

ILLINOIS ROUTE 53/120 CORRIDOR LAND USE PLAN

Existing Conditions Assessment - Preliminary Key Findings

1. **Livability - Without appropriate planning, the proposed 53/120 roadway could harm quality of life within the Corridor and County**
2. **Mobility**
 - a. Increased road congestion over the last 10-15 years has already harmed the area's quality of life and its economy
 - b. This increased road congestion is due to the growth in population and longer commuting distances
 - c. Transit ridership has also grown, but not enough to relieve the roadway network (Nor can current infrastructure, service levels, or land use dramatically increase transit use)
 - d. The 53/120 project will help reduce existing congestion
 - e. However, without proper land use and transportation planning decisions and investments, it is likely that the County will face the same transportation problems in the future
 - f. There is no silver bullet for the issue of congestion. Simply building more roads cannot solve the problem. It must be addressed from all aspects, including improved transit, smarter land use patterns, transportation demand management strategies, and increased roadway capacity
3. **Market**
 - a. Lake County is projected to grow in population and employment through 2040, but at a slower pace than historical trends
 - b. Historical development patterns show the Corridor is already capturing a significant portion of new development in the County
 - c. The roadway will unlock new development potential along the Corridor
 - d. Communities will not achieve the full build-out depicted in their municipal Future Land Use Plans within the next 30 years
 - e. Additionally, future development patterns are likely to differ from the past
4. **Land Use**
 - a. Municipal Future Land Use Plans target "greenfield" sites that would cause a significant loss of natural areas and agricultural land
 - b. Additionally, these plans do not identify underutilized or infill sites that could accommodate part of the development demand

- c. Current zoning in the Corridor does not permit the population or employment density necessary to support transit
- d. The Corridor's livability goals are not supported by existing plans and policies

5. Environmental

- a. There are significant natural resources within the Corridor
 - i. Land resources
 - ii. Water resources
 - iii. Agricultural resources
 - iv. Other resources
- b. Preservation and protection efforts are significant, but only protect a fraction of the existing natural resources
- c. Most of the unprotected natural resources fall under the jurisdiction of the Municipalities, many of which do not have protective ordinances in place
- d. In addition to the impact of the roadway itself, there are significant existing threats to the environment within the Corridor
 - i. Impacts of land development
 - ii. Fragmentation/degradation of natural resources
 - iii. Loss of habitat
 - iv. Impermeable surfaces and the impact of run-off
 - 1. Water quantity/flooding
 - 2. Water quality/transfer of pollutants
 - 3. Soil erosion
- e. Appropriate mechanisms, plans and policies are needed to provide additional protection of these natural resources

- 6. Conclusion: The Corridor has seen dramatic changes over the past 30 years. What was once a series of communities nestled among agricultural fields is now a more uniformly built-out region challenged by the effects of startling population growth, choked roadways, significant development and disappearing open space. The 53/120 parkway, ground-breaking in its approach to environmentally sensitive roadway design, will ease congestion and bring economic development to the Corridor, but for those benefits to last, and for the people of Lake County to retain the quality of life they value, a new mindset must be adopted. Policies and plans that guided the area through the decades of explosive growth must be re-imagined. With thoughtful planning, a willingness to carefully balance mobility, market, land use and environmental issues, and courage to acknowledge and embrace changing realities, the residents of Lake County can confidently look forward to a bright future.**