 Travel Tracker Survey, 2010



Almost half of regional visitors to the County come for work-related purposes.

Visitors to the Region

The Chicago region attracts millions of visitors each year. Many come specifically to Cook County, while many others are simply passing through. In 2015, more than 52 million people visited the City of Chicago alone. These visitors rely on the transportation system to come and go, whether via O'Hare International Airport, Amtrak, or I-57. And while in the area, they depend on the transportation network to get around—using transit, rental cars, taxis, ride sharing, or the bike sharing program Divvy.

Cook County's Role as a Distribution Center

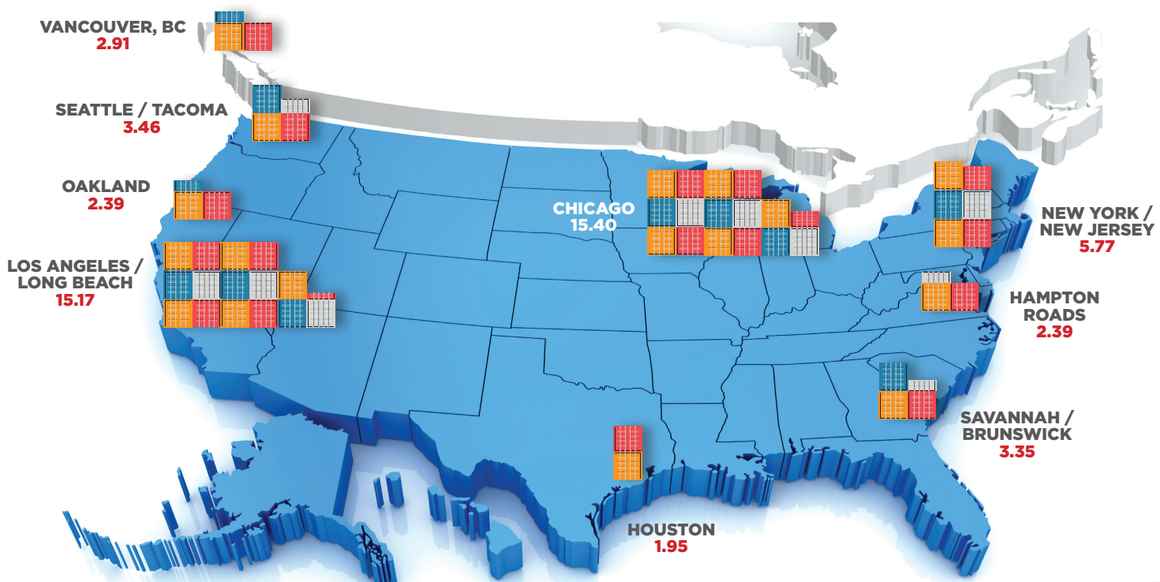
Beyond serving the transportation needs of the Chicago region, the metropolitan transportation system is the center of a global supply chain and supports the nation's largest port. The region receives freight from all over the world and sorts, stores, and reships it for use elsewhere. It handles millions of tons of freight that are not consumed or produced locally. Its major railroads bring rail cars from the coasts, switch them to another railroad and send them to a variety of destinations across the continent. Major retailers have made the Chicago region a distribution point to store goods in vast warehouses and truck them to retail locations in the Midwest and beyond. This function as a major distribution center brings jobs and income to the region, but it also places additional demands on the County's transportation system.

Roughly half of freight rail trips in the region are simply passing through on their way to another destination. The vast majority of these trips are routed through Cook County, given its outsized importance in the regional (and national) rail network. Each of these trains competes for limited time and space on a rail network that is already congested with the movement of local freight and passenger trains.

FIGURE 1.6 BUSIEST NORTH AMERICAN PORTS BY TEU'S MOVED (IN MILLIONS)

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning 2014 Estimate and Metropolitan Chicago's Freight Cluster: A Drill-Down Report on Infrastructure, Innovation, and Workforce, June 2012

TEU = Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit (The equivalent number of 20-foot shipping containers.)



The Chicago metropolitan area is the busiest port in North America handling 15.4 million shipping containers annually. In 2012, the freight cluster moved more than 925 million tons of freight valued at $1.3 trillion directly into and out of the region, supporting over 176,000 jobs and generating $12.3 billion in personal income.

This role as a distribution center is not restricted to rail. Within Cook County, there are nearly 160,584 registered trucks. An additional 331,630 are registered in the greater Chicago region. Not all of these drive within Cook County on a daily basis, but many do. More than 35,000 trucking companies operating in the region manage these trucks. Together, these trucks and the jobs connected to them represent significant sources of demand on the County's transportation system.

When these local trucks are combined with thousands of additional trucks from outside the area, the Chicago region has more truck traffic than most others in the country. Indeed, while shipping by truck is somewhat more localized than that by rail; roughly 30 percent of all truck traffic in the region is due to trucks that are neither shipping freight to or from the region. Even some local trips are a direct result of the region's role as a global distribution center—trucks make more than 7,500 trips each day transporting goods from one rail yard to another, as goods continue on their way across the continent.

Between 2010 and 2040, it is anticipated that the population over 65 will grow by 66 percent.

By 2040, the Cook County population under the age of 29 will represent 38 percent of the County's population, down slightly from 42 percent in 2010.

Trends Shaping Future Needs

These demands are unlikely to shift dramatically in the short term, but just as they have changed over time in the past, there is no doubt that such shifts will occur once again. Over the next 30 years, there will be significant changes to the County's population and economy. Existing technologies will continue to evolve and new ones will emerge. These trends will have a significant impact on the future need for transportation services, and must be the foundation for any related policies and investments made today.

Demographics

Between now and 2040, CMAP's GO TO 2040 plan projects that Cook County is expected to add more than 850,000 new residents. Most of the County will experience moderate population growth. However, there are likely to be some pockets of concentrated growth, in particular the central parts of Chicago. Population growth will place new requirements on the transportation system. So too will changes in regional population; as different portions of the metropolitan area grow at different rates, the County's transportation system will be forced to respond accordingly.

The changing composition of the population will alter transportation preferences. Between 2010 and 2040, it is anticipated that the population over 65 will grow by 66 percent. Experience indicates that older populations are looking for additional transportation options, as they are either unable to rely solely on their cars, or are simply uninterested in doing so.

Furthermore, today's younger generations appear to be significantly less interested in driving, and more interested in utilizing transit or alternative modes of transportation. It seems possible that these preferences will remain, even as that population ages. And while the percentage of the Cook County population under the age of 29 will decline slightly—from 42 percent in 2010 to 38 percent in 2040—continued shifts in preferences among this age cohort could have significant implications.

Across all age ranges, Americans are also increasingly interested in living in *mixed-use* communities, a form of development with a combination of housing, offices, and retail that is known as "transit-oriented development." For example, a national study by TransitCenter in 2014



The mixed-use, transit-oriented developments approved by the City of Evanston near the CTA and Metra Davis Street Stations have turned its downtown into an employment, shopping, and entertainment destination. They have boosted resident population, transit ridership, and walking and biking while reducing the number of cars.

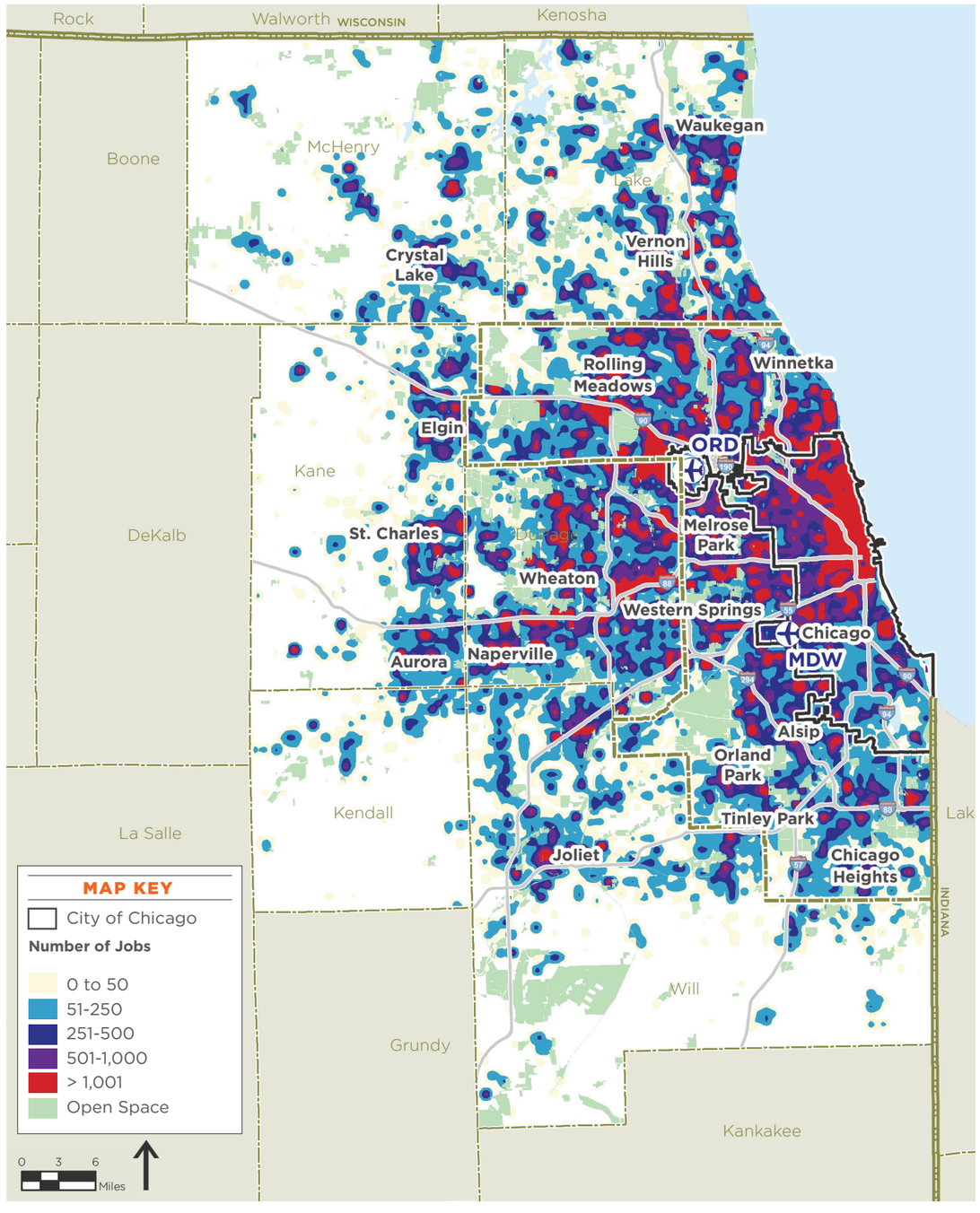
found that, out of nearly 12,000 respondents, roughly 10 percent more would like to live in urban neighborhoods, or mixed-use neighborhoods in the suburbs or small towns, than currently do so (69 percent vs. 60 percent).

Residents of transit-oriented developments own fewer cars, use them less often, and have lower transportation costs as a result. Communities with this form of development have attracted new businesses, experienced an increase in activity around their stations, and seen tax revenues grow.

The County has many communities that fit this definition (especially when compared to national standards) but the desire to live in such communities may well exceed even this relatively large supply. And while mixed-use communities arise in part because of land-use decisions made by both the public and private sectors, they are also a product of the transportation infrastructure and policies instituted by government — the "corner store" cannot easily find a place, or customers, in a suburban cul-de-sac.

FIGURE 1.7 REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT (2010)

Sources: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Volume 3, October 2014



Regional employment is most heavily concentrated in Chicago's urban core, but substantial employment centers exist elsewhere in the County and region at large.



Photo credit: LB Steel

The clustering of industries in sectors such as metal manufacturing, distribution and logistics, manufacturing, and food processing enables Cook County to target infrastructure improvements to corridors that benefit broad sectors rather than individual companies.

Job Growth

In addition to the jobs depicted in Figure 1.7, the County is also expected to add more than a half million jobs by 2040. Many of these will be in places like downtown Chicago that are well-served by the current transportation network, with multiple mode options. Others may be in areas that are less accessible to significant portions of County residents. This might be because of the distance between jobs and the residents that want them, or because of a lack of accessibility by public transit. And some of these jobs, especially those in suburban communities, will not conform to the morning and evening rush hours around which the transit system is based.

There will also continue to be job growth in the surrounding region. Many of these jobs will be filled by Cook County residents, placing additional demands on the transportation system.

Technological Developments

Technological changes, and their impact on the economy, will have important consequences for the County's transportation system. These will include increases in online shopping and a corresponding decline in brick-and-mortar retail, resulting in fewer trips to the store and an increase in truck deliveries. The wide-scale deployment of 3-D printing as a complement to large-scale industrial manufacturing will change freight delivery patterns. More sophisticated video conferencing will generate more work-from-home opportunities and fewer business meetings requiring travel.

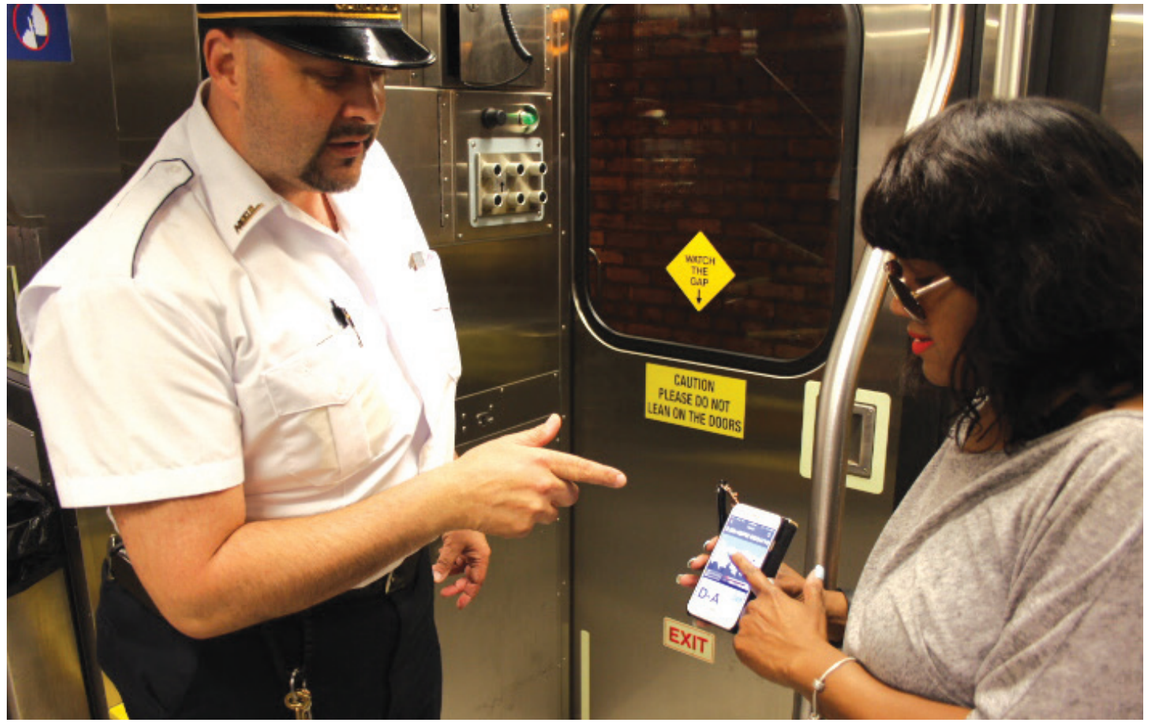
New technology will also shape the supply of transportation services. New technologies have fostered the rapid growth of car sharing, ride sharing, and bike sharing. Governments will expand the use of new technologies that improve the capacity of existing infrastructure, such as road signage that adjusts speed limits in real-time to



New shared-use mobility services like Zipcar could reduce private car ownership and increase reliance on other modes.

smooth traffic flow. The provision of real-time bus arrival information could lead to increases in bus ridership. Automatic adjustment of tolls based on congestion levels will shift demand for highways away from peak traffic times. New parking systems and pricing models are available that will reduce the time people spend looking for parking spaces. Sophisticated new services are in place to allow shippers to fill their trucks and reduce the number of return trips without any cargo. Using new data systems to adjust the timing of traffic signals enables a given road to handle more traffic. All these systems, and new ones yet to be created, have the potential to change the number and character of trips, and could increase the capacity of existing infrastructure.

New automotive technologies will also change the transportation landscape. A new generation of "smart cars" will have automatic warning or braking systems that reduce the risk of accidents, one of the leading causes of traffic congestion. Electric vehicles will change the need for supporting infrastructure, requiring more charging stations and fewer trips to the pump. Advanced GPS guidance systems and real-time data availability will allow drivers to avoid congested routes. And, while autonomous vehicles may be a decade or more away from widespread use, they have the potential to dramatically alter both the demand profile for transportation services and the capacity of transportation systems to meet these needs. Even now, many governments are beginning to plan their response to these new developments. Cook County will do the same.



CTA, Metra, and Pace customers can now use Ventra's smartphone app to access pre-tax transit benefits, purchase tickets, and manage their transit accounts from home, the office, or while riding the bus or train.

Conclusion

The demand for transportation services in Cook County is enormous and complicated. Cook County has to supply services to its millions of residents and thousands of businesses. It provides for travelers who come to the County to work, shop, or visit. Uniquely, it must also provide the resources necessary to support the movement of freight in a globally linked supply chain. These demands, and the trends with the potential to alter them, must play a determinative role when deciding how best to allocate scarce resources and attention.



2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

RESOURCES

CHAPTER TWO

COOK COUNTY'S TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Cook County has a rich and complex inventory of transportation assets and services to meet the needs described in the previous chapter. It contains over ten thousand miles of roads that support millions of truck and car trips and enjoys one of the country's largest public transit networks. It has miles of railroad rights-of-way that serve commuters and facilitate the movement of millions of tons of freight. It supports alternate modes of transportation such as ride-sharing services, taxi cabs, school buses, and bicycles, as well as trails and sidewalks. This complex network of assets and services successfully supports approximately 20 million trips every day.



Cook County's transportation system works well much of the time, but not always. A resident traveling by car at 11:00 pm on a Sunday probably will not have a problem. If she relied on public transit at that time, the trip would be far more difficult. The Monday morning commute can sometimes be double or triple the amount of time it would be at mid-day. Metra commuters schedule their lives around what is typically a very reliable service, until they are delayed by a freight train that has not cleared the tracks, or find their trains canceled due to problems with antiquated infrastructure. Drivers too often get stuck at one of the 794 at-grade rail crossings. Getting into downtown Chicago by transit is relatively convenient. Getting out to suburban jobs by public transit is more complicated, if even possible.

Freight operators face many of the same frustrations as county residents, as well as challenges unique to their industry. When truckers carry a heavy or oversized load, they have to get special permits from a half dozen local jurisdictions that regulate when and where they can drive. The railroads move $3 trillion in cargo each year, but they face costly delays when trains compete with each other for the same tracks. And while this plan will only focus on ground-based transportation, water and air services also play a critical role as drivers of Cook County's economy and enablers of mobility, both in the region and across the globe.

This chapter of *Connecting Cook County* describes the transportation facilities and services in Cook County, the entities that oversee them, and the resources that support them, and the challenges they face.

Meeting The Demand

The responsibility for fulfilling the transportation needs of Cook County rests with multiple public agencies and private businesses. The public agencies and related entities include the following:

- Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (Department)
- Municipalities within Cook County (135 in all)
- Townships within Cook County (22, with transportation resources, in all)
- Transit providers: Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, Pace, and the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
- Amtrak
- Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Public Private Partnership
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- State of Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- State of Illinois Interstate Commerce Commission
- Illinois State Toll Highway Authority (Tollway)
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

These 168 governments work with private participants such as the railroads, taxicabs, car-sharing services, thousands of trucking companies, private bus services, and more. All of the participants share a responsibility to improve transportation services. They frequently act in concert with each other. However, they do not always coordinate their efforts or agree on priorities. Each is constrained by what it is able to do by law, by the limitations of budgets, or by the use of outdated financial allocation formulas. This balkanization of responsibility is a serious challenge for the agencies that strive to meet Cook County's demand for transportation services.

Moving People

Cook County residents, and those who visit Cook County, use a variety of transportation modes: cars, public transit, biking, walking, etc. While cars represent the principal means of travel, many of the trips combine different modes. Each of the modes is inextricably linked with the others, sometimes in complementary ways—bike sharing and car sharing, for example, can provide crucial "last-mile" connections from transit stops to final destinations. Other times, modes such as buses and passenger cars compete for limited space and resources. Each mode is discussed below.

This complex network of transportation facilities and services successfully supports approximately 20 million trips every day.

In 2014, Cook County municipalities and townships spent more than $1.2 billion on transportation. Of this, only $223 million came from the state motor fuel tax.

Roads and Bridges

Within Cook County, there are more than 12,500 miles of streets and highways to accommodate all of the car (and truck) trips made each day. Some of those roads are built and maintained by the State. The remaining roads are the responsibility of Cook County government and the various municipalities and townships within the County. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show the complexity of the roadway network. The Department is responsible for 560 miles of roads, or about 5 percent of the total road system.

On an estimated aggregate basis, 39 percent of the roads in the County are rated as either in "Poor" (7 percent) or "Fair" (32 percent) condition, with 37 percent in "Good" condition and 24 percent in "Excellent" condition.

In addition, there are more than 2,300 bridges in Cook County that are the responsibility of these same governments. Many of these require significant upgrades or maintenance: 37 percent of them are functionally obsolete (i.e., designed in a way that no longer serves the travel demand placed upon them), 3 percent are structurally deficient, and 5 percent are both — in total, 45 percent of the bridges in the County are not in satisfactory condition. The 106 bridges for which County government is responsible fare much better, with only 2 percent being structurally deficient and a total of 20 percent either structurally deficient, functionally obsolete, or both.

The money to maintain or expand this road network comes from a wide variety of sources. The roads that are the responsibility of the State and the County are paid for largely through a combination of federal and state motor fuel taxes. During 2015, Cook County spent $42.2 million on road work.

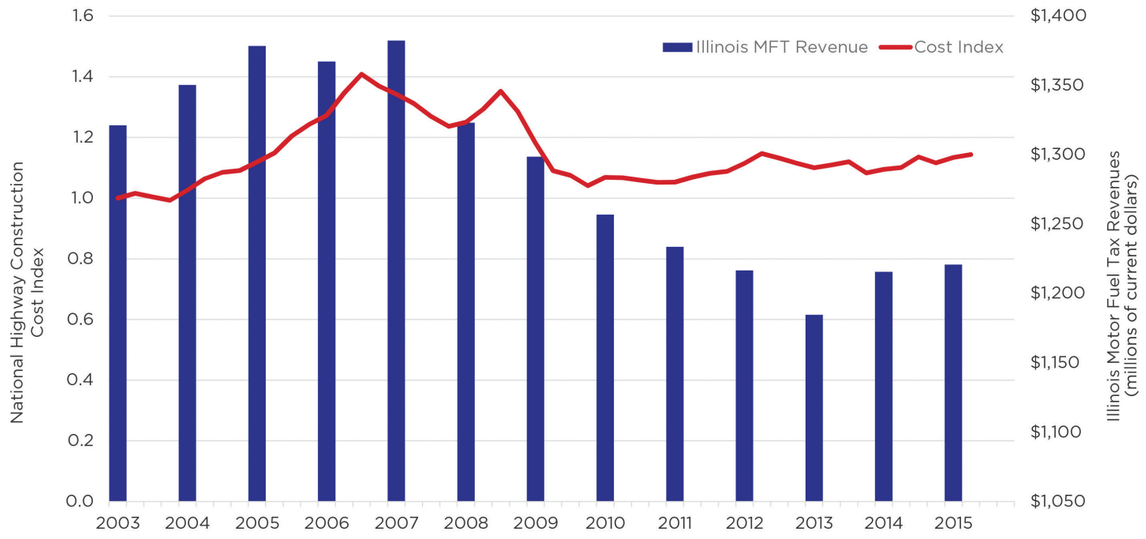
The municipalities and townships within Cook County receive a share of the state motor fuel tax revenues: In 2014, this ranged from a low of $878 for Elk Grove Township to a high of $67,213,376 for the City of Chicago. Cook County received $94,603,987 in motor fuel tax funds in 2015. Cook County and its many municipal and township governments received 40 percent of the total amount of state gas dollars that are set aside for distribution to local governments.

However, motor fuel tax dollars are not nearly enough to support the needs of local governments in building or maintaining roads and bridges. Some funding comes from the national government—roughly 20 percent of surface transportation funding in Illinois—but much also comes from property taxes, general fund revenues, sales taxes, and other sources. In 2014, for example, Cook County municipalities and townships spent more than $1.2 billion on transportation. Of this, only $223 million came from the state motor fuel tax.

The result of this spending is that while the demand for roads in Cook County is high, the supply is also substantial. Indeed, there are few places in the country that have similar road densities. Much of the time this supply is more than adequate. But, during peak periods and in heavily traveled corridors, demand exceeds the available supply, creating congested conditions which exact high cost penalties for residents and businesses. The Texas Transportation Institute indicates that the cost of congestion in the Chicago region is the third highest in the nation. The Metropolitan Planning Council in Chicago places the cost of congestion as high at $7.3 billion per year. That is a cost which is borne largely by Cook County businesses and residents.

FIGURE 2.1 CONSTRUCTION COSTS VS MOTOR FUEL TAX REVENUES

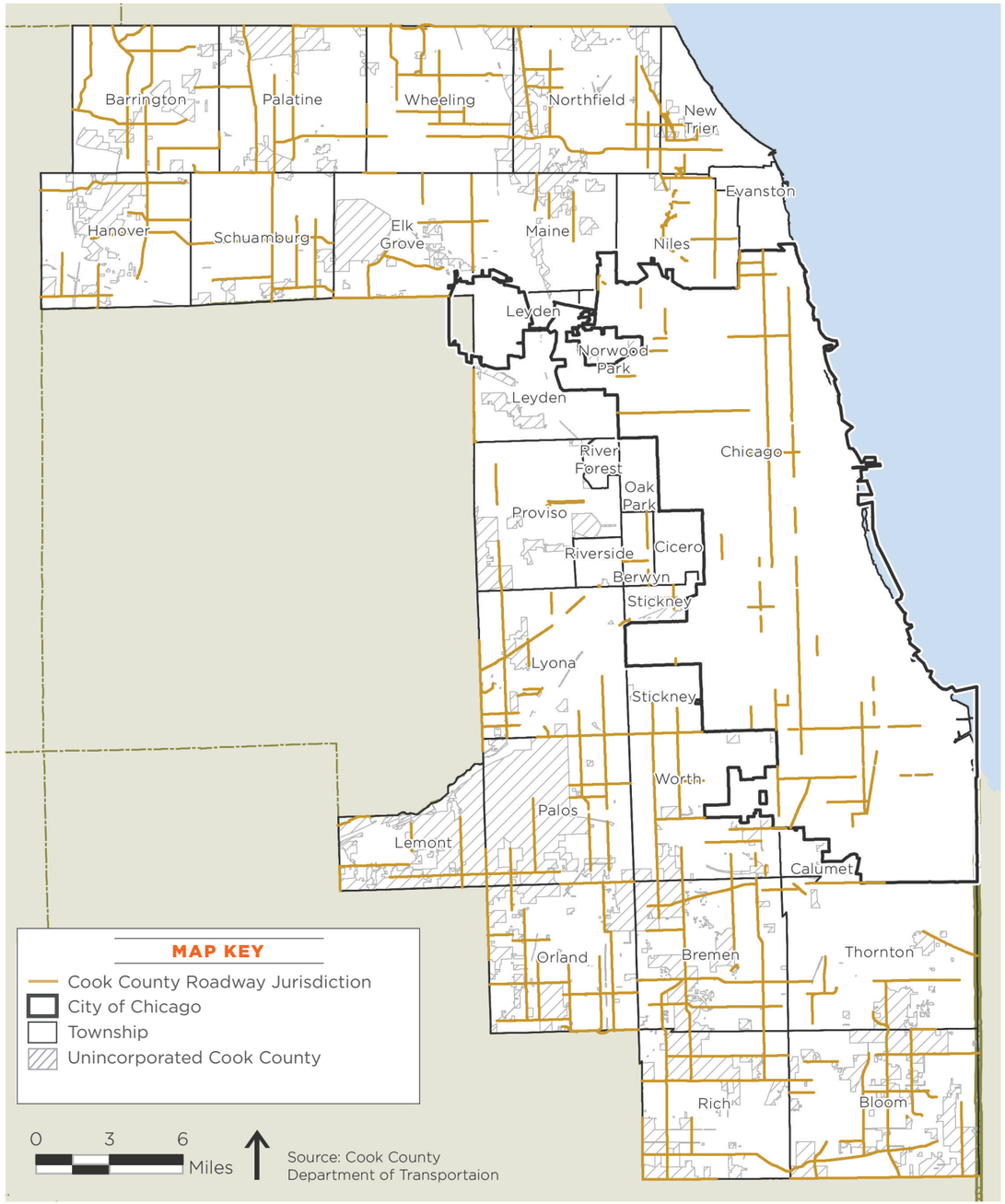
Sources: US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration Office of Highway Policy Information, National Highway Construction Cost Index, November 2014. Illinois Department of Revenue Annual Reports, 2005 – 2014. Illinois Department of Transportation. Motor Fuel Tax Allotment Statistics, December 1, 2012 – November 30, 2013.



Motor fuel tax dollars are not nearly enough to support the needs of local governments in building or maintaining streets and roads. Because tax rates have not been raised in more than 20 years and the motor fuel tax is not indexed to inflation, the gap between the revenue generated by the state gas tax and construction costs has widened in recent years.

FIGURE 2.2 COOK COUNTY ROADS

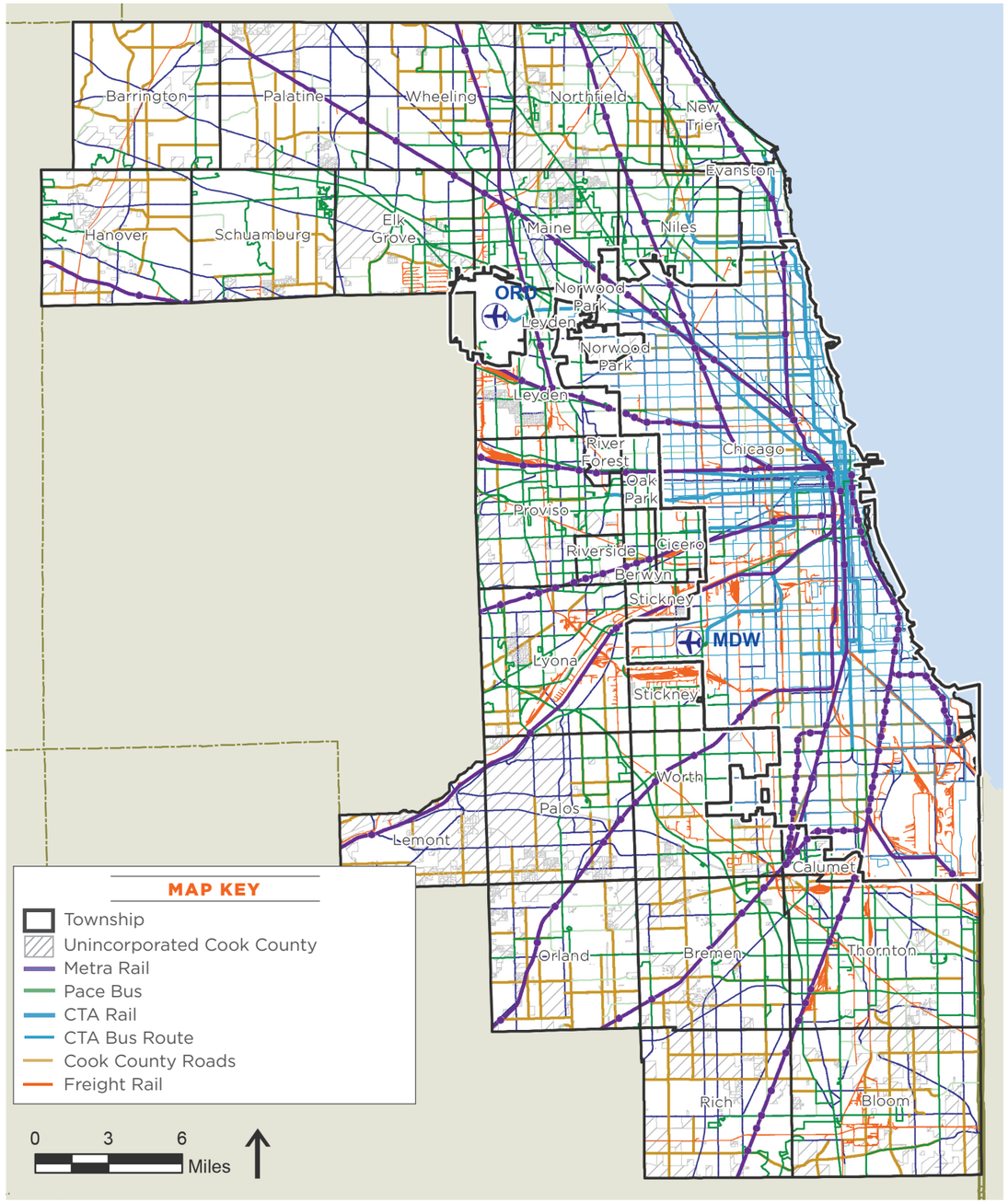
Source: Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways



The Department is responsible for 560 miles of roads and 106 bridges in Cook County.

FIGURE 2.3 COMPLEX TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM UNDER MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, October 2012; Chicago Transit Authority, 2012; PACE, 2012; National Transportation Atlas Database, 2012.



County roadways represent just 5 percent of all roadways in Cook County and an even smaller share of the entire transportation network. As a result, the County will need to look beyond its own facilities to improve local and regional travel.



More than half of all Metra stations and more than 75 percent of its riders reside in Cook County. Regionally, Metra provided 81.6 million rides in 2015, a 10 percent increase from the 74 million rides in 2004.

Public Transit

Cook County, in addition to the rest of the Chicago region, is extremely fortunate to have one of the largest and most extensive public transit systems in the country. It provides more than 650 million passenger trips a year, roughly 90 percent of which begin or end in Cook County. These trips would otherwise more than likely be made on the region's roads and highways. Good transit service is one of the reasons businesses choose the Chicago region. Modern economies place a premium on the proximity of firms and workers that can only be achieved with higher densities and the transit systems that will support those densities. For those who cannot afford a car, or cannot use one, the transit system is an essential service.

Public transit is provided by the five operating agencies that serve the region. They include the CTA; the commuter rail service Metra; the suburban bus service Pace; the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District; and Amtrak. The RTA provides oversight services for the CTA, Metra, and Pace. Each operating agency is described in more detail below:

Modern economies place a premium on the proximity of firms and workers that can only be achieved with higher densities and the transit systems that will support those densities.

The **CTA** provides transit services to the City of Chicago and 40 suburban Cook County communities. In 2015, the CTA provided 516 million rides for its customers. It operates eight rapid transit lines with 145 rail stations, serving 242 million riders in 2015. It also manages 140 bus routes with 12,000 posted bus stops. The bus service provided 274 million rides in 2015. Between 2005 and 2015 ridership on the rail lines increased by 55 million rides or about 30 percent. Bus ridership decreased by 30 million riders in that same period. More than 90 percent of all CTA riders are also Cook County residents.

Metra operates a six-county commuter rail system which includes 11 rail lines and 241 passenger stations. More than half of all Metra stations and more than 75 percent of its riders reside in Cook County. Metra provided about 81.6 million rides in 2015, more than a 10 percent increase from the 74 million rides in 2004. Many of the Metra commuter trains share the rail tracks with freight trains as well as Amtrak. This helps distribute costs, but also leads to competition for time and space on the tracks and often results in delays.

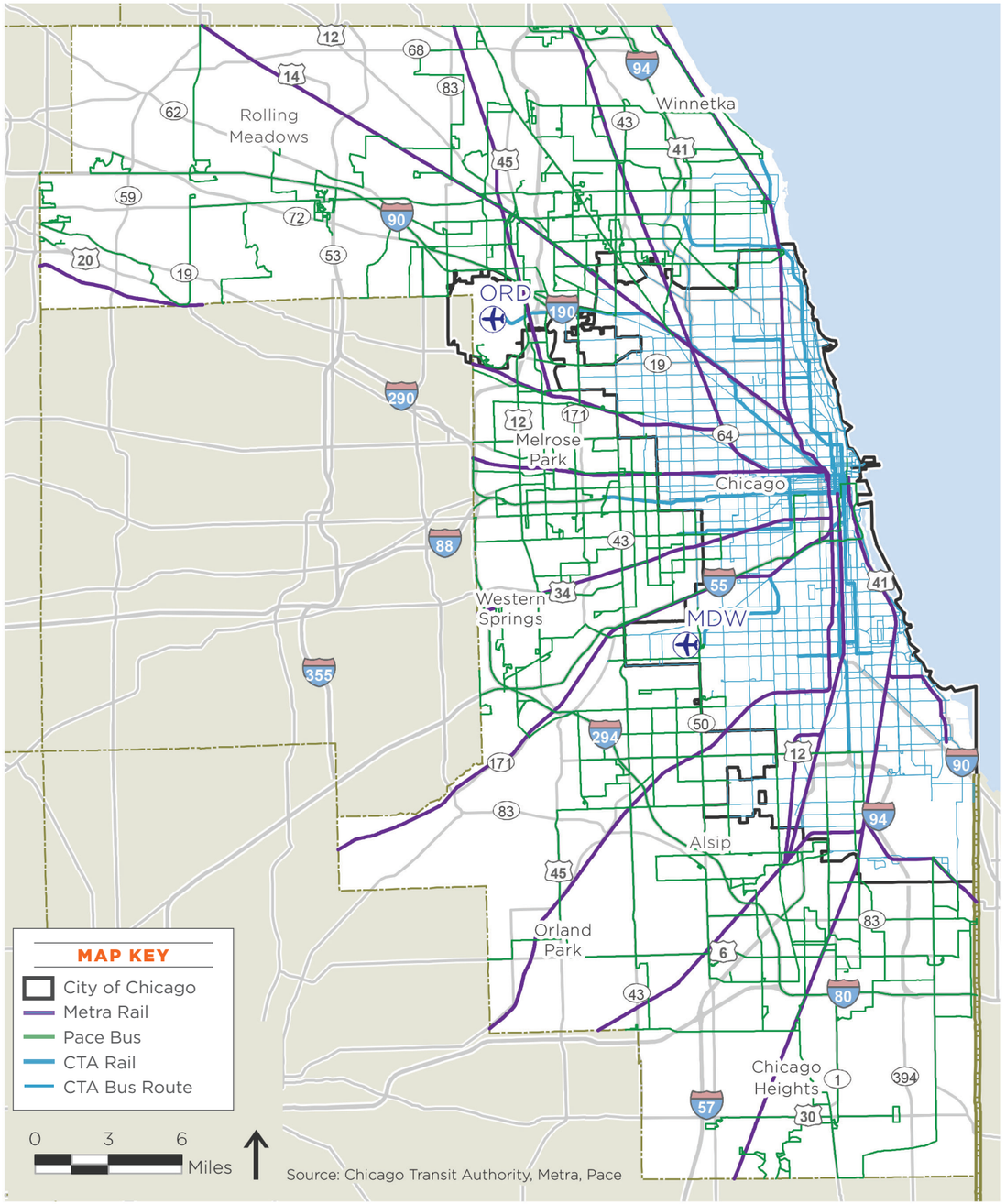
Pace is one of the largest bus service providers in the nation. It manages 209 bus routes, serving 284 communities in the six-county metropolitan area, as well as operates one of the largest vanpool systems in the country, with 784 vehicles in service. Pace is also responsible for the Americans with Disabilities Act transit services throughout all of metropolitan Chicago, supporting the needs of this community with 442 vehicles and providing 4.2 million rides in 2015. Collectively, Pace services account for about 37.3 million trips a year, approximately the same as in 2004. As with the CTA and Metra, Cook County riders represent the majority (75 percent) of all Pace riders.

The **South Shore Line**, which is operated by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transit District, provides commuter rail service between downtown Chicago and South Bend, Indiana. It shares the right-of-way and tracks with the Metra Electric line on Chicago's South Side. Most of its customers are from Indiana or Chicago's Hegewisch neighborhood and are weekday commuters. Weekend service brings riders to downtown Chicago for shopping and recreation. Ridership on this line is about 3.8 million passengers per year.

Amtrak, the nation's inter-city passenger rail system, operates 18 lines through Cook County. The County is one of the top destinations for Amtrak passengers, with Chicago's Union Station having the fourth-highest number of departures and arrivals in the entire system. In 2015, more than 3.5 million Amtrak trips began or ended in the Chicago region, and 97 percent of those were to or from Cook County. Regardless of the trip purpose—leisure, business, or the daily commute—this mode of travel reduces demands on the region's streets, highways, and airports.

FIGURE 2.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Source: Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, Pace.



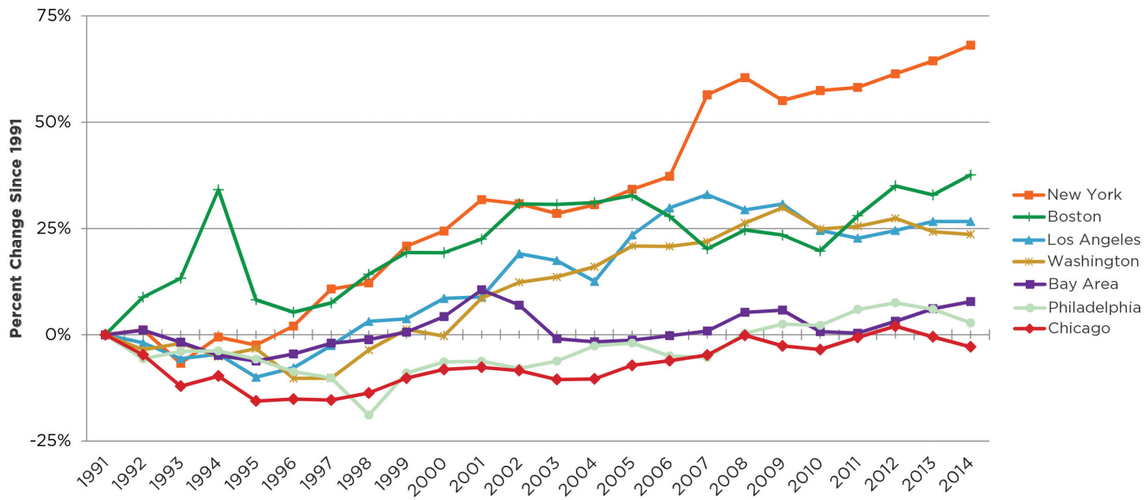
Cook County's large and expansive transit system provides 650 million trips per year representing 11 percent of all trips taken regionally and within the County. The public transportation network plays a vital role in reducing congestion on area roads and highways, and providing mobility—and access to jobs—to residents without a vehicle.

Despite the long history and solid foundation of the region's transit system, other regions are expanding their systems and growing ridership more effectively. Although CMAP has called for doubling transit use by 2040, between 1991 and 2014 transit ridership in the region declined slightly, performing worse than any of the other six regions in the U.S. with transit ridership greater than 300 million a year (Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC). While two of these systems saw only slightly higher growth rates, others saw dramatic increases — New York's ridership rose by 68 percent and Boston's rose by 38 percent.

The Chicago region has not significantly expanded its transit service since the 1990s, with the opening of the CTA's Orange Line in 1993 and Metra's North Central line in 1996. By contrast, other systems have made expansion a priority — since 1991, transit providers in New York, Los Angeles, D.C., San Francisco, and Boston have all added more miles of passenger rail service than has the Chicago region. Funding for the operations of the largest transit providers—the CTA, Metra, and Pace—is provided by fares collected from riders, a sales tax collected from the six counties within the transit service area, and additional tax dollars from the State. Within Cook County there is a 1.25 percent sales tax dedicated to transit. Within the surrounding five counties there is a 0.5 percent sales tax dedicated to the RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace. The money collected through these taxes is largely distributed via formulas established more than 30 years ago, rather than based on usage and need.

FIGURE 2.5 TRANSIT PASSENGER TRIPS

Source: American Public Transportation Association



Transit ridership in the Chicago metropolitan area has remained flat even as peer regions have posted modest to substantial increases.

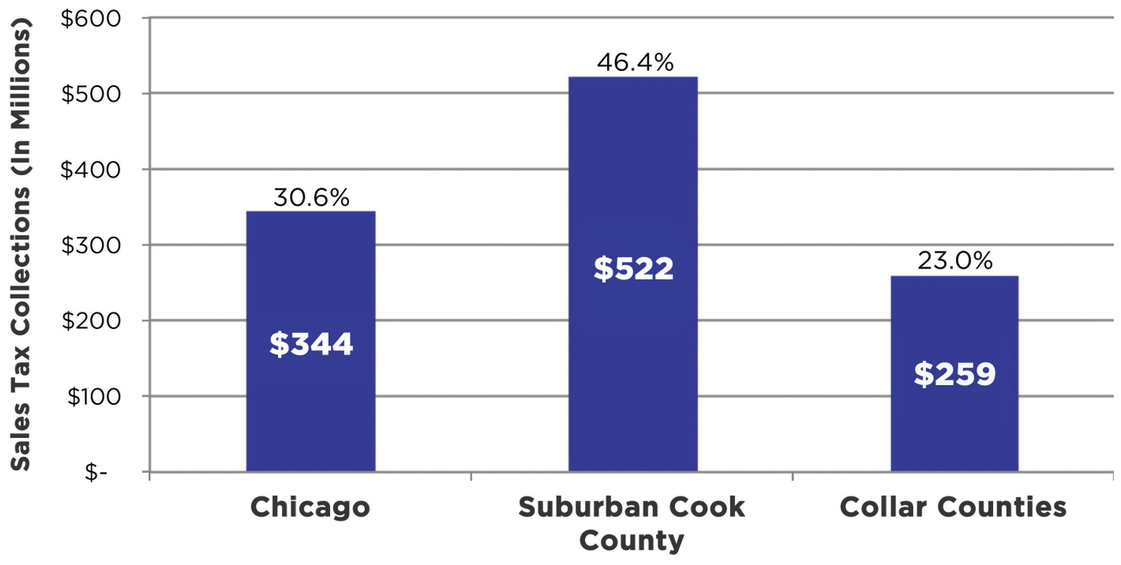
The RTA has estimated that the CTA, Metra, and Pace have a backlog of roughly $20 billion in maintenance needed to achieve a State of Good Repair, and will need an additional $13.4 billion over the next ten years to address routine capital needs. To address these needs, roughly $3 billion in annual capital spending would be required—only $1.3 billion was spent in 2015.



Pace is one of the largest bus service providers in the nation accounting for approximately 37.3 million trips a year. As with the CTA and Metra, Cook County residents represent the majority, 75 percent, of all Pace riders.

FIGURE 2.6 CHICAGO REGION SALES TAX COLLECTIONS FOR TRANSIT (IN MILLIONS)

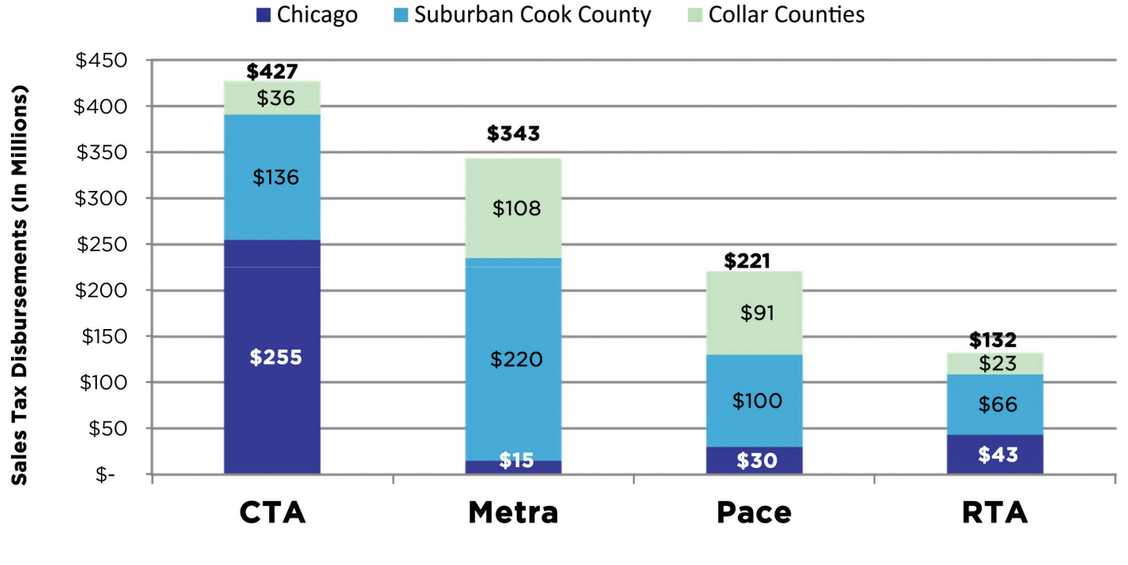
Source: Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics, 2014 Regional Transportation Authority Sales Tax and Real Estate Transfer Tax Receipts, 2014



Communities located in Cook County pay more than three-quarters of the sales tax collected to support transit within the region. In return, they get the majority of transit service.

FIGURE 2.7 SALES TAX DISBURSEMENTS FOR TRANSIT (IN MILLIONS)

Source: Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics, 2014 Regional Transportation Authority Sales Tax and Real Estate Transfer Tax Receipts, 2014



Sales tax revenue collected for transit is largely distributed via formulas established more than 30 years ago, rather than based on usage and need.

FIGURE 2.8 COOK COUNTY APPOINTMENTS TO TRANSIT BOARDS



CHART KEY

- Cook County Board President
- Suburban Cook County Commissioners
- Other elected officials

Cook County appoints one-third of the members of the transit boards within the region. These appointed officials can play a critical role in shaping the policies and practices of their respective boards to ensure they are responsive to the County's transportation priorities.





Photo credit: (left) "DivvyManSuit2" by Steven Vance, available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial license, and (right) Gordon Walek

Launched in 2013 with 75 stations and 750 bicycles, Divvy grew to 476 stations, 4,600 bicycles, and 3.2 million trips by the end of 2015.

Despite these funding sources, transit agencies face a serious shortage of capital funds for maintenance and expansion. Funds for some capital investments are provided by annual funding from the federal government, as well as Illinois capital funding programs. In recent years, state capital programs have been underfunded and erratically timed. Federal funding cycles and amounts have also often been delayed and uncertain, making long-term planning difficult. As a result, the transit agencies are seriously falling behind on basic maintenance, let alone expanding services to accommodate today's demands.

The RTA has estimated that the CTA, Metra, and Pace have a backlog of roughly $20 billion in maintenance needed to achieve a State of Good Repair, and will need an additional $13.4 billion over the next ten years to address routine capital needs. To address these needs, roughly $3 billion in annual capital spending would be required—only $1.3 billion was spent in 2015.

The RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace each has its own Board of Directors and distinct legislative mandate. The four boards have a total of 47 members, which are appointed by 21 different elected officials. The Cook County President and the 17 County Commissioners have the authority to make appointments to these governing boards as indicated in Figure 2.8.

While the RTA is nominally in charge of the major components of the transit system, it is seriously constrained by a lack of funding, obsolete funding formulas for the allocation of what funds are available, and restrictions in its enabling legislation. As a result, the three transit operating agencies largely function independently of each other, as they have with few changes since the current structure was created in 1983.

Additional Transportation Options

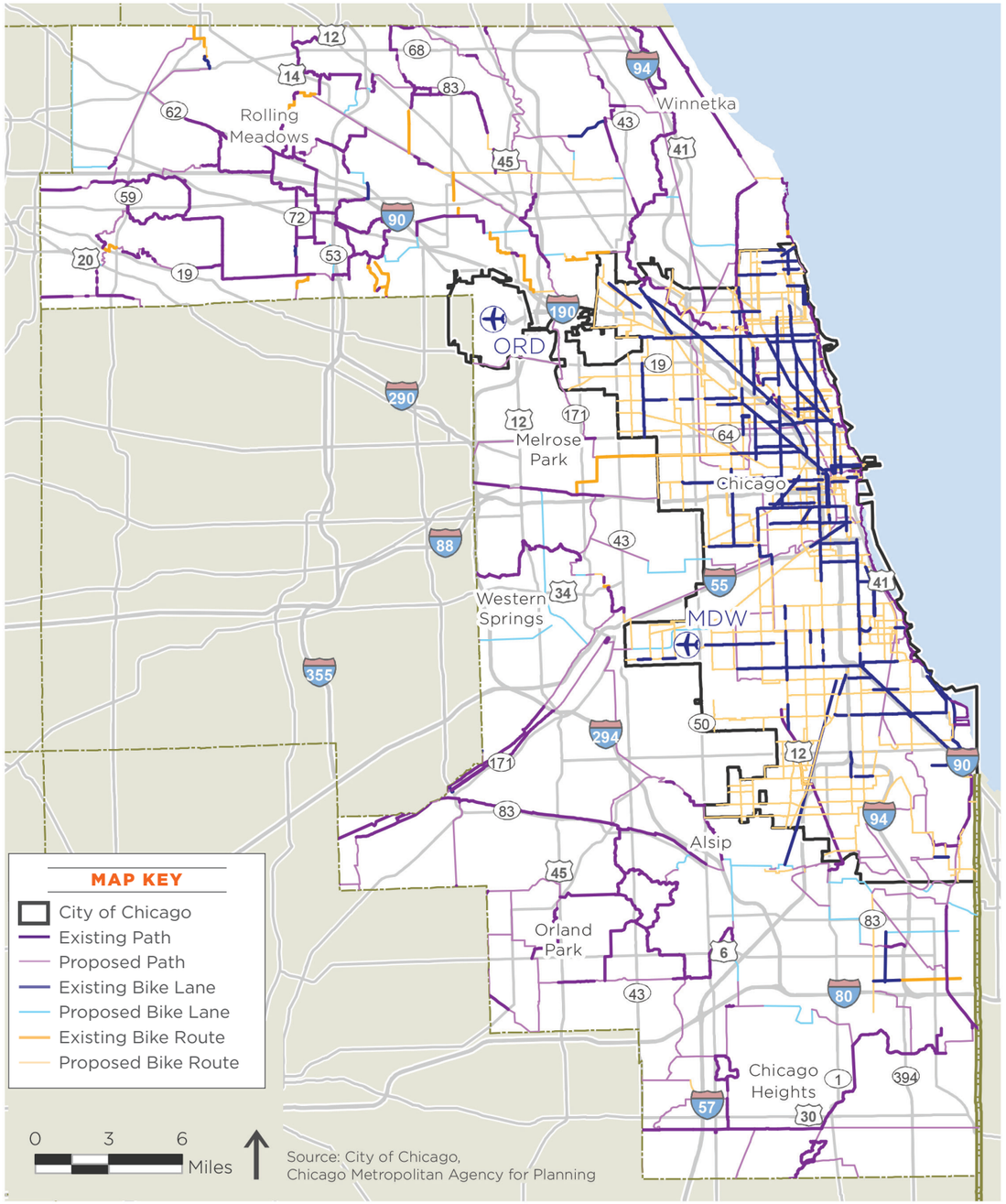
While the vast majority of all trips in Cook County are by personal automobile or public transit, there are many other transportation options that play a crucial role in the County's transportation system.

The first of these is **walking**, which is sometimes referred to as the forgotten mode of transportation. Many trips are completed entirely by walking, and many others require walking as one leg of a longer journey. Nationally, walking trips are 10.9 percent of the total; the walk share of trips increased 235 percent between 1990 and 2009. In the Chicago region, 10.4 percent of all weekday trips are walk trips. Public agencies responsible for transportation need to build and maintain sidewalks for walkers, just as they build and maintain roads and bridges for those who drive cars.

Another important option that more people are choosing is **biking**. Similar to the increases in walk trips, a national survey indicates that bike trips increased from 1.7 billion to 4.9 billion from 1991 to 2009. The share of Chicagoans biking to work rose from 0.5 percent in 2000 to 1.4 percent in 2014. Suburban Cook County saw an increase from 0.3 to 0.5 percent over the same time period. Overall, Cook County residents more than doubled the use of bikes for work trips from 0.4 percent in 2000 to 1.0 percent in 2014. Some of the trips are made with privately owned bicycles, while a growing number are with bike sharing programs like Chicago's Divvy system. Currently Divvy has 476 stations and plans to have 583 by the end of 2016, including stations in Evanston and Oak Park. In 2015, Divvy customers took 3.2 million trips.

FIGURE 2.9 BIKE LANES AND TRAILS IN COOK COUNTY

Source: City of Chicago, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning



Cook County has more than 300 miles of off-street, multi-use paths for bikers and walkers, with an additional 30 miles set to be completed by 2018. Many of these trails are interconnected, but many segments are deficient, underutilized, discontinuous, or completely absent.

In recent years, the City of Chicago and many of the County's municipalities have created new bike paths and redesigned existing streets to accommodate both cars and bikes. In total, Cook County has more than 300 miles of off-street, multi-use paths for bikers and walkers, with an additional 30 miles set to be completed by 2018. The Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trail Plan has proposed an additional 400 miles of off-street trails. On-street, there are also more than 300 miles of bike lanes and routes, with more than 200 miles in Chicago and an estimated 100 miles or more in suburban Cook County.

In addition, Cook County and 35 constituent communities have adopted *Complete Streets* ordinances and six more communities may do so in the near future. These ordinances are a commitment to design streets to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, as well as automobiles. Many municipalities have been using their land use planning and regulatory systems to support mixed-use, higher density developments that encourage more walking and biking.

Taxis, privately operated shuttle buses, limousine services, car sharing services, and ride sharing services, are a critical additional component of the transportation infrastructure of Cook County. Along with biking and walking, these services fill a public demand for something other than personal cars or public transit. This desire is reflected in real, significant numbers of trips:

- Car-sharing companies own and operate nearly 1,000 vehicles within Chicago
- Uber passengers take more than two million trips every month in the Chicago area
- Over 6,300 taxis and 2,500 livery vehicles are registered in the City of Chicago

The rapid growth of these transportation modes reflects the degree to which consumers' needs and preferences are not adequately served by the current system.



Uber passengers take more than two million trips every month in the Chicago area. The rapid growth of ride sharing reflects the degree to which consumers' needs and preferences are not adequately served by the current transportation system.



The Belt Railway of Chicago—the largest switching terminal railroad in the United States—separates and classifies rail cars into rebuilt trains for 14 freight rail providers and dozens of private companies in the Chicago region at its Clearing Yard in Bedford Park.

Moving Goods

The Chicago region is the freight capital of North America. Between a quarter and a third of all freight tonnage in the U.S. originates, terminates, or passes through the region. Each year, the region handles nearly a billion tons of freight with a value of more than $1.3 trillion. A portion of the freight that moves through the area serves the needs of the region's businesses and families. But the region also serves a second freight function, as an important nexus in the national and international freight network.

Serving as a major freight center for the rest of the nation is clearly an economic benefit. The rail, truck, storage, and supporting industries related to freight provide jobs and income to more than 100,000 people in Cook County, and more than 170,000 in the region. Equally important, the region's role as a freight hub provides advantages to other industries that depend on a competitive freight industry to get their raw materials and ship their finished products. By 2024, the volume of freight is expected to grow by 50 percent nationwide, which will mean significant increases in the freight handled in the Chicago region, leading to more jobs, more income, and more tax revenue.

However, this role as a freight hub comes at a cost. The additional trucks create added highway congestion and wear-and-tear on roads and bridges. Freight trains slow traffic at Cook County's 794 at-grade rail crossings. And, every day the freight trains and Metra must share the same tracks, a complication for both the commuter passengers and freight customers.

Public and private leaders in the region have concluded that the benefits of this industry far outweigh the added costs. Indeed, the freight industry has even been singled out by Cook County as a priority industry sector to support, because it provides a competitive advantage that few other regions enjoy. It is a source of jobs and profits for local companies. The City of Chicago, several other surrounding counties, and the region's planning agency CMAP, have also identified the freight industry as an industry sector that deserves priority support to maintain and grow its role in the regional economy.

The challenge for the region is to maximize the economic benefits of the freight industry, while also managing the costs of hosting an industry that serves the nation.

Rail Freight

The Chicago region has 2,796 miles of rail rights-of-way. Of that total, 1,194 miles are in Cook County. Within the Chicago region, there are more than 50 freight rail yards, of which half handle containers. This rail infrastructure is used by six of the seven largest railroads in the nation. The infrastructure also supports nine smaller regional rail companies, many of which move rail cars from one major line to another, as well as Metra and Amtrak. No other place in the country has such a concentration of rail assets. Cook County is the center of the nation's rail system.

An estimated 500 freight trains move 30,000 rail cars through the region each day. That represents about half of the total rail freight movements in the nation. On an average weekday, Metra operates another 703 trains and Amtrak operates an additional 56 trains. As stated earlier, many of these trains are competing for time on the same tracks. In Cook County, roughly half of rail rights-of-way are shared between commuter and freight rail traffic—and trains often have to wait for each other when the tracks cross. As the demand for both passenger and freight capacity grows, these conflicts will limit expansions of existing service.

More than a century ago, Daniel Burnham's *Plan of Chicago* identified rail congestion as a problem the community needed to address. Although significant progress has been made, there continues to be opportunity for substantial improvement.

During the past century the private railroads, with the support of a variety of public agencies, have worked to reduce congestion and conflicts while improving the capacity of the rail system to move goods and people. The latest effort is called CREATE, which is a public-private effort among six of the country's largest railroads, plus Amtrak, Metra, the City of Chicago, and the State of Illinois. Cook County is not a member of the CREATE partnership.

CREATE is the outgrowth of a massive snow storm during the winter of 1998-99 that brought freight rail traffic in the region to a virtual standstill. Given the critical importance of Chicago as a transfer point, rail traffic across the country was slowed or stopped. Local and national political and business leaders were concerned that this rail gridlock would be repeated without significant action.

This public and private concern initially led to the creation of the Chicago Transportation Coordination Office (CTCO). The CTCO is a centralized office that helps reduce operating conflicts when the major freight railroads, as well as Amtrak and Metra, use the same rights-of-way or cross each other's lines. The CTCO still exists and assists in coordinating the timing and routing of train traffic.



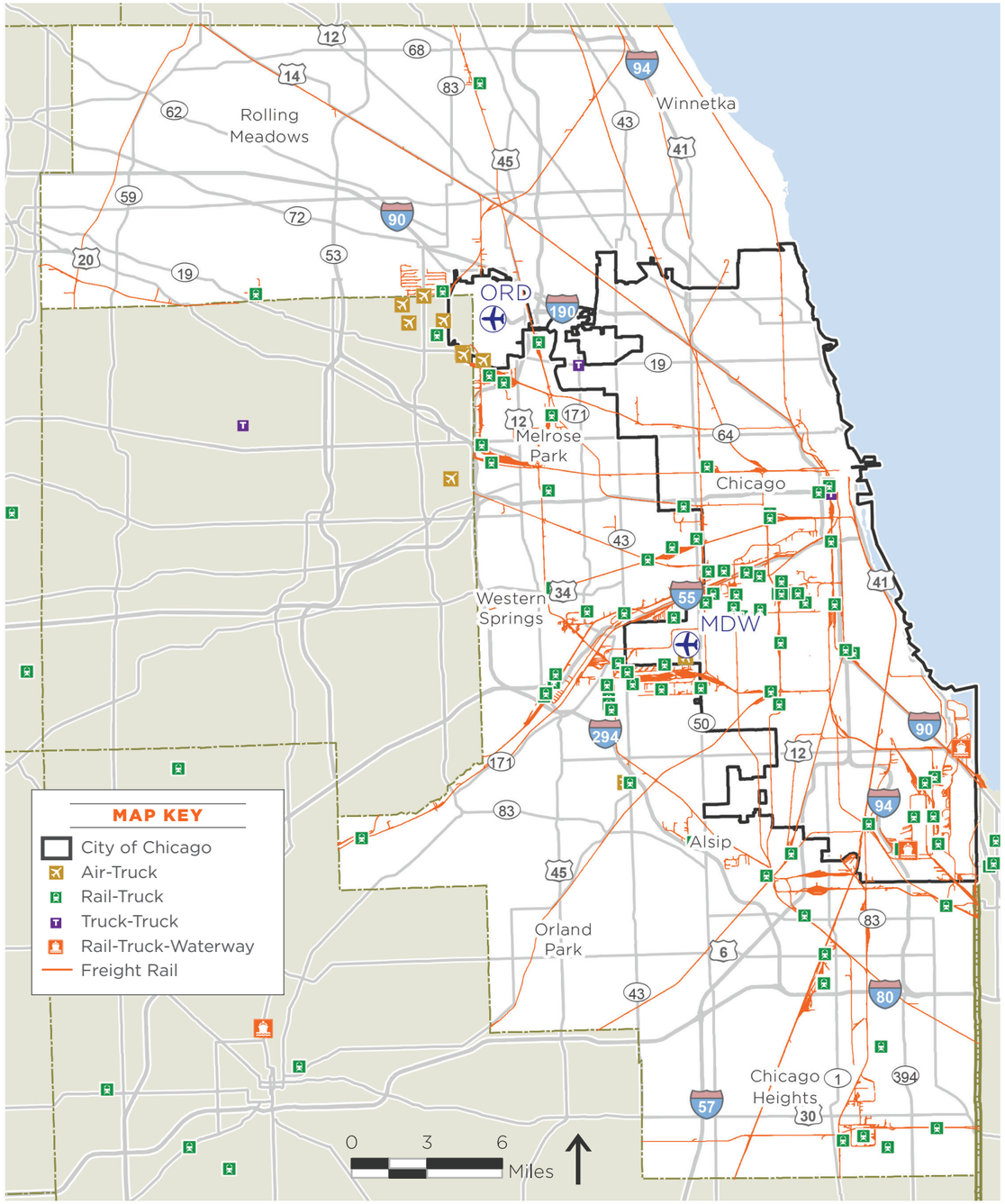
Roughly half of the rail rights-of-way in Cook County are shared between commuter and freight trains.

It soon became apparent, however, that the CTCO by itself was not sufficient, and that further progress in reducing congestion delays would require substantial capital investments. New infrastructure was needed to reduce rail conflicts, eliminate highway grade crossings, and upgrade outmoded signals and switching systems. The initial budget for CREATE was $1.5 billion with the railroads pledging to pay $232 million of the total cost. The current estimate is that all the projects will cost a total of $4.4 billion. To date, $1.2 billion has been spent to complete 25 of the initial 70 projects, as well as begin work on twenty-six more. The remaining projects are in various stages of pre-planning. Approximately 63 of the 70 projects are within Cook County.

While much work remains to be completed, CREATE has been enormously successful. It has resulted in the construction of several projects that have improved train traffic in the region. It is a path-breaking effort, recognized nationally as a public-private approach for maintaining and growing the region's status as a continental freight hub.

FIGURE 2.10 FREIGHT FACILITIES

Source: Illinois Department of Transportation, National Transportation Atlas Database 2014



Most of the region's freight assets are located in Cook County, which has 80 percent of the region's intermodal yards and shipping containers, 50 percent of the region's at-grade rail crossings, and 80 percent of the motorist delays resulting from passing trains. Rail bottlenecks are also more numerous.



Approximately 70 percent of all the freight moved in the Chicago region travels by truck. Trucking companies identify this region as one of the least commerce-friendly places in the country because of the complicated regulatory environment and infrastructure deficiencies.

Truck Freight

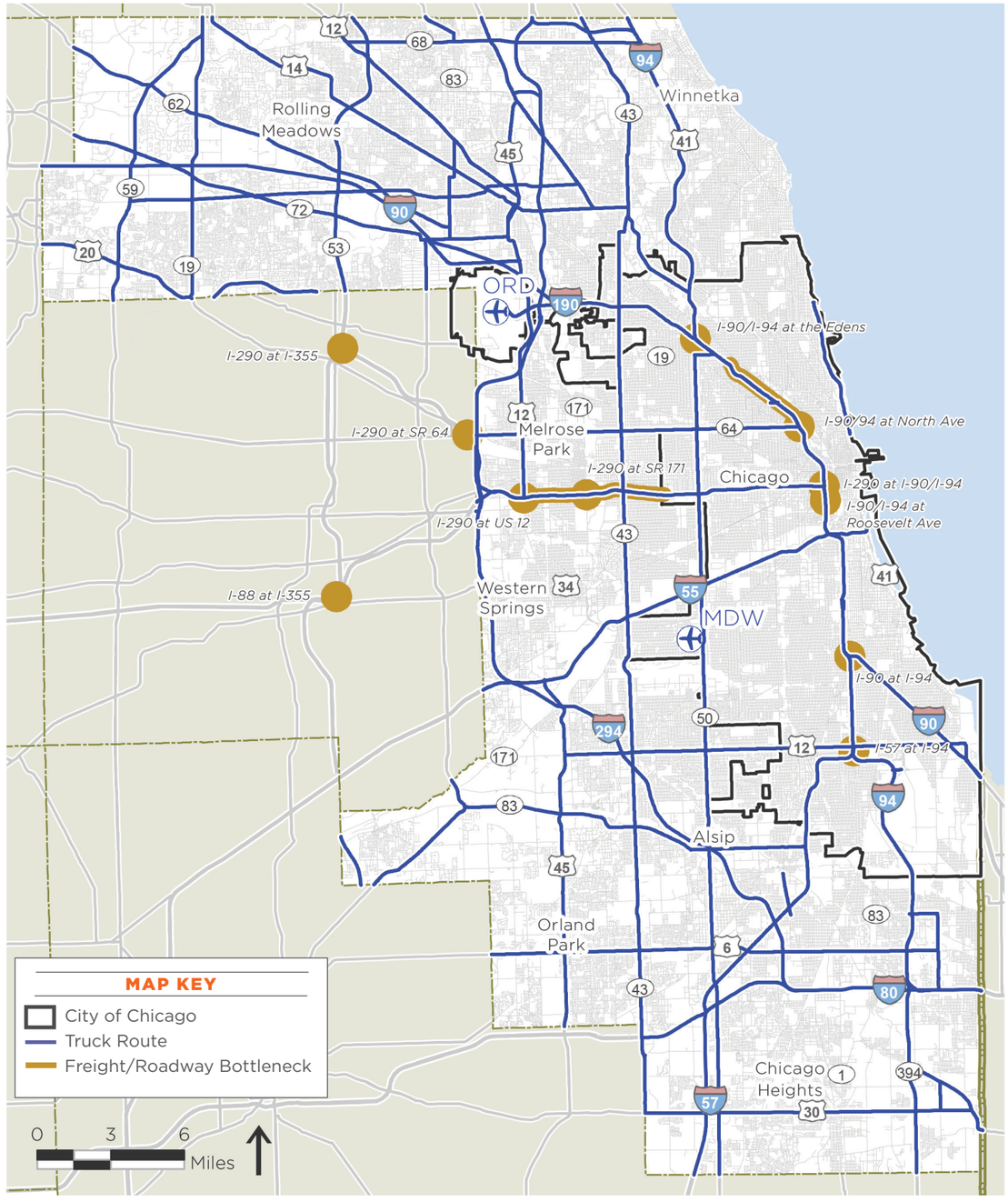
While rail plays a central role in the region's freight network, trucks actually move most of the goods. About 70 percent of all the freight moved in the Chicago region travels by truck. These movements range from a truck loaded with cars on its way from Detroit to Milwaukee, to a truck full of scrap on its way to a steel mill, to a delivery truck bringing groceries to someone's home.

Trucks operate on the same roads, streets, and highways used by personal automobiles. Six percent of these are designated as official truck routes, but trucks travel on many others. And much, though not all, of that infrastructure was designed with the car in mind. As a result, the trucking industry is frequently faced with bridges that cannot bear their loads, viaducts that are too low, streets that are too narrow, or with turning radii that are too small. In addition, trucks must deal with a complicated regulatory environment that involves the State, the County, and hundreds of local jurisdictions that control when and where some of the trucks can travel. Because of these hurdles, shippers, trucking companies, and logistics firms often identify the Chicago region as one of the least commerce-friendly places in the country.

Every street and bridge need not be designed for trucks, but there are substantial opportunities to improve this element of the freight industry. There are trade-offs such as increased congestion, wear-and-tear on the region's roads and bridges, and air pollution, among others, but these are the price the region pays for increased logistics employment opportunities and economic productivity. Failure to realize these opportunities makes it hard for the County to support this critical sector of the economy.

FIGURE 2.11 FREIGHT BOTTLENECKS AND TRUCK ROUTES IN COOK COUNTY

Source: *Assessment of Multimodal Freight Bottlenecks and Alleviation Strategies for the Upper Midwest Region*; National Center for Freight & Infrastructure Research & Education Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; University of Wisconsin–Madison; April 2010.



Eleven of the top 20 bottlenecks in the Midwest are located in or near Cook County on IDOT-designated truck routes. The American Transportation Research Institute estimates that Cook County has the highest cost of congestion to trucking firms—$933 million—of any county in the U.S.



Infrastructure designed for the car poses problems for the trucking industry in the form of viaduct clearances that are too low, bridges that cannot bear commercial weights, and narrow streets with turning radii at intersections that are too short to accommodate trucks.

About 70 percent of all the freight moved in the Chicago region travels by truck.

Much, though not all, of the roadway infrastructure was designed with the car in mind, not the truck.



The Central Tri-State between 95th Street and Balmoral Avenue serves as a major freight corridor within the region, with trucks accounting for as much as 20 percent of traffic in some sections. Planning is currently underway to rebuild this 22-mile stretch of Tollway, which connects with four different interstates. A fifth roadway—the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway—will connect once it is completed.

Conclusion

Cook County's extensive transportation network and services on average support 19 million trips made by people and businesses every day. However, the long-term sustainability of these assets and, more importantly, the regional economy are threatened by a lack of vision and values that clearly articulate the importance to the County of maintaining and modernizing a complex system across modes and jurisdictions. Without such a framework to provide guidance, system performance will continue to fall short of expectations, changing preferences and technological innovation. And funding will continue to be insufficient to maintain and modernize the transportation system and distributed using outdated financial allocation formulas rather than changing demands or transparent performance criteria.



2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PRIORITIES

CHAPTER THREE

COOK COUNTY'S TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

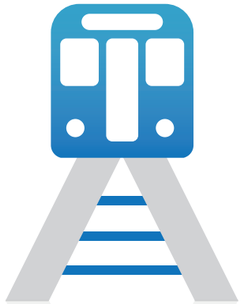
The County's existing transportation system is extensive, but it is not meeting the needs of many current users. Clearly, it is not sufficient to meet future demands. Although the County enjoys a substantial foundation of transportation infrastructure and services, it cannot simply rely on its history of leadership and investment. Other regions across the country and around the world are continuing to modernize and expand their transportation systems. If Cook County does not do so, it will lose its competitive advantage, damage its economy, and make the County a less attractive place to live and work.

Although the County enjoys a substantial foundation of transportation infrastructure and services, it cannot simply rely on its history of leadership and investment and retain its supremacy as a transportation hub.

To meet this challenge Cook County has adopted the following five policy priorities. These policies will shape the County's work and serve as the foundation for collaborative efforts with the many other public and private agencies responsible for providing transportation services. Each of these policy priorities is discussed below with corresponding action items presented in the following chapter.



PROMOTE
EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES



PRIORITIZE
TRANSIT AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES



SUPPORT
THE REGION'S ROLE AS NORTH AMERICA'S FREIGHT CAPITAL



MAINTAIN AND MODERNIZE
WHAT ALREADY EXISTS



INCREASE
INVESTMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION



PRIORITIZE TRANSIT AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

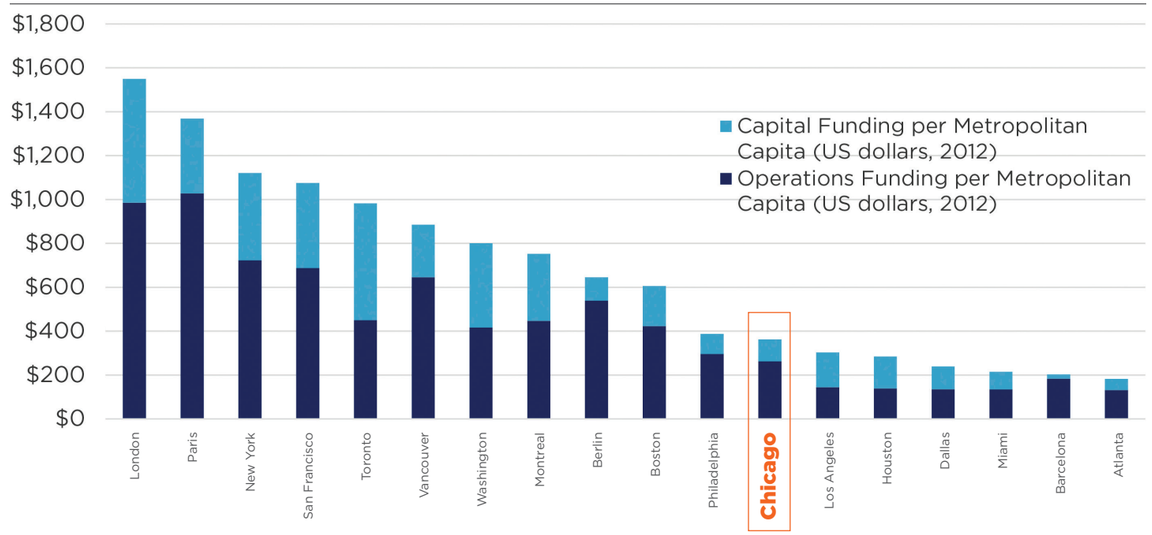
Cook County, like the rest of the country, has long prioritized the automobile as the preferred mode of personal travel. It has done so with land use policies that encourage low density land development, and because federal or state funding policies have historically prioritized road building over other transportation investments. Cars, of course, will continue to have a central place in serving the mobility needs of County residents. However, trying to address congested traffic or supporting new consumer preferences by only expanding highways or building new ones is unrealistic and shortsighted. In recent years, it has even become apparent that new road capacity can lead to more traffic, offsetting any temporary reductions in congestion.

Cook County is a highly urbanized place, competing with similar places across the globe for businesses, people, capital, and talent. To successfully compete, the County must complement its extensive road network with improved transit and fully embrace other modes such as walking, biking, car sharing, and ride sharing. These modes must not be afterthoughts to a system based on the automobile, but must instead be essential components of a suite of transportation options, offering families and businesses realistic, high-quality choices.

Of these modes, **public transit** is the single-most important. Growth in transit use in the region has been disappointingly slow over the past few decades, especially when compared to other regions. Crucially, many of those regions are making substantial improvements in their systems and investing more per capita than metropolitan Chicago as shown in Figure 3.1. The County fully supports the CMAP goal of doubling transit ridership by 2040. Expanding transit service either through better use of existing resources, or the development of new capacity, will be a priority for Cook County.

FIGURE 3.1 TRANSIT FUNDING PER CAPITA, 2012

Source: Transit agencies in each region, Metropolitan Planning Council



Public transportation ridership in the Chicago metropolitan area has shown disappointing growth over the last several decades because this region invests less on a per capita basis than many international and domestic urban counterparts.

In addition to transit, Cook County will fully support **bicycles** as an important transportation mode. The early success of Chicago's Divvy program, as well as the popularity of bike lanes, indicate the potential for growth. What's more, the infrastructure required to make biking more attractive—paint for bike lanes, plastic bollards to separate them from car lanes, etc.—is relatively low-cost. "Road diets," one mechanism for creating bike lanes out of existing car lanes, can also have the added benefit of reducing speeding, which can make the road safer for everyone—drivers, bikers, and pedestrians alike.

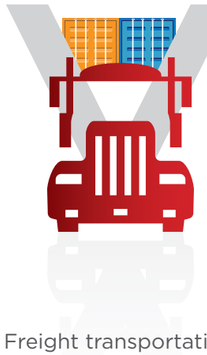
The County will also place a new emphasis on **pedestrians**. While many places in the County are walkable, pedestrian-friendly environments, a significant number are not. In those places, walking to a store or a transit stop is not possible, or at least highly inconvenient. As with bicycles, designing streets to better accommodate pedestrians—by adding or widening sidewalks, shortening the distance needed to cross an intersection, adding street lighting, etc.—can be relatively inexpensive and hugely beneficial. Actions in this vein are already underway; continuing them is a priority.

Transportation services operated by private companies have an important role to play as well. **Ride sharing**, **car sharing**, **and other services** can and should fill gaps in and supplement existing transportation offerings, just as private bus systems and shuttle services do. Government need not have a monopoly on providing services or facilities to travelers. Instead, it is government's responsibility to ensure that these new services lead to more and better options for County residents.



Nationally, demand for freight services has exceeded population growth and is expected to increase by 50 percent by 2024 and nearly double over the next 25 years.

To retain its status as a freight hub, the County will focus on rail and trucking, the two modes that carry the most freight within the region.



SUPPORT
THE REGION'S ROLE AS NORTH AMERICA'S FREIGHT CAPITAL

Freight transportation has historically played a critical role in Cook County's economy—one that carries through to the present. Freight's economic impact extends beyond transportation infrastructure and providers to include the many manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers that depend upon and interact with the transportation sector. Collectively, this cluster of industry sectors supports a significant number of well-paying jobs. The County's central location within the region and nation makes it a crossroads for much of this traffic.

Rail freight facilities in the region collectively handle the equivalent of 15.4 million shipping containers a year, making the Chicago region not only the busiest freight hub in North America, but also the largest rail bottleneck in the national freight system. Most of this regional activity occurs in Cook County, which has 80 percent of the region's intermodal yards and shipping containers, 50 percent of the region's at-grade rail crossings, and 80 percent of the motorist delays resulting from passing trains.

The **trucking industry** faces similar constraints. Eleven of the top twenty highway bottlenecks in the Upper Midwest, for example, are located in the Chicago area; nine are in Cook County and two are in neighboring DuPage County. And new regulations may allow longer, taller, and heavier vehicles than in the past, adding additional pressures to a system that is already straining to accommodate the demand.

Nationally, demand for freight services has seen much growth and is expected to increase by 50 percent by 2024 and nearly double over the next 25 years. Recognizing the economic opportunity embedded in these trends, the County's competitors have upgraded freight transportation systems and added strategic capacity to and connections between roads, rail lines, waterways, ports, and airports. As a result, the Chicago region's market share is slipping. In 2000 the metropolitan area processed 51.2 percent of all intermodal containers nationally; by 2013 that share had dropped to 47.7 percent.

Despite this relative decline, metropolitan Chicago's freight cluster has the potential to add jobs and businesses at a faster rate than other commercial sectors, and in greater numbers than at the two other largest freight centers in the U.S.—Los Angeles and New York . However, the County cannot take these possibilities for granted. To ensure that it captures its share of this growth, the County will maintain and build upon the advantages that have led to its unique roles as North America's freight capital and a global freight hub.

To retain this status, the County will focus on rail and trucking, the two modes that carry the most freight within the region. Both modes, and the industries associated with them, are highly complex. Any solutions to the problems affecting them will require collaboration with the many governments and private companies. Some efforts already underway, such as the CREATE program and the streamlining of truck permits, will require renewed support and revitalization. Other problems, such as the more fundamental capacity constraints facing the rail freight industry, or the need for an overarching approach to the issues affecting the trucking sector, will require new solutions and partnerships. And because these issues are a result of the function the County performs for the rest of the nation, the federal government must be one of these partners.

Beyond transportation, the County will also prioritize land-use and development practices that build upon the region's strength as a center of freight distribution. Such practices are referred to as cargo-oriented development, and involve promoting areas with good links to freight infrastructure as sites for potential freight and logistics developments.



The unequal distribution of transportation services and opportunities lead to significant additional costs and restrictions in opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Cook County families and companies each day.

PROMOTE EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

The purpose of transportation is to provide access to opportunities. Transportation is the way people get to jobs, school, healthcare, recreational activities, and much more. Within Cook County, however, **transportation services and the opportunities they afford are not equally distributed**. The historical causes of these inequities may be land use and economic development practices that have limited the number of nearby opportunities, discrimination in investment, or other factors. Whatever the cause, discrimination against part of the population or business base is not acceptable.

In acknowledging this, Cook County is not alone. Most notably, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recently said, "There is a regrettable legacy of aligning and designing transportation projects that separated Americans along economic and even racial lines. The choices we make about future transportation projects, the people they touch and places they connect, will play a role in determining how widely opportunity expands throughout America." The County will use transportation investments as a means to combat inequalities, because inequalities lead to significant additional costs and restrictions in opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Cook County families and companies each day.

The unequal distribution of transportation services is not restricted to one particular mode, but falls across many modes. This is not necessarily surprising, since the County is not a homogeneous place—its transportation system will not be so, either. What is problematic, though, is when the distribution is so unequal that it leads to material differences in access between residents of various sub-regions.

This problem is often referred to as ***transit deserts***, areas that have high demand for but no access to high-quality transit. Figure 3.2 highlights areas that have high demand for transit, but are both more than a quarter-mile away from high-frequency bus service and more than a half-mile away from rail transit stations. While there are some transit deserts within the City of Chicago, the large majority lie in the suburbs. Moreover, the lack of access to reliable transit is not restricted to transit deserts. For example, many of the areas not noted as transit deserts in Figure 3.2 may only have a Metra stop, which would support trips for work, but not for shopping, social entertainment, healthcare, or other purposes due to limited service outside of rush hour.

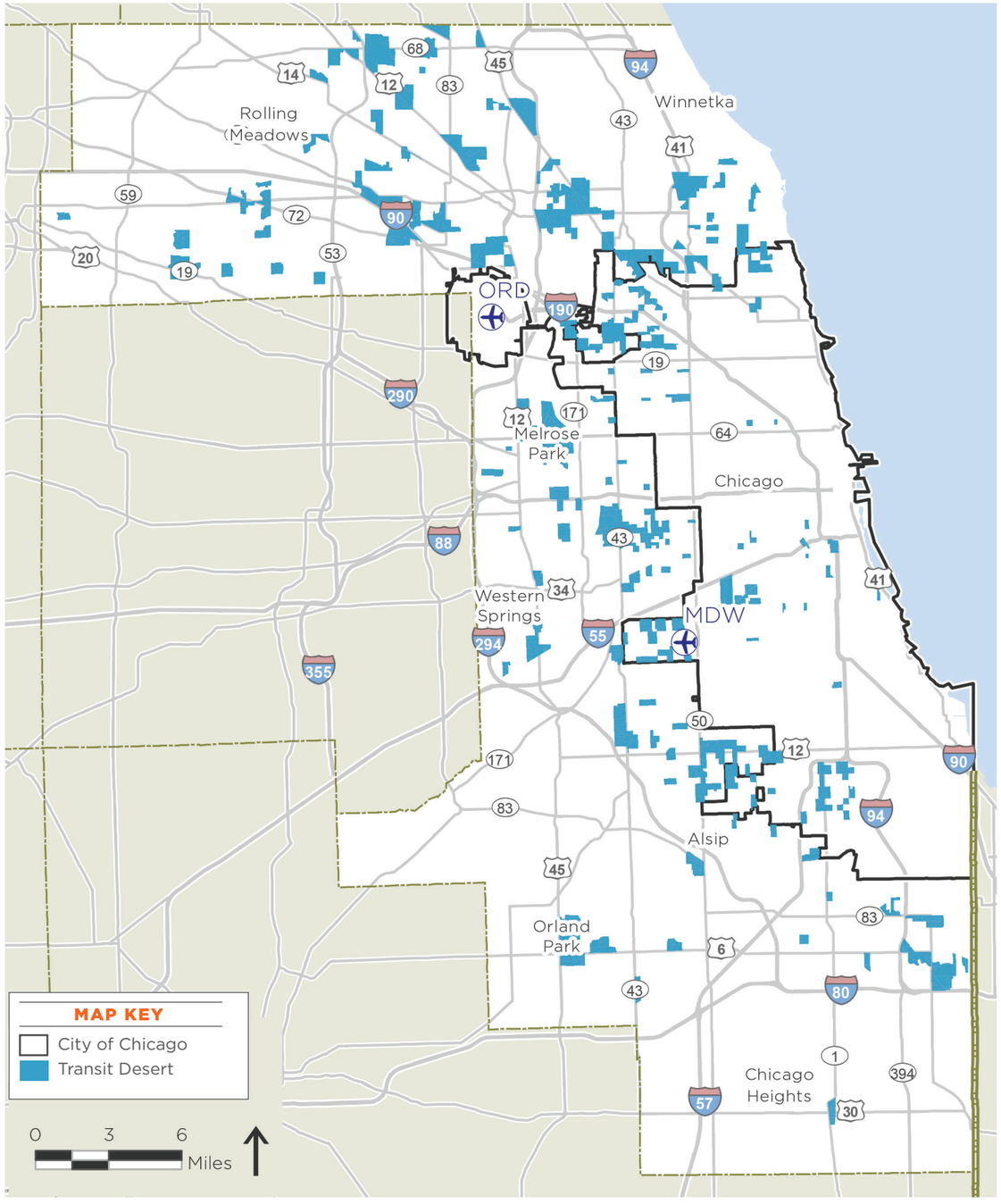
Other modes see similar discrepancies in access—for instance, while the City of Chicago has been ambitious in expanding its network of protected bike lanes, many areas of the County have no such infrastructure available. And, while residents in highly urbanized areas might never come across a road without a sidewalk, this is not uniformly true for the five million people who live in Cook County.

Even in the areas where most residents are effectively served by the transportation system, there are hundreds of thousands of persons with disabilities, seniors, and parents with small children for whom proximity to transportation options is not enough. Whether because of a missing sidewalk, a flight of stairs, or a vehicle not properly equipped, this population cannot access quality transportation services.

Businesses are also impacted by unequal access to public infrastructure. Many firms have operated for decades in communities with deteriorated transportation facilities and paid a price for disinvestment in the form of less efficient operations and higher shipping costs. These impediments have limited their ability to thrive and

FIGURE 3.2 AREAS POORLY SERVED BY TRANSIT

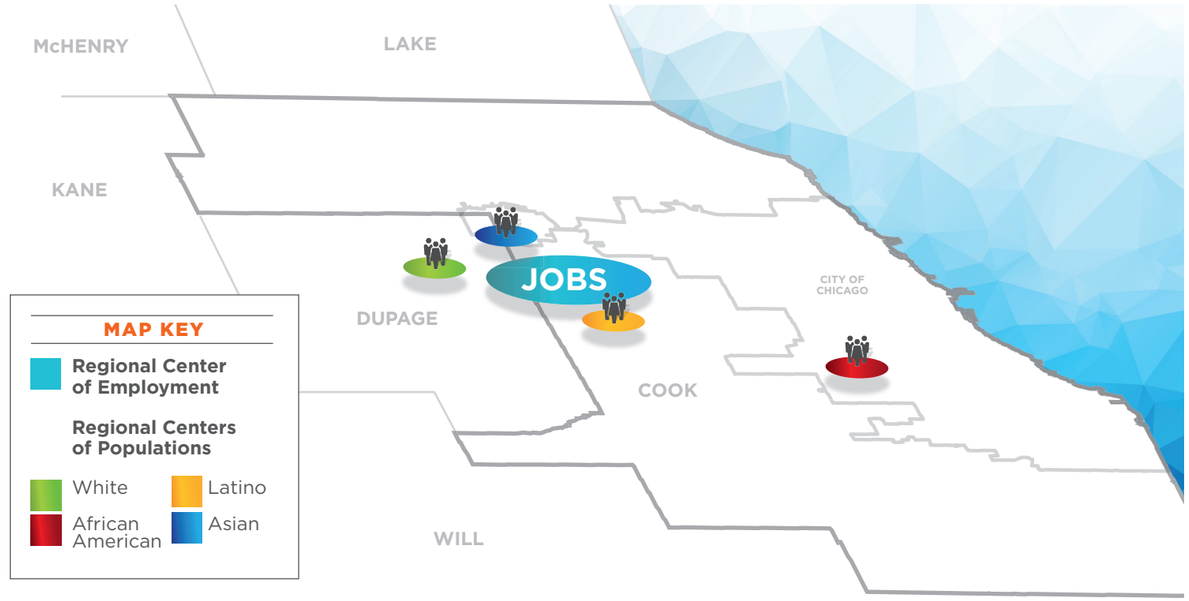
Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology



Transit deserts have high demand for public transportation but no walkable access to high-quality transit. The large majority of transit deserts lie in the suburbs.

FIGURE 3.3 AFRICAN AMERICANS' UNEQUAL ACCESS TO JOB OPPORTUNITIES, 2010

Source: US Census, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, RW Ventures, LLC and Mass Economics, 2016



Regional jobs as well as the population centers for Asians, Whites, and Latinos are centered in the Northwest part of the County. The center of the African-American population is further away from the job center, creating increased challenges for employment accessibility and more transportation challenges.

expand. Similarly, companies in transit deserts have access to smaller labor pools and face decreased workforce reliability and higher turnover rates that also add to their operating costs.

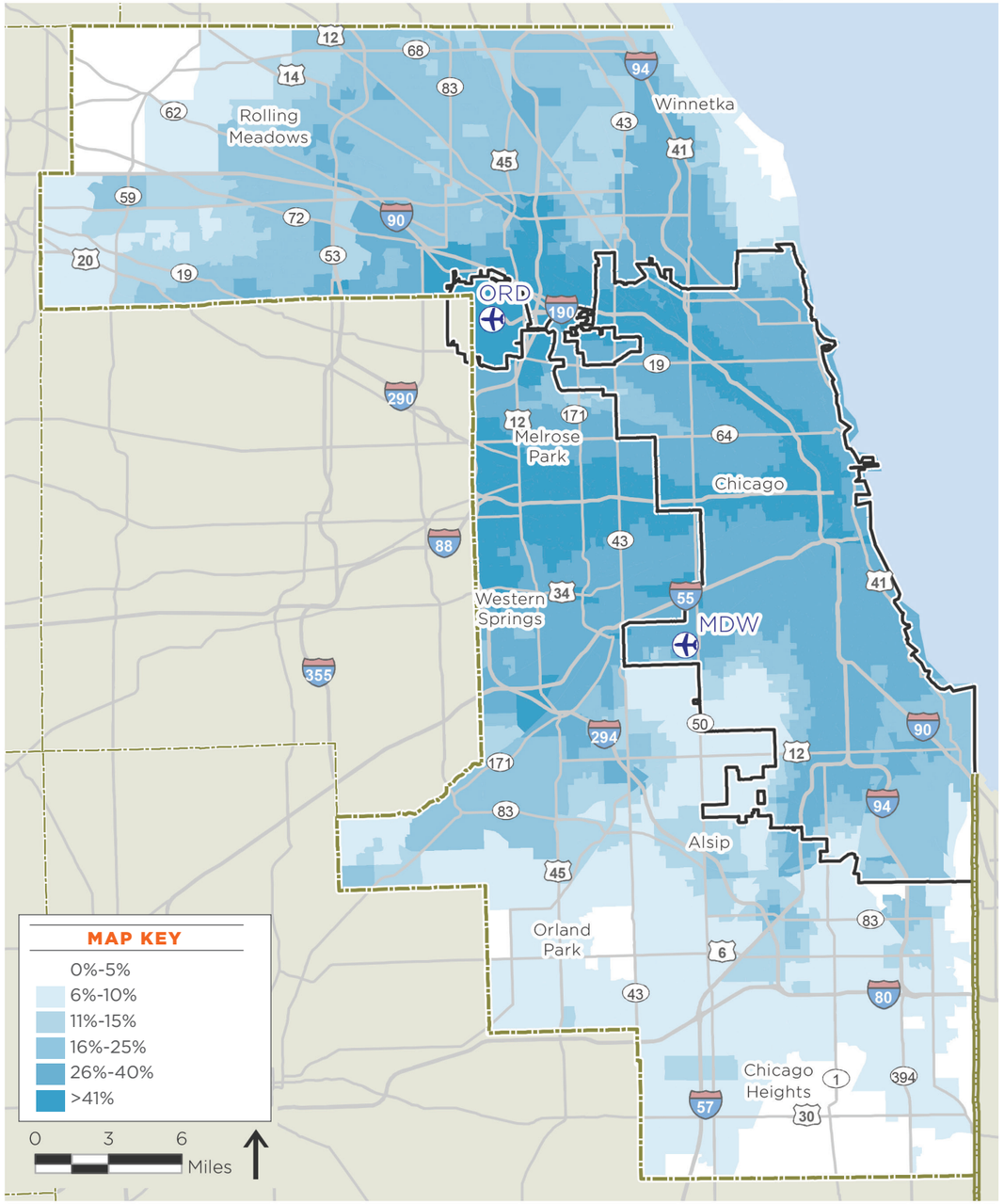
The second inequality is in the distribution of opportunities—jobs, schools, healthcare, and more. For even if transportation services were equally available throughout the County, an unequal distribution of opportunities would still lead to longer commutes, higher costs, and restrictions in choice. For example, as seen in Figure 3.3, African-American residents of the region live much farther from the region's employment centers than any other group. And Figures 3.4 and 3.5 show that this mismatch is reflected in the number of jobs accessible to different sub-regions, across all modes.

South Cook County, in particular, has seen less capital investment and more economic contraction than other parts of the County as a result of declines in the steel industry and manufacturing. It has high unemployment rates. There are too few job opportunities in the area and commutes to available jobs are much longer than in other parts of the County. The County has launched a major sub-regional economic development effort in the South Suburbs, designed to both increase opportunities and to improve access to opportunities outside the area.

To fully realize equitable distribution of employment opportunities, the County's economic development and transportation policies will be designed to create a climate conducive to business expansion and to making jobs more accessible to households everywhere.

FIGURE 3.4 JOB ACCESSIBILITY BY CAR WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF HOME

Source: University of Illinois-Chicago Metropolitan Chicago Accessibility Explorer ; Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

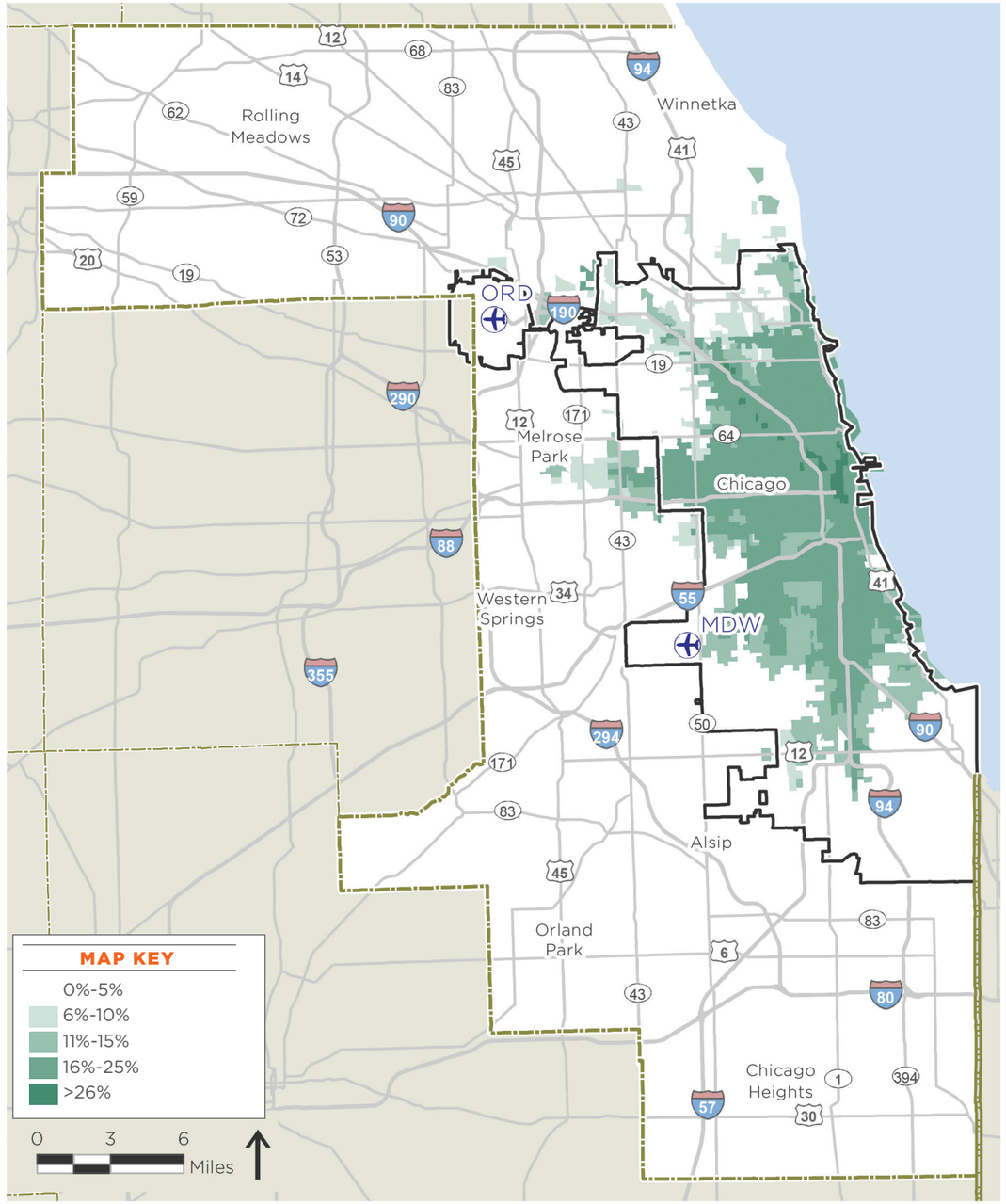


NOTES: 1) Total number of regional jobs is 3.9 million. 2) The accessibility calculation does not take into account congestion for auto travel.

Residents of south Cook County have far fewer jobs accessible to them within a 30-minute drive than do residents of other parts of the County.

FIGURE 3.5 JOB ACCESSIBILITY BY TRANSIT WITHIN 45 MINUTES OF HOME AT 8AM

Source: University of Illinois-Chicago Metropolitan Chicago Accessibility Explorer ; Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics



NOTES: 1) Total number of regional jobs is 3.9 million. 2) The accessibility calculation is based on travel at 8 a.m.

The number of jobs accessible within 45-minutes by transit is highly concentrated within the City of Chicago.



Maintaining what exists will be a priority. It is tempting to add new capacity, but failure to maintain what already exists creates additional long-term operating costs, safety hazards, delays, and congestion.

MAINTAIN AND MODERNIZE WHAT ALREADY EXISTS

Maintaining what exists will be a priority. It is tempting to add new capacity, but failure to maintain what already exists has major negative consequences. By postponing regular maintenance, agencies significantly add to their long-term costs. It is three to four times more expensive, for example, to restore pavement once it has fully degraded than to keep it in a state of good repair through regular upkeep. Poor maintenance creates safety hazards, increases operating costs, causes delays, and creates or worsens congestion. Poorly maintained public transit services lead to declines in ridership, and once those riders are lost, it is not easy to get them to return. Deteriorating highway systems and freight rail networks underperform by delivering fewer goods at higher costs.

Despite these realities, agencies responsible for transportation systems have not always made maintenance a top priority. Often there is simply too little money to keep the various systems in a state of good repair. Ribbon cuttings for a new road are more appealing than routine maintenance. Some government funding programs make money available to build new roads or transit lines rather than money to maintain what already exists. As a consequence, there are significant maintenance and investment needs. Cook County will prioritize addressing these backlogs.

Modernizing the existing transportation system means using new practices and technologies to get more out of what exists rather than building new capacity. By maximizing existing resources, modernization projects can feasibly deliver significant results, even given financial constraints. And modernizing existing infrastructure typically reduces long-term maintenance obligations. Such projects are, of course, not always easy—they will require significant intergovernmental collaboration and financial investment—but the potential returns for the County are worth the effort involved.

Modernization can take several forms. One is Transportation Systems Management techniques, which are programs designed to improve the capacity and efficiency of existing infrastructure, such as adding bus lanes on the shoulders of expressways or coordinating traffic signals on arterial streets in order to reduce congestion and increase traffic flow. Another is Transportation Demand Management, which are programs to reduce or reallocate demand for transportation services that are currently congested or over capacity. This could include prioritizing multi-occupancy vehicles on the County's expressways, or redesigning existing streets to support all modes, rather than just cars.

Modernization can also mean adapting existing infrastructure to new technologies. This could be for the technologies of today, such as by building charging stations for electric vehicles. Even now, many governments are beginning to plan their responses to future technological developments—automation, "smart" devices, and more. When making upgrades to its existing infrastructure, as well as when making new investments, Cook County will do the same. Given existing financial constraints, the County must ensure that today's investments do not preclude future innovation and growth.



Photo credit: "OaktonStation1" by cta web, available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial license

Even with better and more collaborative spending practices, current revenues are not sufficient to adequately address the County's transportation needs.

INCREASE INVESTMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION

More money needs to be invested in the County's transportation system. *Investment* is the right way to think about transportation costs. The nation's investment in the Interstate Highway system generated a 15% return on investment by helping lower freight rates, reduce inventories, increase reliability, and reduce travel costs.

In Illinois the **real cost of transportation** is borne by families and businesses when they buy vehicles, fill them with gas, insure them, repair them, hire drivers for trucks, or pay a transit fare. For every dollar governments spend on transportation when they build roads or buy buses, families and businesses spend 8 dollars. When governments are smart about their transportation they can reduce the private costs to businesses and families. Those savings can go into more purchases, more savings and more investments in the local economy.

Transportation investments have another benefit. They make commerce more efficient and businesses more profitable. A good transportation system provides businesses with a larger labor pool to draw upon, improving the effectiveness of the workforce. A good transportation system can reduce costly business inventories. It can make it easier to get goods to market and raw materials to factories. It can reduce accidents and improve air quality. Failure to invest in transportation shifts more of the cost of moving people and goods to taxpayers.

Experience locally and throughout the country has demonstrated that the public will support new revenue for transportation, but only if they can be assured the investments will generate a good return. For example, the Tollway almost doubled its tolls recently with little public objection. Those who had to pay the tolls believed that the money was wisely and fairly used, providing value and worth the added cost.

The public is less likely to support new taxes, tolls, or fares if they lack confidence in the ability of public agencies to deliver promised results. To build that support, the County and others must demonstrate their ability to be responsible stewards of public resources allocated to the transportation system. This must include more transparent allocation of resources, performance-based criteria for decision-making, and effective and efficient interagency collaboration. Funds must be spent in ways that reflect today's transportation realities. Cook County will push for the reallocation of existing and new funds in ways that align with its transportation priorities, at the local, state, and federal level. And because of the demonstrated importance of spending on transportation, the County will also need to explore new and increased sources of revenue.

Conclusion

In a system dominated by the automobile, valuable transportation assets such as the public transportation system, bike and pedestrian facilities, and the freight network have been taken for granted, or viewed as afterthoughts by Cook County. *Connecting Cook County* establishes a framework that elevates the importance of these facilities as catalysts for sustainable economic growth and for improved access to a greater array of transportation choices and more diverse employment opportunities. *Connecting Cook County* envisions the transportation policies and improvements that are needed to address these challenges and meet the current and future needs of residents, businesses, communities, and the region. The next chapter describes the path forward.



ACTION

CHAPTER FOUR

COOK COUNTY'S ROLE IN TURNING PRIORITIES INTO ACTION

The five priorities described in the previous section reflect Cook County's assessment of the state of its transportation system. While the foundation of the system is substantial, it has been neglected. Too many families and firms find themselves with too few transportation options. They spend too much on transportation and too much time traveling. Too many families have unequal access to jobs, health care, shopping, or other opportunities.



The County faces competition for population and employment from regions across the country, and the rest of the world. Those regions have recognized the importance of creating transportation systems to attract business investment and improve the quality of life for their residents.

Cook County represents more than two-thirds of the metropolitan area's population and economic activity. It contains a similarly large share of the transportation services operating in the region. In order to realize the full potential of the region's transportation system, the County must be a leader in restoring and enhancing transportation assets and service.

To realize the full potential of the region's transportation system, the County must be a leader in restoring and enhancing transportation assets and services.

Leadership and Advocacy

Connecting Cook County will guide the transportation policy and funding decisions of Cook County. The President and County Commissioners recognize the enormous impact transportation assets—expressways, roads, commuter rail, rapid transit, city and suburban bus service, and freight facilities—have on commerce, community livability, and personal mobility. With approval of this plan, the County will assume a broader transportation focus and take the following actions to implement it:

- Communicate the priorities to the 11 members of the United States Congress, the 58 members of the Illinois House, and the 32 members of the Illinois Senate that represent the County. These elected officials will understand the breadth of the County's transportation interests, need for additional investments, and priorities for action.
- Inform the 21 board members appointed by the President and County Commissioners to serve on the CMAP, RTA, Pace, and Metra boards of the County's priorities for action. These appointed officials represent a critical force in shaping the policies and practices of their respective boards. They will be asked to represent the County's interests and priorities.
- Advocate for increased transportation revenues from the State. These include:
  - An increase in the state motor fuel tax, which has not been raised since 1991 and which has a purchasing power that is 40 percent less as a result. Any increase in these funds should be available for investments in all modes of transportation. In a modern economy, it is long past the time when transit, trails, and other modes of transportation are given only a negotiated share of what is assumed to be money for roads.



Increasing transit ridership is key to relieving congestion in Cook County. Innovations such as allowing busses to drive on the shoulder during periods of congestion need to be implemented across the region.

Photo credit: "Descending" by Steven Vance, available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial license

— The enactment of a reliable and consistent source of transportation capital funding. The State has not served its constituents effectively by passing infrequent capital bills. This pattern of unpredictability has led to gross inefficiency in the planning and use of capital dollars. The result is transportation infrastructure that is failing.

Advocate for the reevaluation of the powers, duties, and membership of the current CREATE partnership. It is time for a major reassessment. The program is taking longer and costing more than originally anticipated. The lack of data to conduct cost-benefit analyses makes it difficult to determine how much of the benefits of each investment accrue to the public and how much to the railroads. After a decade, the interests of the private railroads have changed and their commitment to CREATE is uneven. The federal interest and commitment to freight transportation has also substantially changed in the past decade; CREATE needs to reflect those changes. Updating the structure and policies of this partnership to reflect new circumstances, new challenges, and new opportunities is essential to ensuring that the region continues to be a preeminent national and international freight center.

Advocate for a public review of the organization and financing of the RTA and its service boards. The RTA was created in its current form more than 30 years ago and has not changed materially since then. In that time there have been significant population shifts and changes in consumer preferences. The RTA itself is handicapped by limited authority to lead a region-wide transit system. The allocation of capital and operating dollars is made by old formulas that do not reflect changing needs or transparent performance criteria. It is time to act on the many public recommendations for modernizing the system that have been made over the past several years, including those in the 2014, *Northeastern Illinois Public Transit Task Force Report: Transit for the 21st Century*.

Publish an annual update on the state of the transportation system to be called the Transportation for Our Future: State of the County. This report will use established performance indicators to measure progress toward meeting the goals of increasing the availability and use of transportation alternatives, supporting the region's role as a freight hub, providing equitable opportunities for all of its residents, making travel safer, maintaining and modernizing existing facilities, and securing higher levels of transportation funding. The report will include a description of the County's investment and policy priorities for the succeeding year.



Cook County partnered with the Village of Franklin Park to use innovative financing and a low-interest BUILT (Broadening Urban Investment to Leverage Transportation) in Cook loan to finance infrastructure improvements in the Cullerton Avenue Industrial Park. The loan includes a job creation requirement and will be repaid from taxes levied on firms within the Special Service Area that benefit from the new industrial streets.

Implementing the Priorities

Transportation is an ever-present and essential part of life. Because fully realizing the County's transportation priorities will engage all aspects and powers of Cook County government, the Department of Transportation and Highways will not be the only department tasked with implementing the priorities. Instead, the Department will play a leadership role in collaborations across County government, working with its partners in the Bureau of Economic Development, the Department of Planning and Development, the Department of Public Health, and others.



PRIORITIZE
TRANSIT AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Globally competitive regions depend upon and support robust transit systems. The needs of modern economies and changing consumer preferences argue for substantial improvements in the County's transit system. Cook County commits to the following actions to enhance transit and other alternative forms of transportation:

- Prepare a transit plan that complements the existing plans of the RTA and its transit agencies. The County's plan will identify gaps in service and high priority needs not addressed by existing public transit services. It will make recommendations on how to provide those services, either through changes in existing transit agency policies or the adoption of supplemental services that could be funded or delivered by the County or other organizations.

- Expand its support of public transit agencies and other alternative modes of transportation. For example, the Department will assist Pace in its efforts to provide expedited bus service on arterial roads and expressways. This will include assistance to local governments with respect to the design of streets, sidewalks and bus stops, and work on signal coordination and giving transit vehicles priority.

- Fund transportation improvements in support of transit-oriented developments to make it easier and more convenient to walk, bike, or take transit to destinations. Improvements to be supported by the Department include sidewalks, facilities for bicycles, and community plazas. The number of stations within the County makes this a sustainable strategy that can be broadly implemented.

- Encourage and support an increase in the number of local governments that have adopted Complete Street ordinances, and support these governments as they work toward implementation. These ordinances are designed to ensure that designated public rights-of-way are available for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and buses, not just automobiles. DOTH will play a leadership role in developing, designing, and financing expanded construction of trail systems.

- Assist local governments with the adoption of bicycle/pedestrian planning programs designed to identify gaps in existing services and promote increases in pedestrian and bicycle trips.

- Support new and emerging ride sharing, private shuttles, and other supplemental services that are changing the transportation landscape. These services are fulfilling the needs of consumers that are not being served by the taxi industry or transit agencies.

COOK IN ACTION



Rosemont Station Transportation Center and Transit-Oriented Development

The Rosemont Station on the CTA Blue Line is the busiest transfer point in the region between Pace buses and CTA rail. The existing Rosemont transit center already exceeds capacity and must be modernized and expanded to accommodate Pace's new express bus service on the Jane Addams Tollway. The availability of underdeveloped land around the station, owned by Cook County and the Tollway, presents an opportunity to build a multi-modal transportation center. Cook County will lead a collaborative process to redevelop the site and build a state-of-the-art center.



A Walk Along The 606

Projects like The 606 in Chicago, the Prairie Path in west suburban Cook County, and the Burnham Greenway Trail extension in south Cook, connect communities and open space assets in a way that promotes more walking and biking. Cook County's contribution of $2.26 million toward viaduct rehabilitation on The 606 improved traffic flow on County routes and enhanced the community's enjoyment of the new trail.

SUPPORT
THE REGION'S ROLE AS NORTH AMERICA'S FREIGHT CAPITAL

Metropolitan Chicago's role as the freight and logistics center of North America brings benefits and challenges. The County is committed to making sound plans, policies, and investments in order to fully realize the benefits and overcome the challenges associated with sustaining supremacy as a shipping and logistics hub. The County's commitment to the freight transportation system includes:

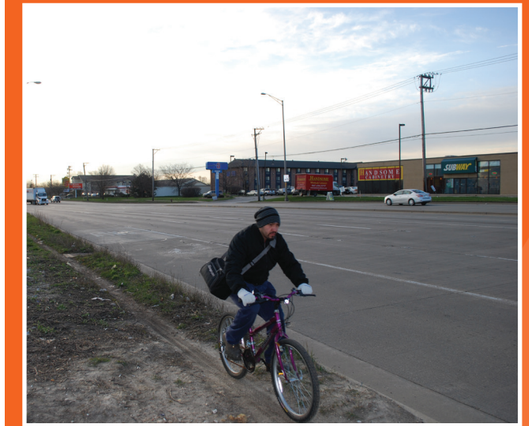
- Completing the unfinished projects in the CREATE Program. These projects were carefully designed to improve freight and passenger rail traffic. Cook County will participate in and support efforts to secure federal, state, and railroad funding of the unfinished CREATE projects. It will expect that all projects will be subject to transparent evaluations and equitable allocations of costs between governments and the private sector. The Department will help speed project delivery by joining IDOT and CDOT as one of the implementing agencies in the state with the ability to design and procure federally funded projects.

- Producing a comprehensive passenger and freight rail plan that addresses the expected growth in freight rail traffic, the need for more frequent and reliable commuter rail service, and the exceptionally high number of rail crossings that delay motorists on the County's roads. The many rail facilities in the Chicago region are reaching full capacity, even if all the CREATE projects were to be completed. The public agencies in the region responsible for transportation will be part of a planning process to address the County's long-term rail needs.

- Developing a CREATE-like program for the trucking industry to be called TRIP—*Truck Routing, Infrastructure, and Permitting*. Like the freight rail industry, much of the truck traffic in the region supports shippers from across the country. In partnership with the freight and logistics industry, other government agencies, and shippers, the Department will develop a plan that:
  - Brings to completion the recently launched initiative to harmonize the hundreds of different truck regulations within the region. Working with other counties in the region, Cook County will actively support efforts to align policies and practices so as to simplify the steps that private industry must take when moving goods within the region.
  - Creates a connected and efficient system for truck movements, which would include the identification of more priority truck routes, roadway improvements that would accommodate the needs of trucks, rail grade separation priorities, bridge and viaduct limits that currently inhibiting truck movements, and the rationalization of truck parking requirements.

COOK IN ACTION







Touhy Avenue Multi-Modal Safety and Capacity Improvement Project

Touhy Avenue carries more than 33,400 vehicles per day, 14% of which (4,750) are trucks. This route serves major job centers in Elk Grove Village (3,600 firms) and at O'Hare International Airport, as well as surrounding residential and business communities. The Touhy Avenue project will add capacity to a road with traffic volumes that already exceed its design and that has led to severe congestion and crash incidents that place it in the top 5 percent for Illinois. CMAP projects that traffic volumes will increase more than 40% by 2040.

To address these issues, the Touhy Avenue project includes roadway reconstruction, wider intersections, interconnected traffic signals, and a new by-pass at Old Higgins Road. However, this is much more than a road project; the improvements will enhance freight railroad operations by building a grade separation at the Union Pacific (UP) rail crossing, UP's second busiest line in the region. It will facilitate growth in air travel and shipping by improving access to O'Hare International Airport, the fourth busiest passenger and sixteenth cargo airport in the world. Finally, it will address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders by adding much-needed sidewalks, crosswalks, safety islands, transit signal priority, and bus shelters. Touhy is one component of the Elgin-O'Hare Western Access project, an improvement of regional and national significance. Cook County is leading the improvement of the state route and has partnered with the Tollway and CMAP on funding. Additional funds are being pursued via the U.S. Department of Transportation.

PROMOTE
EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Regions that are more inclusive, that fully use their human, transportation, real estate, and business assets, achieve greater and more evenly distributed economic growth than less inclusive metropolitan areas. The County is committed to promoting equity in its own policies and investments, and as a partner with other governments that provide transportation within the region. The Department will:

- Make access to opportunity a principal criterion when making its transportation investment decisions or reviewing the choices made by others. One outcome of this long range transportation plan is the establishment of a project evaluation and selection process with criteria tied to the plan's priorities. The Department will review its list of proposed and completed projects to ensure that their distribution is equitable and spur greater opportunities.

- Provide funding for transportation improvements in support of cargo-oriented development, a form of development found across the County that represents a significant part of the economy. This form of development is characterized by a mix of complementary manufacturing and logistics firms clustered in industrial districts surrounding freight facilities. The Department will promote the growth of cargo-oriented development by investing in roads, utilities, viaducts and grade separations—many of which do not fall under its jurisdiction but are essential to economic development.

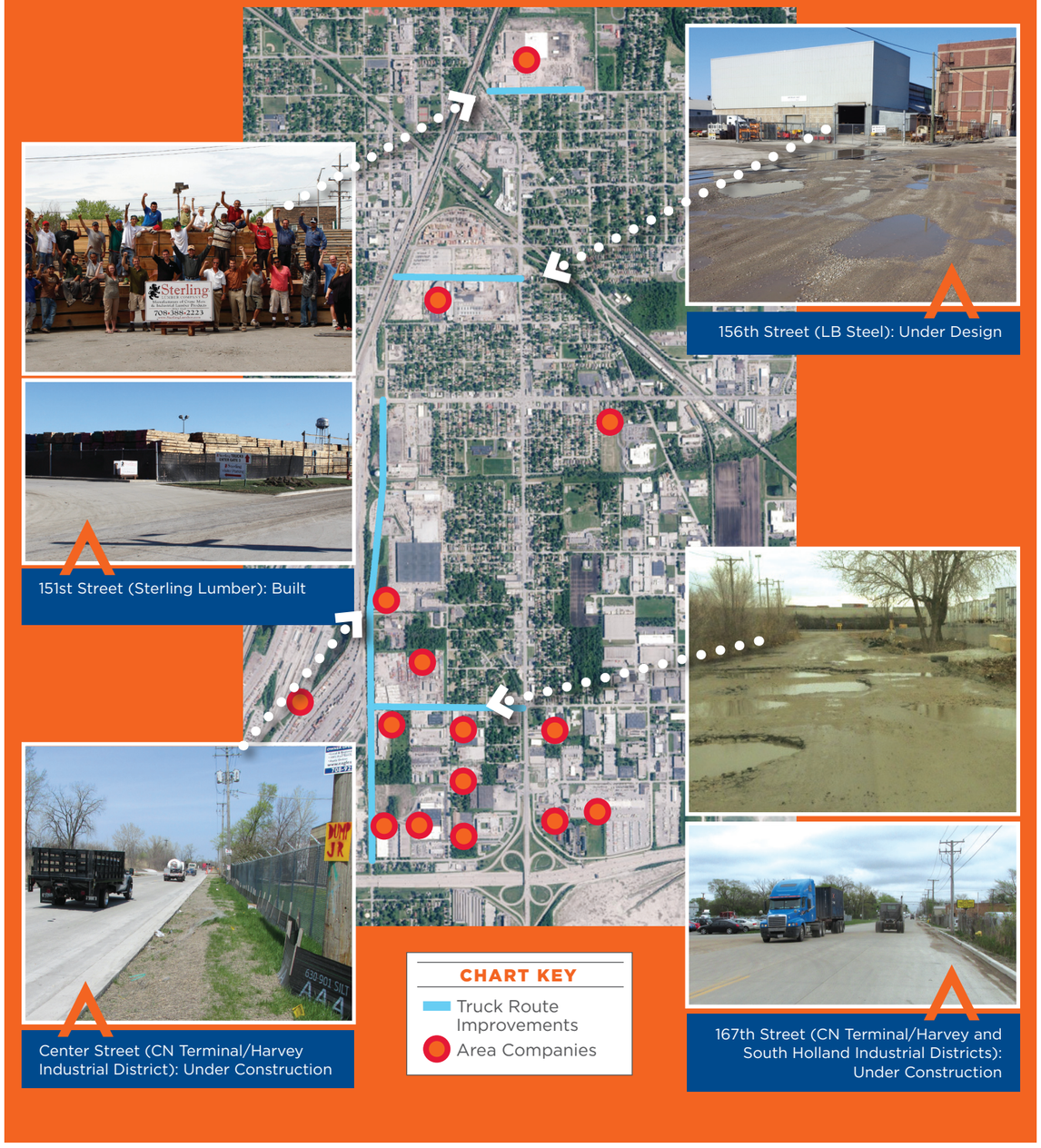
- Participate in the County's South Suburban pilot to improve opportunities in and the economic well-being of the County's most distressed communities. Within Cook County the inequality in access to quality transportation facilities and services and to jobs is pronounced in south Cook and getting worse. A major initiative coming from the President's Council of Economic Advisors, the pilot is designed to create combinations of housing, retail and other amenities that attract and retain key segments of the regional population by linking growth to strategies addressing public safety and healthy communities. The Department will support this effort by funding, rehabbing and building facilities such as transit facilities, public spaces, bike paths, and sidewalks that enhance quality of life.

Regions that are more inclusive achieve greater and more evenly distributed economic growth than less inclusive metropolitan areas.

COOK IN ACTION

The Economic Benefits of South Suburban Truck Route Improvements

The County's commitment to rebuild deteriorated municipal roads in Alsip, Harvey, Phoenix, Riverdale and South Holland has played a significant role in business retentions and expansions. Cook County has secured federal and state funding and contributed motor fuel tax revenue to improve truck routes in these industrial districts. This $20 million public investment supports businesses that employ 1,170 workers, are investing $62 million in their facilities, and expect to add 420 new jobs.



MAINTAIN AND MODERNIZE
WHAT ALREADY EXISTS

Striking the balance between maintenance and modernization of existing facilities and the expansion and investment in new facilities is a challenge for all local agencies, as well as government more broadly. There are circumstances in which adding new capacity is appropriate. But each new investment leads to future maintenance costs, in addition to those already required to keep up today's infrastructure. Instead, investments made in maintenance, or in modernizing what currently exists, are often a better use of limited resources.

The cost of maintaining the County's current infrastructure is substantial. Bringing the Department's average pavement quality up to industry standards of "good condition" will require an additional investment of $60 million per year for the next 10 years. Addressing this backlog as well as the maintenance needs for all types of existing infrastructure will require a shift in the way that resources and investments are allocated. The Department will:

- Establish annual target allocations for the percentage of transportation funding to be spent on maintenance of existing assets. These investments are needed not only to achieve a state of good repair, but also to bring assets into compliance with modern safety and accessibility standards. The Department will have individual targets for specific asset types (pavement, bridges, stormwater management facilities, traffic signals, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and freight).

- Enhance coordination with partner agencies to ensure projects deliver the greatest benefit across all modes. In particular, because so many agencies and entities in Cook County are responsible for transportation investments, the Department will prioritize projects where its investments will complement those made by others. These could include: upgrading intersections along priority truck routes; prioritizing improvements that are part of, or complementary to, a community's development plan; and incorporating sidewalks, crosswalks, bus pads, and shelters into roadway projects along planned Pace Arterial Rapid Transit routes.

Current infrastructure can also be modernized. Many existing techniques and technologies can be used to expand the capacity of existing infrastructure. Other tools can alter the demands placed on that infrastructure. And many more such innovations will be developed in the coming years. To take advantage of these practices, and to prepare for new developments, the Department will coordinate with its transportation partners to:

- Implement a network of Smart Corridors across jurisdictional lines to improve travel for all modes (private autos, freight, and transit vehicles) by increasing their traffic-handling capacity through the adoption of low-cost technological solutions (often referred to as Intelligent Transportation Systems). Among the tools to be applied along Smart Corridors are traffic signal interconnects, transit signal priority, real-time fleet location tracking and dynamic messaging—which can increase a road's traffic capacity by as much as 15 percent.

- Redesign existing streets and intersections to provide enhanced mobility for bicycling, walking, transit, and seniors, families with young children, and those with disabilities by adding bike lanes, sidewalks, and improved compatibility with bus traffic.

- Advocate for the adoption of techniques that optimize the use of existing infrastructure, such as managed lane programs for multi-occupancy cars on the region's expressways and the use of dynamic, congestion-based toll pricing to shift drivers toward alternative modes of transportation, or to encourage them to drive at off-peak hours.

- Keep pace with technological advancements, and particularly their potential impacts on transportation systems. The Department will build upon existing interagency forums, which convene to discuss technical issues, to advocate for a "future-proofing" approach. Today's investments must be made in ways that are adaptable to new technologies.

COOK IN ACTION



Transit Priority on Expressways

Several Cook County expressways and tollways have, or are planning, special facilities for Pace bus service. On I-55, the Illinois Department of Transportation retrofitted existing shoulders so that Pace buses could bypass congestion when travel speeds fall below 35 mph. Cook County is actively engaged in planning for the reconstruction of a section of the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) and encouraging inclusion of special use lanes for transit.

INCREASE
INVESTMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION

In 2015 Cook County took the unprecedented step of expanding transportation funding by ending the long-standing practice of diverting motor fuel tax funds to other uses. Starting in 2017, this action will provide an additional $45 million per year for transportation. The additional funds will be used to pursue the priorities described in *Connecting Cook County*. This significant demonstration of leadership is a first step in a concerted campaign to increase funding for transportation from multiple sources, including taxes, tolls, and fares.

This commitment also represents the first step in the County's expanded responsibilities with respect to transportation. The County is not only responsible for the highways and bridges under its direct jurisdiction, but is also accountable for providing its constituents with the transportation services they expect by actively working with the multiple providers of those services. The County is pleased to take more responsibility to direct, source, and invest resources throughout the County on projects and services consistent with its priorities. The economic health of the County depends on expanded and coordinated investments.

Requests for more transportation dollars, regardless of the source, will only be honored by the public if it is assured that the money will be used efficiently and effectively. The County's actions to demonstrate effective stewardship of public money includes:

- A new, more rigorous investment criteria for the use of County transportation funds. The criteria are designed around the priorities described in this plan. This performance-based approach to investment is an integral part of *Connecting Cook County*.

- A commitment to work with the 135 local municipalities in designing and financing projects. Active cooperation will save money for the County and municipalities, and it will demonstrate to the public its money is being used responsibly. The Department is right-sized to collaborate across all levels of government and qualified to handle projects of varying complexity. Collaboration is essential to exerting influence, leveraging public dollars, and attracting the private investment that will move the region forward. Examples would include:



— Advance the implementation of transportation safety programs. In 2014 there were 143,952 reported traffic accidents in the County, resulting in 235 deaths. The County is developing its own road safety program and will share this work with local governments.

— The County will play a leading role in the development of regional and sub-regional trail and path plans with councils of government and municipalities that address existing gaps and promote more walk and bicycle trips.

— Provide engineering services and contracting support using the County's Job Order Contracting system.

— Provide joint procurement opportunities to reduce costs of procuring goods or services.

— Provide engagement of municipalities and the Active Transportation Alliance to assist with the preparation, adoption, and implementation of a Complete Streets program to ensure that the safe and efficient use of public rights-of-way for all users.

- The County will also advocate for more transparent, performance-based investments for all the agencies that provide transportation services. At a minimum, this will include the State, which continues to employ a formula for allocating dollars between metropolitan Chicago and the rest of the state. Similarly, the RTA allocates operational and capital dollars between the three service boards based on old formulas rather than on well-defined objectives or system performance. The allocation of public and private dollars for CREATE projects are negotiated deals rather than publicly available analyses that document the relative costs and benefits.



Conclusion

With over 5,000,000 residents and 128,000 businesses, Cook County deserves a first rate transportation system. President Preckwinkle has made this a clear priority. *Connecting Cook County* formalizes that commitment and puts forth an agenda to support, modernize, expand, and advocate for the region's transportation system.

The premise of *Connecting Cook County* is that transportation assets and services drive the economy of northeastern Illinois. Transportation improves the quality of labor markets. It facilitates retail trade. It reduces costs for families and businesses. And it is essential for the region to grow its role as the freight capital of North America. We cannot afford to neglect this essential critical driver of the region's economy. Smart investments will yield long-term dividends.

This plan identifies what needs to be done and how it must be accomplished. It recognizes that responsibility for transportation extends beyond Cook County's own jurisdiction. As Cook County is the epicenter of the nation's networks, transportation services within the County are vast, containing all possible modes and touching many diverse stakeholders. Cook County will collaborate with all stakeholders, including municipal leaders, regional organizations, and the private sector, to ensure key priorities are addressed and critical projects are completed.

The recommendations in *Connecting Cook County* have the potential to improve transit, increase transportation choices, facilitate business expansion, better link people with jobs, spur redevelopment in areas that have declined, and strengthen key industry sectors and employment centers by redirecting where and how Cook County improves its transportation infrastructure. The plan's success will be measured by how well implementation addresses the challenges and moves toward the vision.

Connecting Cook County provides the guiding framework by which Cook County can use its strengths to more fully realize opportunities as well as to overcome challenges in pursuit of a stronger, more resilient economy and healthier communities. The plan's success depends upon Cook County becoming a more strategic partner as well as a more effective transportation leader.

CONNECTING COOK COUNTY
2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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CONNECTING COOK COUNTY

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