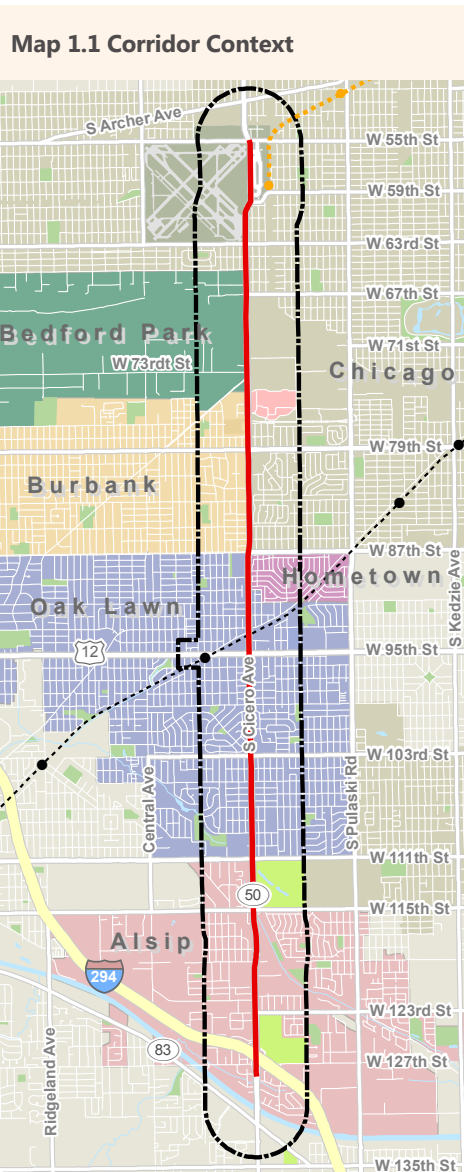


Chapter 1: Introduction



On behalf of its constituent communities, the Southwest Conference of Mayors (SCM) is pleased to present the Cicero Avenue Corridor Plan, a transportation and economic development plan for the Cicero Avenue Corridor.

Study Corridor

The Cicero Avenue Corridor is defined as the 9-mile segment of Cicero Avenue from 55th Street on the north to 127th Street on the south. The Corridor runs through the City of Chicago and five southwest suburban communities: Bedford Park, Burbank, Hometown, Oak Lawn and Alsip. The Corridor is centered narrowly on Cicero Avenue, including the right-of-way and adjoining land or property, with consideration of areas within a one-half mile buffer as areas of influence and impact.

Cicero Avenue is a major transportation corridor in the southwest Cook County suburban area. Daily passenger vehicle traffic on Cicero Avenue averages 35,400 vehicles per day in the Study Area. The Cicero Avenue Corridor is served directly by 27 Pace and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus routes, traveling on Cicero and cross-streets. CTA’s Orange Line terminal station at Midway Airport serves as the closest heavy-rail station and an important transfer center for bus riders. No Metra commuter rail stations are located directly on Cicero Avenue. However, the Oak Lawn SouthWest Service Station (SWS) is situated 1/2 mile west on 95th Street in Oak Lawn, and another reasonably close Metra station is located in Chicago in the Ashburn neighborhood.

Cicero Avenue functions as an Urban Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) route designated as Illinois Route 50 and falls under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). It is a major north-south regional route extending from the north suburb of Lincolnwood to the south suburb of Monee, Illinois. Within the Corridor, there is direct expressway connectivity to I-294 at 127th Street. As a state route, Cicero Avenue serves a regional travel function and facilitates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Cicero Avenue also provides access to a diverse mix of land-uses located across the six study communities, including retail, residential, industrial, entertainment and open space. Direct access to Midway International Airport and the Cicero Avenue commercial centers and businesses is vital to the long-term success of the regional economy. It is also an important multi-modal regional corridor with Pace and CTA vehicles traveling along the Corridor.

Introduction

Vision & Goals

The study goal is to develop a holistic plan that unites the Corridor, its activities and character to make it a more highly-functioning transportation corridor and activity center for the southwest suburbs. This planning study is designed to complement, not supersede, the existing plans of the communities and transportation agencies.

The vision for the future of Cicero Avenue is to function as a street safe for travel for all modes of transportation and safe for all users, regardless of age and ability. This “Complete Streets” approach balances the needs of all users of the roadway and focuses on the development of a complete transportation network. For Cicero Avenue to be viewed as a “complete street”, improvements should be developed that embrace all users, including not only autos and trucks, but also transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists. As part of an overall transportation network, individual roadways do not have to function as all things to all people, but can provide a specific role within the network. This network approach helps to balance the needs of various users.

Specific objectives for the Cicero Corridor include:

- Creating a cohesive identity for the Corridor.
- Maximizing the potential of each community’s assets along the Corridor, including economic activity centers, transportation infrastructure, and natural resources such as trails.
- Optimizing mobility and efficiency of all modes of travel.
- Increasing safety for non-motorized users of the Corridor, especially at crossings and transit access points.

Plan Process & Elements

The Cicero Avenue Corridor Plan was developed between April 2013 and November 2014.

The Southwest Conference of Mayors (SCM) received grants totaling \$200,000 from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and IDOT in 2010 to fund the study. The study was conducted with active participation from RTA, IDOT, Pace, Metra, the CTA,

the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDOH), the City of Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), the City of Chicago Department of Aviation (CDOA), and the Illinois Tollway. A Steering Committee composed of the leadership from the Corridor Communities and SCM oversaw the process and contributed to the definition of improvement projects and implementation priorities, with active input from the noted agencies.

Planning materials and interim documents produced for this study include the following:

- The **Existing Conditions Report** (October 2013) was the first step in the planning process, and synthesized current physical, demographic, policy and transportation and conditions along the Corridor.
- The **Market Conditions Report** (November 2013) summarized market conditions in the Corridor, analyzed potential future demand and opportunities, and identified redevelopment opportunity sites, along with potential redevelopment recommendations.
- The **Land Use and Transportation Plan Report** (August 2014) presented detailed forward-looking planning recommendations for land use and transportation. The draft Future Land Use Plan presented an updated overall vision for land use patterns across the study area. The draft Transportation Plan Framework presented broad transportation improvement principles by mode applicable to the entire Corridor; the Transportation Improvement Plan included recommendations for specific locations along the Corridor. A set of Showcase Projects synthesized market, land use, urban design and transportation recommendations in highly detailed improvement concept illustrations.

These interim documents are available on the project website at <http://www.cicerocorridor.com>.

