



# Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update



## Acknowledgments

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# Executive Summary

The purpose of this report was to update the Joliet Arsenal Area Long-Range Transportation Plan commissioned by the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority (JADA) in 2004. The 2004 Plan addressed transportation infrastructure and transit services required to accommodate the existing and planned development in southwest Will County. The Plan Update documented changes in area development and cataloged transportation plans and programs of the various state, regional, and local entities with transportation planning and implementation responsibilities for the defined study area. These plans were assimilated into a specific set of transportation recommendations for the area that were believed to best address area needs today and in the future. A key objective of the Update was to identify a subset of these planned transportation investments that could be used as a starting point in a consensus-building exercise among area stakeholders that would lead to the timely implementation of transportation projects important to the future of southwest Will County. A companion document addressed a recommendation of the 2004 Plan to study the feasibility of establishing a Transportation Management Association (TMA) for the JADA area.

The Update provided a summary of the 2004 Plan including a list and map of Plan recommendations. Existing conditions were described, including emphasis on changes in transportation facilities and land use since 2004. Chapter 3 identified the major transportation problems and challenges of the study area. Chapter 4 describes area projects, plans and programs for southwest Will County. This inventory involved summarizing documents and receiving direct input from:

- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
- Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
- Metra
- Pace
- Will County
- Will County Center for Economic Development (CED)
- Municipalities

Chapter 5 summarized in table form the programmed and planned transportation projects for each of the entities researched. Tables were created for freeway, arterial, and transit projects, and included recommendations of the 2004 Joliet Arsenal Area Plan. For each project a priority rating was assigned that drew upon the problems and issues identified in Chapter 3. The recommended highest priority projects are listed below (projects are mapped on Figure 11, page 40).

### Freeway Projects

- I-80: Add lanes US 45 to Grundy County line
- Illiana Expressway: I-65 to I-55
- I-55: Widen to six lanes, from current 6-lane segment to IL129
- I-55: Reconstruct/improve US 6 interchange
- I-55: New interchange at Arsenal Road
- I-55: Interchange improvements in the Wilmington area

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### Arterial Roadway Projects

- Laraway Road: Extend west to an extended Baseline Road/Vetter Road
- IL 53: Widen to four lanes, South Arsenal Road to New River Road
- Baseline Road/Vetter Road: Extend north over Des Plaines River, link to Empress Road/Houbolt Road

### Transit and Rail Projects

- Heritage Corridor: Infrastructure investments to allow full service
- High Speed Rail: Chicago-St. Louis
- Express Bus: I-55, Arsenal Road north
- Transit Center: Joliet (Joliet Union Station)
- Study improved transit connections between JADA area and Joliet Union Station

The Update also recommended that the I-80/IL 53 interchange be studied to address safety and capacity issues. Potential solutions could include improvements to alternative I-80 access points.

The report emphasized that the priority projects were believed to have the most significant benefit to the core of the larger study area. Projects identified with a lower priority were not to be interpreted as unworthy of implementation.

The Update background research and recommendations were presented to the JADA Study Oversight Committee (SOC) over several meetings. The SOC was represented by JADA, Will County Governmental League (WCGL), Will County Center for Economic Development (CED), Will County, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Pace, Metra and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). The updated plan results and recommendations were also presented to the TMA Feasibility Group, which included the SOC representatives as well as major local employers. In addition, the Feasibility Group included representatives of IDOT, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, the City of Joliet, Empress Casino of Joliet, and Chicagoland Speedway.

# 1.0 Study Purpose

In April 2004, the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority (JADA) issued the Joliet Arsenal Area Long-Range Transportation Plan<sup>1</sup> This Plan addressed transportation infrastructure and transit services required to accommodate the ambitious development plans in the southwest Will County area. More recently, and the subject of this report, JADA received a grant from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) to prepare an update to the 2004 Plan. This updated plan documented identified changes in area development and cataloged transportation plans and programs of the various state, regional, and local entities with transportation planning and implementation responsibilities for the defined study area. These plans were assimilated into a specific set of transportation recommendations for the area that were deemed to best address transportation needs today and in the future. It is hoped that these recommendations will be used to foster a dialogue among area stakeholders to reach consensus on investment strategies that will ultimately lead to the timely implementation of projects. A companion document addressed a recommendation of the 2004 Plan to study the feasibility of establishing a Transportation Management Association (TMA) for the JADA area.

## 1.1 Summary of 2004 Transportation Plan

JADA was created as a part of the conversion of the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant (known locally as the Joliet Arsenal), which was a major employer in Will County with more than 12,000 people working at a site covering over 20,000 acres. When the Federal Government declared the plant excess property in 1993, a coalition of federal, state and local officials was formed to reclaim portions of the site for new economic development and job opportunities. It was felt that a key element to the success of the economic development initiatives being pursued would be transportation access.

JADA commissioned the preparation of this long-range transportation plan for the former Joliet Arsenal property and the surrounding area. The overall purpose of this plan was to guide transportation investments in the area of southwest Will County bounded by I-80 to the north, Wilmington-Peotone Road to the south, I-55 to the west, and Cedar Road on the east. The plan identified, evaluated, and recommended transportation strategies required to serve the existing and planned development in this area; and to recommend an implementation plan for these strategies. The study also identified an institutional option to integrate the Arsenal redevelopment and other future projects into the local and sub-regional land use and transportation planning processes. This report brought together data on existing conditions with future developments and forecasts that will have implications on the future transportation system. The study presented the recommended long-range transportation plan for the year 2020. Specific projects or actions were recommended for consideration that could realistically occur in the short-term (five to seven years), the mid-term (eight to 15 years) and the long-term (15 to 20 years).

The Joliet Arsenal Area Long-Range Transportation Plan was sponsored by JADA, with financial support from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). In addition to the sponsors, local stakeholders (including Will County and the various municipalities within the study area) provided guidance and input to the study and the recommended 2020 transportation network. Traffic forecasts for the year 2020 were provided by the Chicago Area Transportation Study

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<sup>1</sup> Joliet Arsenal Area Long-Range Transportation Plan, Joliet Arsenal Development Authority, April 2004.

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(now the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)). The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (now CMAP) provided socioeconomic forecasts.

The 2004 Transportation Plan recommended the following as high-priority actions. Actions that have been implemented, or have seen progress towards implementation, are noted in italics.

- Improvements to Regional Facilities
  - Add lanes on I-55 Naperville Road to Arsenal Road, consider further extension to Wilmington
  - I-80 add lanes between I-55 to US 45
  - Construct I-355 between I-55 and I-80 (*opened November 2007*)
  - Extend 355 from I-80 to I-57
  - Upgrade Metra Heritage Corridor; extend to Wilmington
  - Phase II of Metra SouthWest Service upgrades; extend to Midewin
  - Phase 1 of STAR Line (*Alternatives Analysis between Joliet and O'Hare Airport in progress*); follow-up on future Outer Circumferential sections
  - Explore opportunities for new Pace service
- Operational/Capacity Improvements
  - Widen IL 53 between South Arsenal Road and Wilmington-Peotone Road
  - Widen US 52 between I-80 and Wilmington-Peotone Road
  - US 6 add lanes I-55 to US 52
- Functional Hierarchy Improvements
  - Implement SRA-related improvements on Wilmington-Peotone Road between IL 53 and US 45
  - SRA designation of Arsenal/Manhattan Road from I-55 to US 45
  - Widen Laraway Road between I-80 and Cedar Road and add new Des Plaines River crossing at Houbolt Road (*segment Patterson Road east has been upgraded, including a realignment north of new Union Pacific (UP) Intermodal and improvements to various intersections*)
  - SRA designation of Gougar Road from Wilmington-Peotone Road to the proposed I-355 extension
  - Widen Cedar Road between Francis and Manhattan-Monee Road
  - Upgrade Cherry Hill Road; correct offset intersection at US 52
  - Schweitzer/Delaney Road intersection improvements at IL 53 and US 45; extend west from Brandon Road to Patterson Road; correct offset intersection at US 52
  - Ridge Road/Briggs Street extension between Manhattan Road and Spencer Road with a connection to Briggs Street
  - Rowell Road upgrade between Schweitzer Road and Manhattan Road
  - Widen Brandon Road between US 6 and Schweitzer Road (*extension south of Laraway Road no longer possible with new UP Intermodal*)
- System Continuity Improvements
  - Wilmington-Peotone Road extension from IL 53 to New River Road
  - Baker Road extension from Cherry Hill Road to IL 53
  - Hoff Road realignment to connect to Walter Strawn Drive



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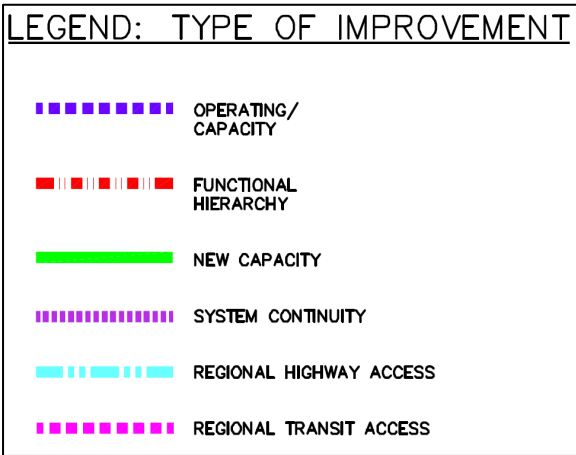
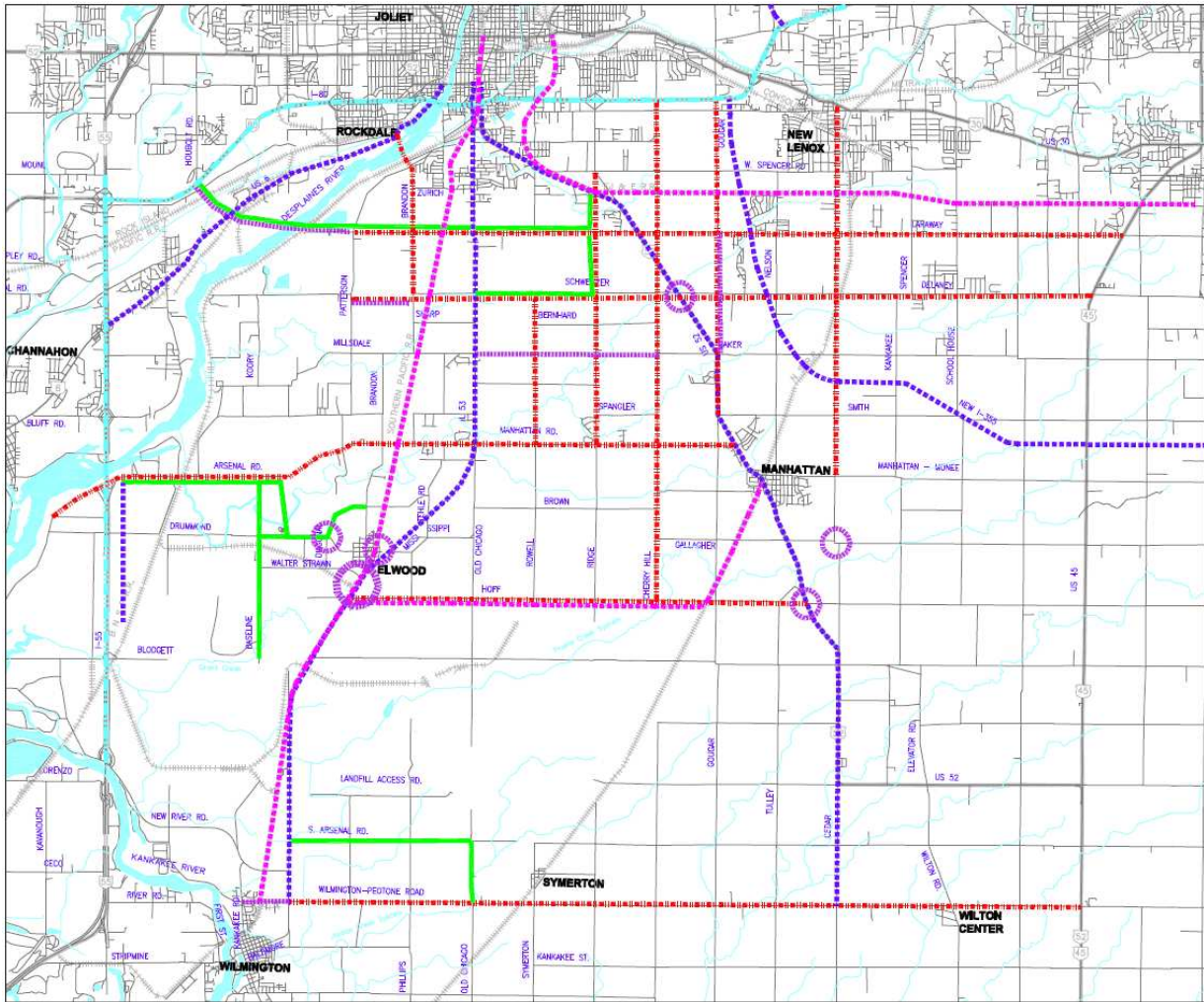
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- Intersection Realignments
  - Cedar Road/Bruns Road
  - Hoff Road/US 52
  - Mississippi Avenue/IL 53
  - Mississippi Avenue/Brown
  - Schweitzer/Delaney Road/US 52
  
- Explore feasibility of a Transportation Management Association (TMA) (*companion to this study*)

A map of the Plan is included as **Figure 1**.

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Figure 1. Joliet Arsenal Area Long-Range Transportation Plan, 2004



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## 1.2 Transportation Plan Update Approach

The approach to preparing this update to the 2004 Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan involved collecting information on relevant local and regional plans, programs, and projects. The effort was not an independent research effort that assembled and analyzed new data to reach a set of conclusions and recommendations. Rather, it represents the development of a compendium of work by others and sought to synthesize these plans into a cogent summary that can aid in identifying transportation investments that will be most important to the study area. It should be understood that this update did not critically review the technical work of these documents; nor was any attempt made to account for differences of same when the work was conducted on behalf of the Plan Update.

The report culls from these plans and programs the elements regarded as most critical to addressing short- and long-term transportation needs of southwest Will County. Since one of the recommended roles of a local TMA will be to facilitate dialogue on the prioritization of transportation investments, this agenda of plans and projects can be used as a starting point of an action plan for improving transportation facilities and services that area stakeholders could cooperate on implementing.

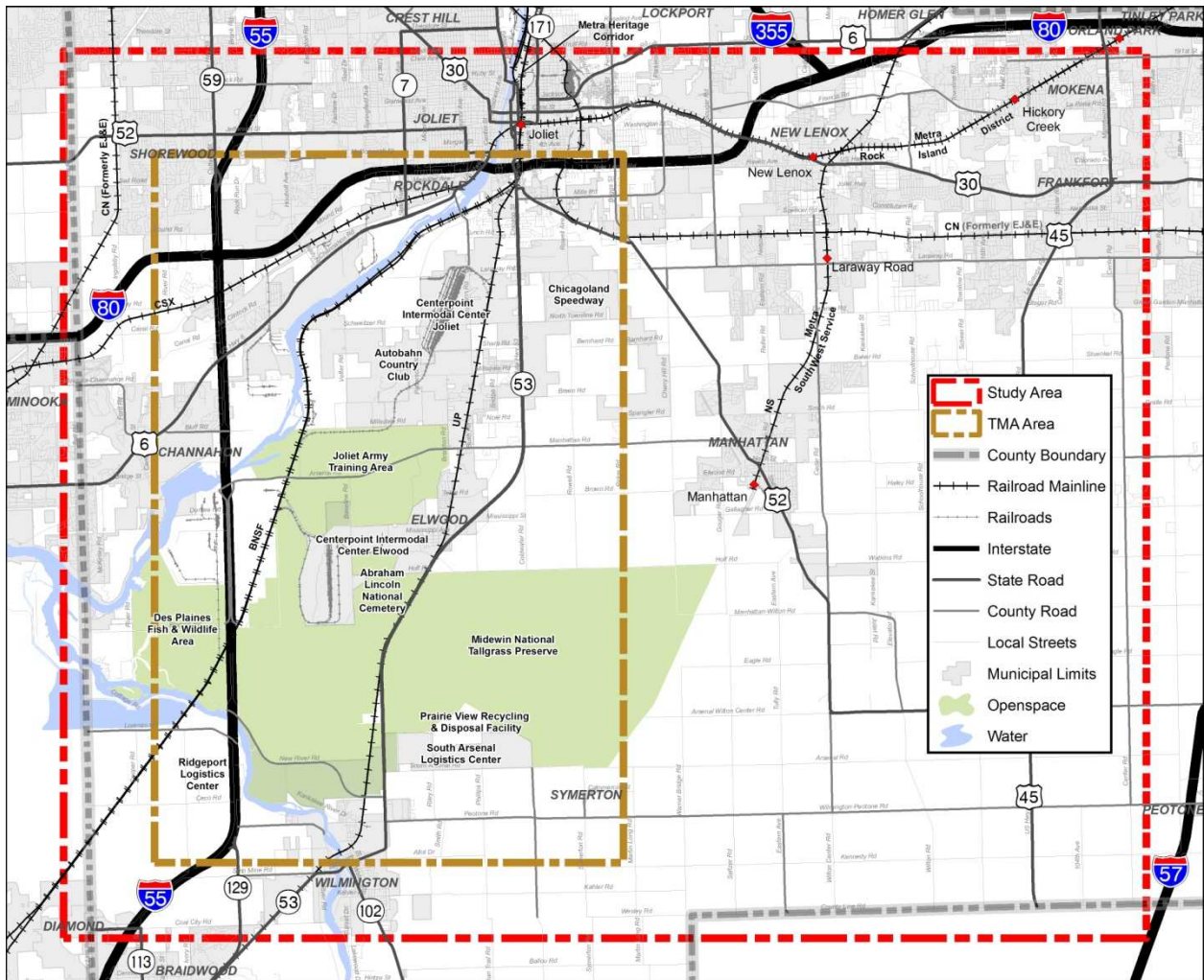
The Update identified and cataloged existing and future developments and high-trip generators in the study area. Plans and projects were represented in map form using geographic information systems (GIS). Results of these current plans and projects were presented to the JADA Study Oversight Committee (SOC) over several meetings during the fall of 2009. The SOC was represented by JADA, Will County Governmental League (WCGL), Will County Center for Economic Development (CED), Will County, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Pace, Metra, and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). The updated plan results and recommendations were also presented to the TMA Feasibility Group, which included the SOC representatives as well as major local employers. In addition, the Feasibility Group included representatives of IDOT, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, City of Joliet, Empress Casino of Joliet, and Chicagoland Speedway.

## 1.3 Study Area

**Figure 2** provides a map of the study area for the Plan update. This study area is somewhat larger than the previous 2004 study. While the geographic focus of the update remains fairly concentrated to the former Arsenal site, it was determined that transportation and development projects on the periphery could also influence transportation investment decisions of the Arsenal area. The map also indicates the generalized boundaries that were considered for the TMA Feasibility Study.

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Figure 2. Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update – Study Area



## 2.0 Existing Conditions

### 2.1 General Area Description / Historical Development

Southwest Will County is comprised of a highly varied mix of land uses. Prior to World War II, the area consisted mostly of small family farms. With the onset of the second World War, the federal government acquired 40,000 acres in Jackson Township to build the Joliet Arsenal. The Joliet Army Ammunition Plant was opened in 1940 as two separate facilities: the Elwood Ordnance Plant and the Kankakee Ordnance Works. In 1945, the two were deactivated and combined forming the Joliet Arsenal. The plant was reactivated for the Korean War and renamed Joliet Army Ammunition Plant during the Vietnam War. Production of TNT ended in 1976, and the major plant operations closed shortly after in the late 1970s.

In 1993, 23,500 acres of land were declared to be excess. Redevelopment plans included about 3,000 acres for two industrial parks, 450 acres for the Will County Landfill, 980 acres for the Abraham Lincoln National Veterans Cemetery, and 19,000 acres for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The government retained a portion as the Joliet Army Training Area. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains portions of the property on the Superfund national priorities list. Clean up includes composting by the Army Corps of Engineers. The cemetery and industrial parks were on the buffer portion of the facility, and there was little or no cleanup required. However, portions of the site that became Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie were heavily contaminated; the EPA expects that cleanup will continue into the future.

This transformation in land use has resulted in a major concentration of open space coupled with the development of logistics and distribution facilities attracted by the two major rail intermodal facilities and access to two interstate highways. These changes in land uses will significantly impact the transportation system in the area, both from the growth in traffic (truck and auto) and presence of large blocks of open space which create physical barriers to the development of a complete grid of roadways. The presence of the Des Plaines and Kankakee Rivers also form physical barriers that limit access to existing or planned bridges.

### 2.2 Principal Land Uses and Activities

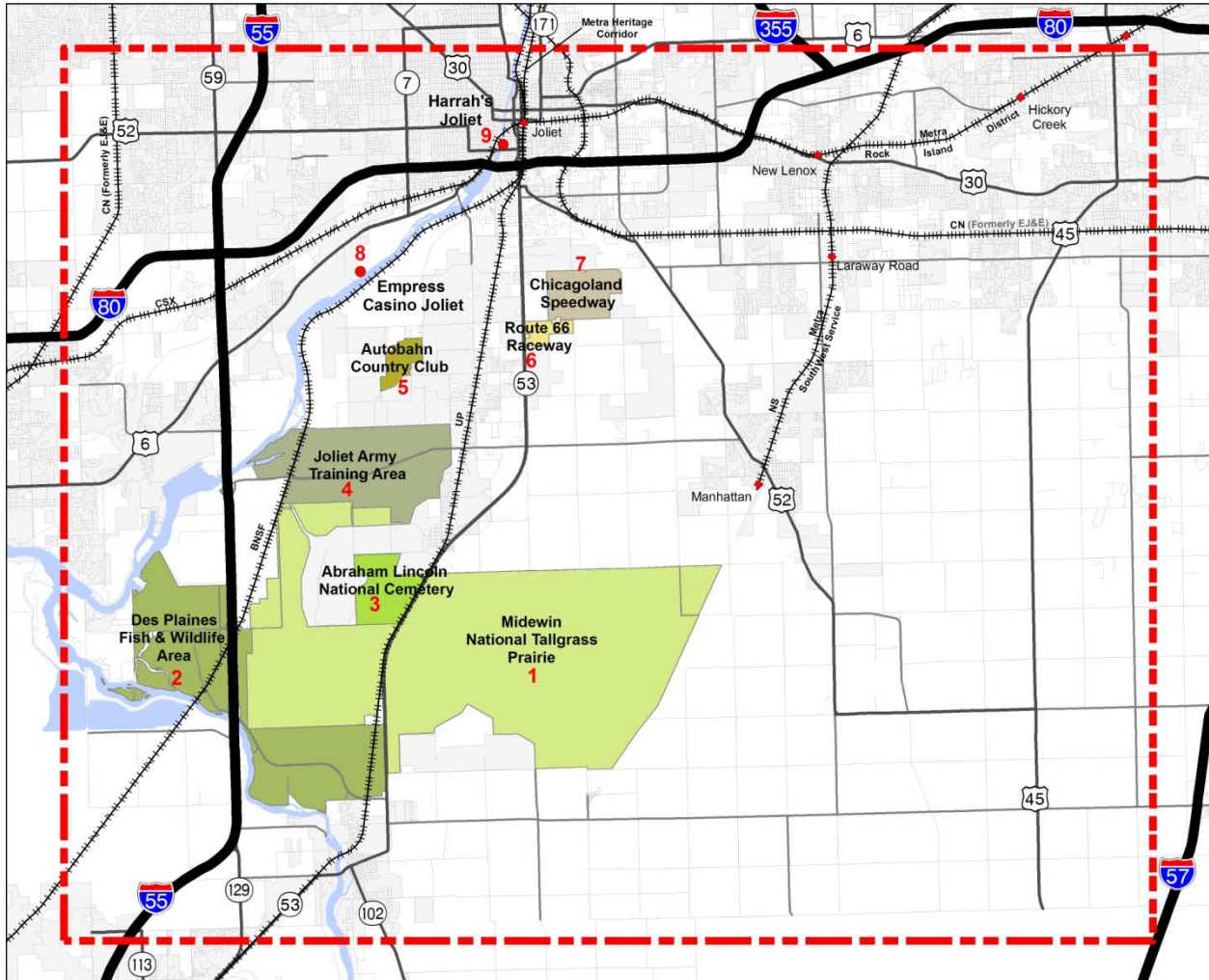
**Figure 3** maps major activities located in the study area. A description of each is provided below using the reference numbers on the map.

1. Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. This 19,000-acre site is the largest protected open space in northeastern Illinois and the first national tallgrass prairie in the United States. The Prairie is operated by the United States Forest Service. A CMAP-sponsored study to recommend transit links to the site is to be conducted in 2010.
2. Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area. This area was acquired by the state from the federal government in 1948 and established its use as a recreation area. Additional land was accessed following the completion of I-55 in the 1960s. The site covers over 5,000 acres and is managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
3. Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. In October 1999, Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery was dedicated as the 117th national cemetery within the Department of Veterans Affairs National

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Cemetery Administration. When fully developed, this nearly 1,000-acre cemetery will provide 400,000 burial spaces.

**Figure 3. Study Area Points of Interest and Activities**



4. **Joliet Army Training Area.** The government retained a portion of the Arsenal site as the Joliet Army Training Area (JTA). JTA is a 3,600-acre regional facility serving the training needs of all Army as well as federal and local law enforcement personnel throughout northern Illinois. A major expansion and improvement to the facility has been proposed, including the following elements:
  - Relocation of the Army's Area Maintenance Support Activity from Orland Park to the JTA;
  - Consolidation of the U. S. Army Reserve units that occupy the Joliet Armed Forces Reserve Center and other facilities in northern Illinois to the JTA; and
  - Replacement of the existing Elwood U.S. Army Reserve Center located at JTA.

These actions will provide for the increased use of the existing engineering training area, accommodating the simultaneous training of the Army Reserve, Joint Services, and National Guard upon relocation to the JTA. Another element involved the granting of a dedicated easement for a roadway and rail lead track, which will support the operation of the Union Pacific's

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Joliet Intermodal facility being developed by CenterPoint. The road and rail line are in construction as of this writing.

5. Autobahn Country Club. This 350-acre auto racing members-based club features two road courses, which combined, create the second longest racing venue in the United States. The facility opened in 2005.
6. Route 66 Speedway. Known as the first true "Stadium of Drag Racing," Route 66 Raceway provides entertainment for all types of racing fans. The facility opened in May 1998 as a multimillion-dollar complex including a one-quarter mile, 30,000 seat, stadium-style drag strip. The multipurpose facility hosts a wide variety of entertainment events.
7. Chicagoland Speedway. Located several miles south of Joliet, the Chicagoland Speedway has a capacity of 75,000 people. Since its inaugural season in 2001, it has been a draw for major National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) and Indy Racing League (IRL) events.
8. Empress Casino Joliet. The 50,000 square foot casino features over 1,100 slot machines, 32 table games and restaurants. The casino opened in 1992.
9. Harrah's Joliet. Riverboat casino located just west of downtown Joliet has 1,100 slot machines, 200 hotel rooms, and five restaurants. The casino was established in 1993.



### 2.3 Business Development

The southwest Will County area is the site of two major intermodal facilities, which have been a major factor in attracting industrial development. In addition to these two freight rail-based facilities, **Figure 4** maps the many business parks that have developed or are proposed for development. These include:

1. Union Pacific's Joliet Intermodal. Construction began in August 2009 and is expected to be completed in 2010. The facility will adjoin the state-of-the-art CenterPoint Integrated Logistics Center. The 3,600 acre site includes rail and intermodal terminal development, warehousing, distribution, manufacturing, cross-dock, and transloading uses, and space to accommodate container / trailer and equipment management facilities. The site also has set-asides for stormwater and conservation purposes.
2. Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Logistics Park. Located in Elwood and opened in 2002, this 620-acre intermodal terminal is designed as an integrated logistics center for the transfer, distribution, and warehousing of consumer materials and goods from rail to trucks. The adjacent CenterPoint Intermodal Center combines warehouse and distribution space in eight structures. The project has the capacity to accommodate up to 12 million square feet of industrial and distribution facilities.



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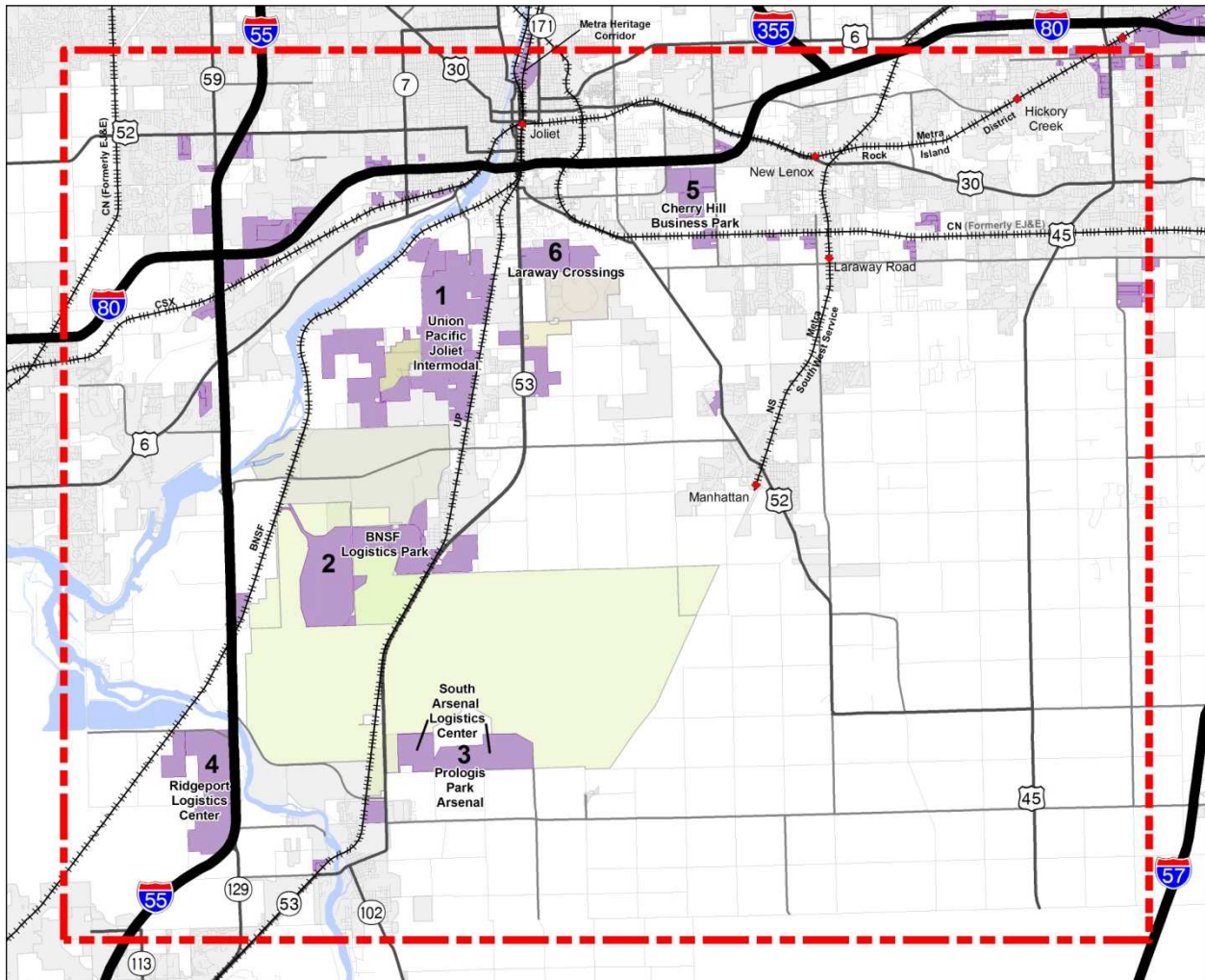
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3. ProLogis Park Arsenal/South Arsenal Logistics Center. Located east of IL 53 and south of Midewin, the 775-acre site is part of the former Joliet Arsenal that was previously ProLogis Park Arsenal. This park has been reduced to 189 acres and the remaining 586 acres are now being developed as the South Arsenal Logistics Center, an industrial park that can accommodate 6.7 million square feet. An adjacent 300-acre site (to the east) was developed by the International Operating Engineers Union Local 150 as a state-of-the-art training facility and opened in 2007.
4. Ridgeport Logistics Center. This is a 23 million square foot rail-served site located on more than 1,500 acres north of Wilmington. Industrial, warehousing, logistics buildings and 70 acres of commercial development will have access to the BNSF and I-55. An underground limestone mine is also planned.
5. Cherry Hill Business Park. This Park in New Lenox is designed to accommodate single or multi-tenant warehouse, distribution and manufacturing uses. The Park is accessible to I-80 and I-355.
6. Laraway Crossings Business Park. This 352-acre master planned distribution and warehouse center is located two miles from the IL 53 / I-80 interchange and is accessible to the I-355 extension.



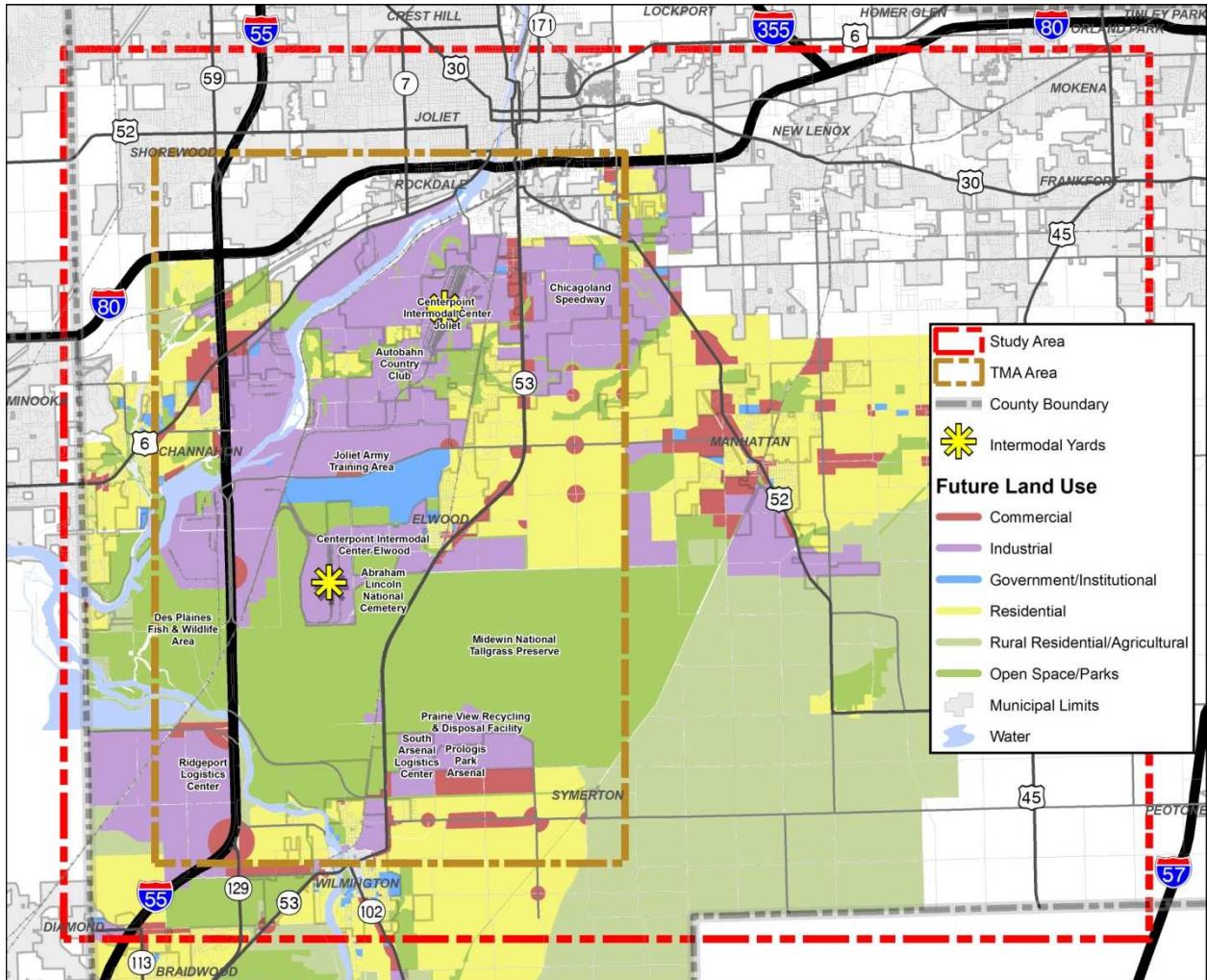
Figure 4. Intermodal Facilities and Business Parks



## 2.4 Land Use

Future transportation facilities and services will be largely determined by the land uses that exist and will be developed in the future. **Figure 5** presents a composite of land use plans for five of the municipalities which cover key portions of the study area, including Channahon, Joliet (South Side), Elwood, Manhattan and Wilmington.

Figure 5. Municipal Land Use Plans



## 2.5 Transportation Resources

Southwest Will County has a diverse mix of transportation infrastructure, principally to accommodate the movement of freight. Between interstate highways, major railroads, and navigable waterways, the area offers unparalleled transport systems. The following describes the existing elements of this nationally unique system of accessibility.

### 2.51 Roadways

The study area has a mix of interstate highways, state arterials, County roadways and a system of local collector streets. The following narrative description is supplemented by the map shown on **Figure 6**.

#### Interstate Facilities

- **Interstate 80** passes through Will County in an east-west direction and is located at the northern part of the study area. Major I-80 interchanges in the study area include I-55, IL 7, US 6, IL 53 and US 30.

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- **Interstate 55** connects St. Louis to northeastern Illinois and travels through Will County from southwest to northeast. I-55 is located along the western edge of the study area, where it provides north-south access. Major I-55 interchanges include IL 59, I-80, US 6, Arsenal Road, and IL 129.
- **Interstate 355**, also known as the Veterans Memorial Tollway, is located in the western and southwest suburbs of Chicago. I-355 runs from Interstate 80 in New Lenox north to Interstate 290 in Itasca. The southern leg of the highway from I-55 to I-80 opened in November 2007, and is in the far northeast corner of the study area.

### Other State Facilities

Non-interstate highways provide for more regional travel, connecting between the interstate highways and county and arterial roadways. In Will County, the state highway system includes US, Illinois, and unmarked state routes. In addition to the state routes, four unmarked state routes serving the area include: Hoff Road (between IL 53 and just west of US 52), Manhattan-Monee Road (from US 52 to east of US 45), Old Chicago Road (between Hoff Road and IL 53) and Mississippi Avenue (between IL 53 and Old Chicago Road). The designated state highways in the study area are:

- **Illinois Route 53** is located in the center of the study area and provides access through the major development area of the former Joliet Arsenal site. It is a four-lane, divided highway from south of I-80 to South Arsenal Road.
- **US 52** has a northwest-southeast orientation. It is a two-lane, undivided roadway connecting Joliet with Manhattan and eventually connects to US 45 for access farther south.
- **US 6** is located in the northern part of the study area and is oriented generally east-west.
- **US 30**, also known as Lincoln Highway, is a major thoroughfare on the north end of the study area.

### County Roadways

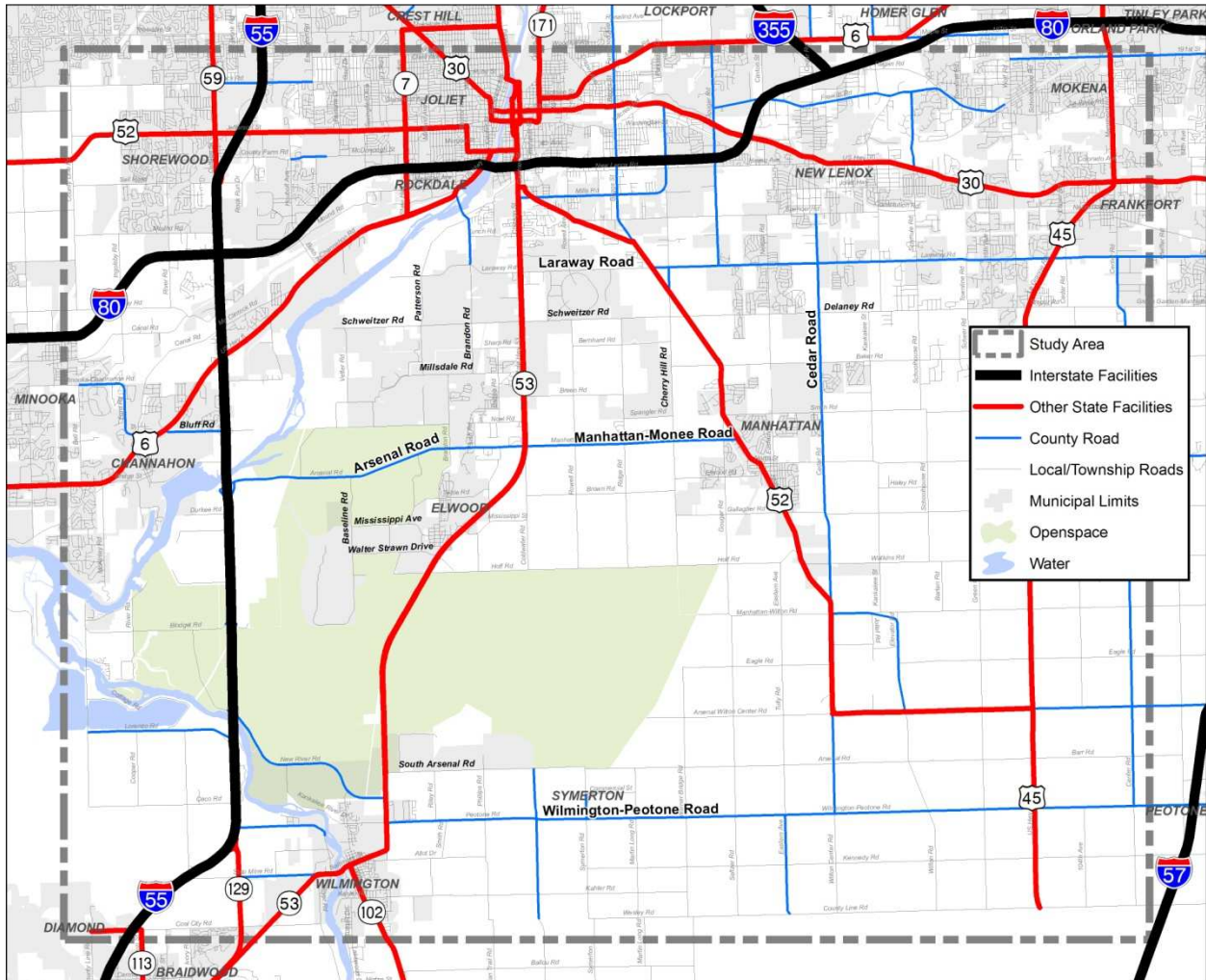
County roadways provide connections between US and state roadways and the townships and municipalities. County roads, in conjunction with local and township roads, serve a large percentage of the trips within the study area. However, many of the county roadways are offset or do not provide continuous coverage throughout the area.

- **Arsenal Road** is an east-west arterial in the center of the study area. It terminates at I-55 on the west and becomes Manhattan Road at IL 53. Arsenal Road is grade-separated from the BNSF main lines in Elwood, and crosses the UP at-grade west of IL 53.
- **Laraway Road** is an east-west road in the northern part of the study area. Laraway Road was realigned slightly north to accommodate the UP Intermodal facility. The intersection with Rowell Road provides an entrance to the Chicagoland Speedway complex. Laraway Road crosses two railroads in the study area: Norfolk Southern (NS)/Metra SouthWest Service (SWS) just east of Cedar Road and UP just west of IL 53.
- **Wilmington-Peotone Road** is an east-west road connecting IL 53 and US 52 at the southern portion of the study area. It has one travel lane in each direction with gravel shoulders and an open-ditch drainage system. The intersection with IL 53 is signalized.

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- **Cedar Road** is located at the eastern border of the study area and provides for north-south travel.
- **Manhattan-Monee Road** has an east-west orientation in the center of the study area, from IL 53 to IL 50. Manhattan Road is offset in the Village of Manhattan where it travels along US 52. This road links the study area to the villages of Manhattan and Monee and then further east via Crete-Monee Road. It is an unmarked state roadway east of the Village of Manhattan.

**Figure 6. Study Area Roadways**



The lower truck weight limits on the County and local roads are of particular concern given the heavy truck traffic generated by the various developments within the study area. Upgrades completed on South Arsenal Road east of IL 53 are examples of the improvements needed throughout the road network. South Arsenal road and the access road to the landfill were constructed to 80,000-pound limits. Additional upgrades will be needed on other County and local roads to accommodate trucks.

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### Local/Township Roads

Roadways under the jurisdiction of the townships or municipalities typically serve shorter, more internal trips. Many are not continuous throughout a township or a municipality, but together function as a local collector system. Generally, these roadways are one lane in each direction, have unimproved shoulders, have stop sign control at intersections and carry between 100 and 1,000 vehicles per day. Some of the more important local roads in the study area provide connections to the interstates or major land uses. These include:

- Baseline Road
- Walter Strawn Drive
- Bluff Road
- Millsdale Road
- South Arsenal Road
- Patterson Road
- Brandon Road
- Cherry Hill Road
- Schweitzer/Delaney Road
- Mississippi Avenue

### 2.52 Rail

The study area has a relatively comprehensive network of rail lines, most of which are oriented to Chicago, as shown in **Figure 7**. All mainlines depicted have freight service but at varying levels of traffic. Five of the seven North American Class I railroads serve the area including BNSF, CN, CSX, NS and UP. The BNSF and the UP have the highest levels of traffic.

Metra operates service on three of the lines shown on Figure 7, including:

- Rock Island District. This line is owned and operated by Metra, and has a full schedule of service seven days a week. The route operates between Joliet and LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago. Service to stations in New Lenox and Mokena is also provided.
- Heritage Corridor. This line is operated by Metra under a trackage rights agreement with the CN. Six trains are provided on weekdays during peak periods and in the peak direction only (i.e., three AM peak inbound to Chicago and three PM peak outbound from Chicago). The outlying terminal station in Joliet is shared with Metra Rock Island and Amtrak service.
- SouthWest Service. Service on the SWS was extended from Orland Park to Manhattan in 2006. Trains are operated with Metra crews under a lease agreement with the NS. Service at the two stations in the study area (Laraway Road and Manhattan) includes two peak period/peak direction trains per weekday plus one midday roundtrip. Six trains are provided on Saturdays in both directions, (i.e., three inbound and three outbound).

**Table 1** presents results of a Metra passenger count taken in the fall of 2006 for stations located in the study area. Counts include boarding and alighting passengers for all trains on a single weekday.

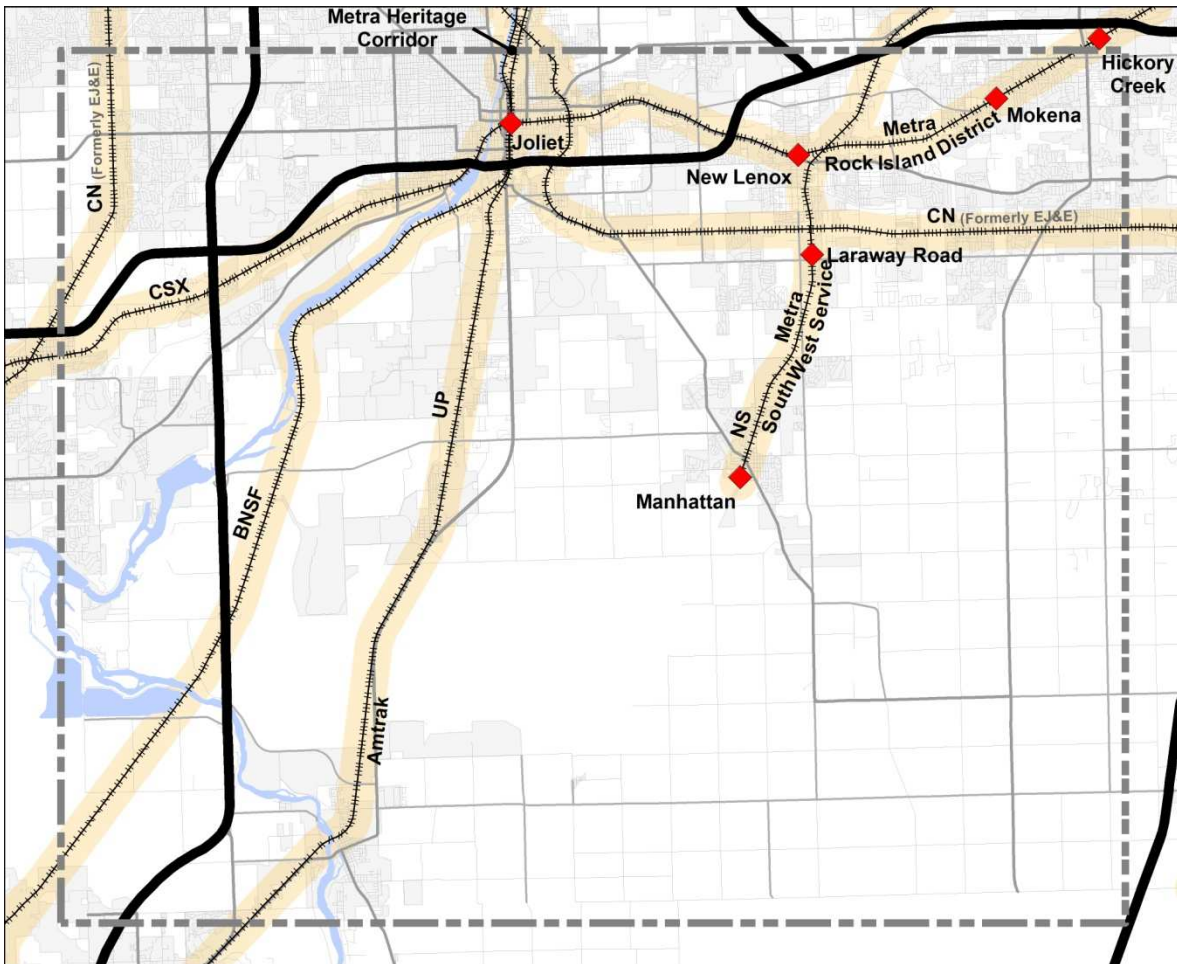
## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

**Table 1. Metra Station Average Weekday Ridership (fall 2006)**

Line	Station	Mile Post	Fare Zone	Passengers	
				Ons	Offs
RI-Main	Joliet	40.2	H	958	973
RI-Main	New Lenox	34.0	G	1,348	1,321
RI-Main	Mokena	29.6	F	634	647
Heritage	Joliet	37.2	H	395	349
SWS	Manhattan	40.8	I	22	27
SWS	Laraway Road	35.8	H	11	12

Intercity passenger rail service is provided by Amtrak at the Joliet Union Station. There are a total of ten trains seven days a week (five in each direction). Eight of the ten are the state-subsidized Lincoln Service trains operating between Chicago and St. Louis. The remaining two are the Texas Eagle, operating between Chicago and San Antonio, Texas with trains continuing to Los Angeles three days a week.

**Figure 7. Mainline Railroads and Passenger Stations**



## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

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### 2.53 Non-Rail Transit

Public fixed-route bus service in the study area is provided by Pace's Heritage Division, including eight local routes serving the Joliet area. Ten routes hub in and out of the area immediately north of Joliet Union Station, including the eight local routes plus Route 832 (Joliet-Orland Square) and Route 834 (Joliet-Downers Grove). **Figure 8** includes a map of Pace study area routes.



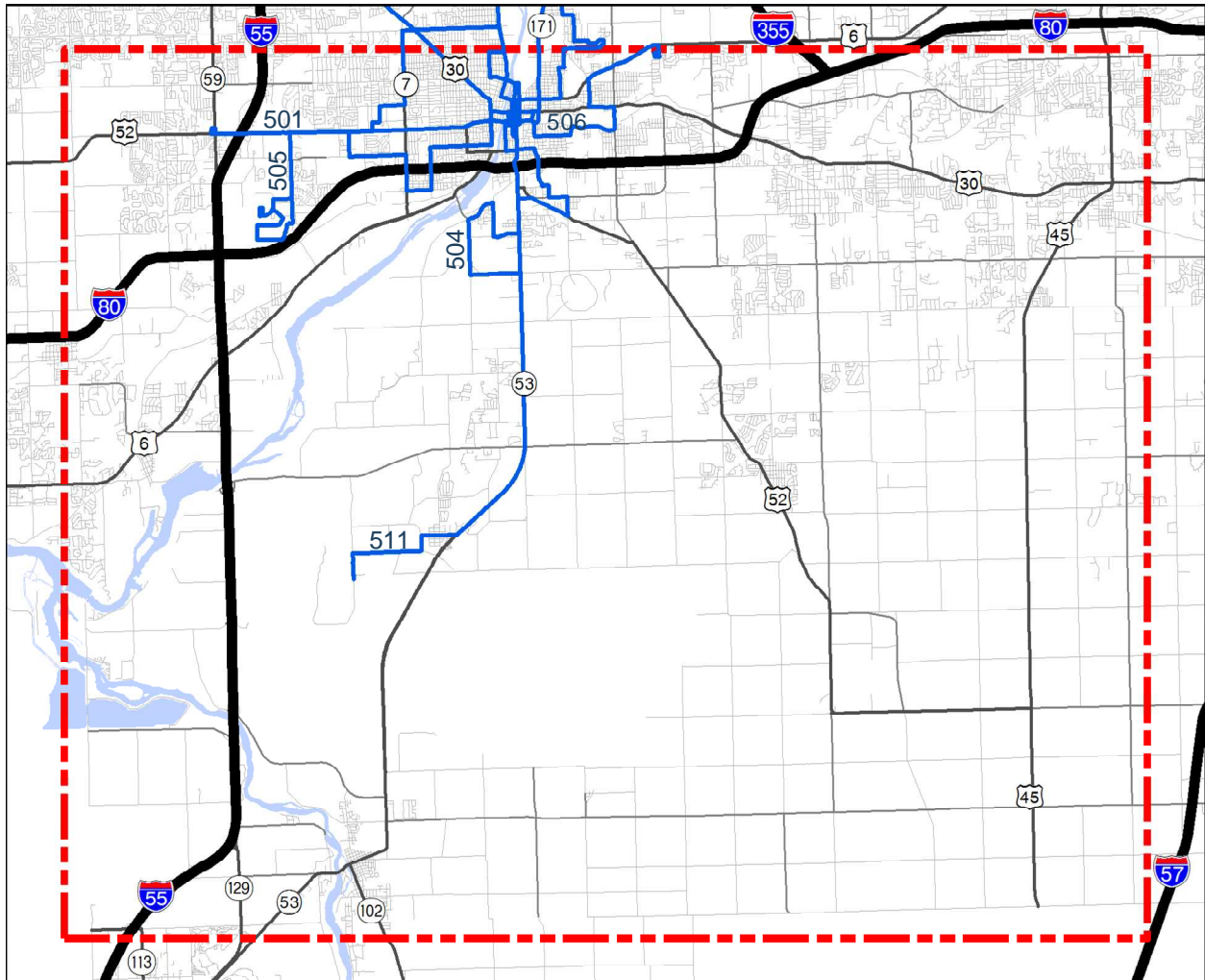
Pace Heritage Division

Two of the routes serve employers in the study area, including:

- 504 South Joliet. Provides service between industrial areas in south Joliet to the Joliet central business district and Joliet Union Station. This route provides service to the Philip Murray Complex, Will County Health Complex, Primary Care Facility and Harrah's Casino. Service operates hourly on weekdays only.
- 511 Joliet-Elwood-Deer Run. This route consists of one roundtrip during each peak period (timed for first-shift factory work) operating between Joliet City Center, Elwood and CenterPoint Intermodal Center (formerly known as Deer Run Industrial Park).



**Figure 8. Pace Bus Routes**



Pace provides one of the largest vanpool services in the country. Debuting in 1991, the Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP) allows groups to save by commuting to work in a van that is owned, insured and maintained by Pace, but driven by a vanpool participant. The Program offers vans for several different uses, including traditional user-operated vanpools, employer shuttles, Metra shuttles, not-for-profit human service organizations/workshops/agencies, and the Municipal Vanpool Program.

Pace also provides the RideShare program, which is a free service that connects commuters who are interested in sharing their drive to work. Carpoolers are connected by e-mail to discuss their needs and expectations. After registering, participants are provided access to a list of people who live and work nearby and have similar schedules and personal preferences.

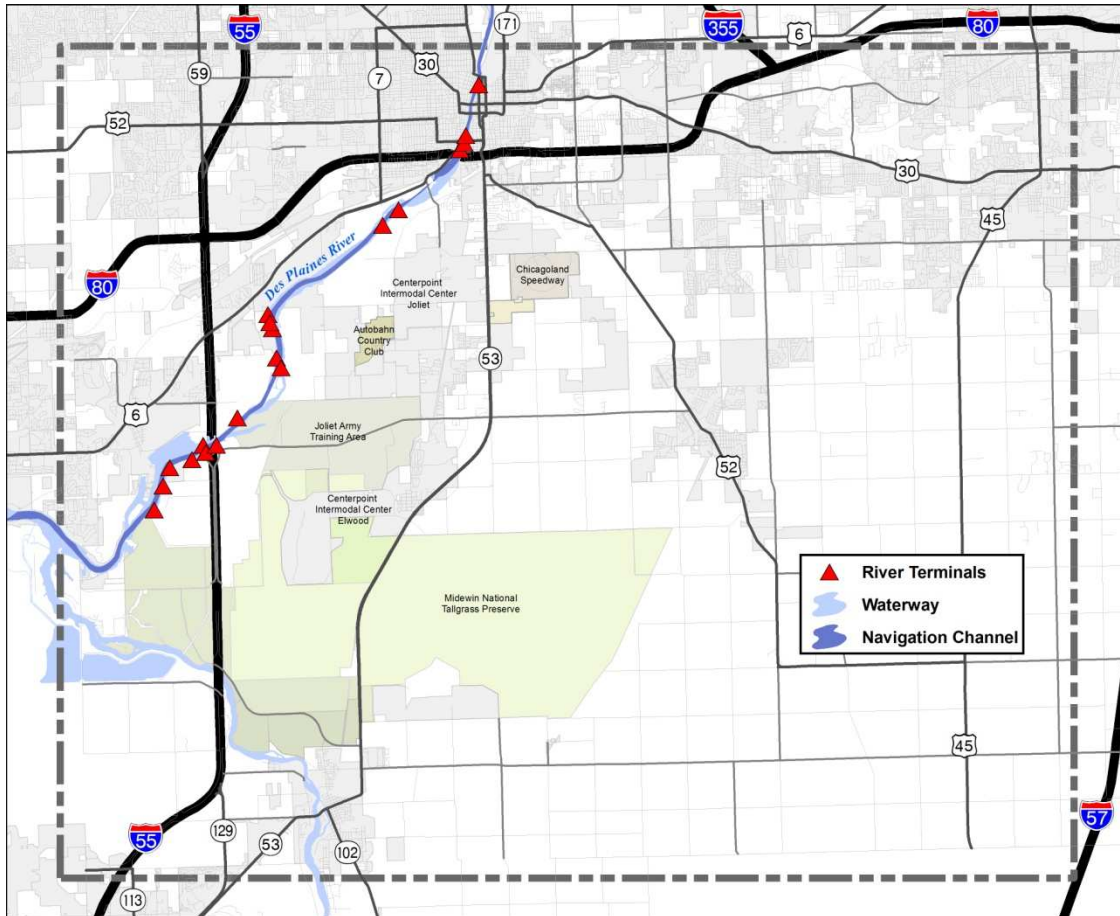


## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

### 2.54 Navigable Waterways

In addition to extensive rail and truck freight transport facilities, southwest Will County also has excellent access to the nation's inland waterway system. As indicated on **Figure 9**, a number of dock facilities have been constructed on the Des Plaines River in the study area. Access is available to the Gulf of Mexico via the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers, and well as the Saint Lawrence Seaway via the Great Lakes.

**Figure 9. Study Area Docking Facilities on the Des Plaines River**



## 3.0 Transportation Issues and Problems

As noted above, the unique transportation attributes of southwest Will County have served to attract economic development, especially the railroads, interstate highways, and Des Plaines River. Combined with its central location in the country, these transportation resources provide excellent access to national and international markets. However, while access at a macro level is excellent, travel within the local area to access these national transportation facilities can be problematic. The following describes some of the major constraints to realizing a more fluid local circulation and distribution transportation system.

- Roadway System
  - **Lack of N-S Roads.** Only one continuous roadway (IL 53) exists between US 52 on the east and I-55 on the west, a distance of approximately 12 miles at the south-end of the study area.
  - **Lack of E-W Roads.** There are no continuous east-west oriented roads in the study area south of I-80.
  - **Midewin Tallgrass Prairie.** The Prairie creates a physical barrier for N-S roads. IL 53 is the only public thoroughfare that traverses the site.
  - **Des Plaines River.** The Des Plaines River is a physical barrier that limits access to I-55 from north of Arsenal Road. The Des Plaines River has a northeast-southwest orientation in the study area. The area formed by the triangle of I-55, I-80, and the Des Plaines Rivers is isolated from areas on the east side of the River. There is only one bridge between the I-55 and I-80 crossings - Brandon Road, a minor two-lane highway that only extends as far south as Laraway Road. Area traffic destined to I-80 is forced to use IL 53 or travel in the reverse direction to Arsenal Road/I-55.
- Capacity and Design of Roadway Facilities
  - **I-80/IL 53 Interchange.** The outdated design of this key interchange is constrained by railroad tracks on the east, a stream on the south, and development north and west.
  - **Highway Congestion.** Interstates and selected arterials are experiencing high traffic volumes. Continued development in the area will exacerbate area traffic conditions.
  - **Truck Traffic.** The BNSF Logistics Park attracts high levels of truck traffic, the impact of which will only worsen with the completion of the UP Joliet facility. Community complaints regarding trucks operating on local streets have been expressed, which is likely to increase with residential development.



Manhattan Road west of IL 53

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- **Special Attractions.** Visitor levels to the attractions that are evolving in the area can be expected to continue to increase, which will further impact the transportation system.
- **Highway Safety.** Injuries and deaths due to traffic accidents remain a major issue. This may be particularly important for an area such as southwest Will County, where the pace of development may have outstripped the implementation of facilities using the latest highway engineering designs. One local example is the I-55 interchange at IL 129, which has been identified as exhibiting one of the more severe highway safety needs in the state. The geometry of the interchange has an unconventional design with the southbound I-55 exit to southbound IL 129 provided through a left hand ramp and northbound IL 129 entrance ramp to southbound I-55 provided through a left hand exit. These movements require the driver to cross both northbound I-55 lanes to enter southbound I-55 and are inconsistent with driver expectations. These issues are currently the subject of the I-55 Wilmington Study,<sup>2</sup> which includes Phase I Engineering and Environmental studies.
- **Rail-Highway At-grade Crossings.** Rail traffic in the area contributes to highway congestion at grade crossings. Problems associated with crossing gate downtime will worsen as the volume of train movements grows. Grade crossings also have a safety-risk aspect.



- **Transit Access.** Transit service is currently very limited to most of the area. The sole local bus route which extends furthest south into the study area (Pace Route 511) attracted five daily riders on average in January 2010.
- **Jurisdictional Mismatches.** There are misalignments between jurisdictions and infrastructure assets.

As noted earlier, a companion study to this report examined the feasibility of creating a transportation management association (TMA) for southwest Will County. As part of this research a web-based survey of area employers (public- and private-sector) was conducted to solicit opinions about interest in transportation demand management programs and joining a new TMA. Of the 81 employers who were asked to complete the survey, 26 responses were received. One of the questions asked employers to

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.i-55wilmingtonstudy.com/index.aspx>.

## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

rate the key transportation problems affecting their worksites. All 26 respondents answered this question, which allowed multiple responses to the ten optional answers. As can be seen on **Table 2**, traffic congestion was the most commonly cited problem.

**Table 2. TMA Employer Survey - Key Transportation Problems Affecting Worksite**

Answer Options	Total		Private	Public
	Count	Total	Firm	Agencies
Traffic congestion	12	46%	60%	27%
Safety	9	35%	53%	9%
Lack of parking for employees	4	15%	7%	27%
Lack of parking for customers	3	12%	0%	27%
Length of commute for employees	5	19%	20%	18%
Access from local roads and highways	5	19%	20%	18%
Lack of convenient transit	5	19%	20%	18%
Lack of sidewalks and/or bike lanes	7	27%	20%	36%
Transportation problems do not affect our organization	7	27%	7%	55%
Other	2	8%	13%	0%
<i>answered question</i>		<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

**Table 2** also breaks down responses between private firms and public agencies (municipalities, townships, etc.). This shows several distinct differences in responses, including: many more private employers indicated that traffic congestion and safety were problems than public respondents. Also, significantly fewer private firm respondents (1 of 15) indicated that transportation problems do not affect their organization, versus 6 of 11 public entities. While the survey rate of response was lower than had been hoped, the 32% (i.e., 26 completed responses of 81 employers requested) is believed to be representative of area employers. In summary, the survey shows that a majority of employers believe that transportation problems affect their worksites, and that congestion and safety are the key problems.

Given the importance to addressing congestion, it's worth noting the results presented in the Will County 2030 Transportation Plan<sup>3</sup> completed in 2009. Forecasts of congestion in 2030 were measured for the existing plus committed highway system in the County. The analysis indicates the following roadway segments would be congested in 2030:

- I-80: East study boundary to I-55
- US 6: Terry Drive (end of four-lanes) to I-55
- US 30: Entire length in Will County
- Laraway Road: US 52 to Brandon Road
- Delaney Road (Schweitzer Road): East study boundary to US 52
- Monee-Manhattan Road (Arsenal): East study boundary to IL 53 (including jog on US 52)
- Cedar Road: North study boundary to Monee-Manhattan Road
- Gougar Road: North study boundary to Laraway Road
- US 52: North study boundary to Monee-Manhattan Road and Cedar Road to Wilton Center Road
- Briggs Road: I-80 to US 52

<sup>3</sup> Will County, Will County 2030 Transportation Plan, March 2009.

## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

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- IL 53: North study boundary to Arsenal Road / Monee-Manhattan Road and South Arsenal Road (end of four-lanes) to West River Road
- Brandon Road: Meadow Road to Schweitzer Road
- Patterson Road: Brandon Road to Laraway Road
- Houbolt Road / Empress Road: Cathy Drive (end of four-lanes) to US 6
- I-55: North study boundary to New River Road



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires that states submit an annual report describing the five percent of highway locations (road segments and intersections) exhibiting the most pressing safety needs. As noted above, the IL 129 and Lorenzo Road interchanges with I-55 are contained on this list. This Five Percent Report helps Illinois to provide guidance on where safety investments are needed. High priority locations have been identified in Illinois on the state and U.S. highway system, including freeways, urban and rural two-lane and multilane facilities, and intersections. Study area locations in the 2009 Five Percent Report,<sup>4</sup> include:

- E-W Segments: I-80, US 30
- N-S Segments: US 45, Cedar Road, US 52, IL 53, Larkin Avenue, I-55, River Road
- Intersections:
  - Manhattan Road & Laraway Road
  - US 52/US 45 & Wilmington Road
  - IL 53 & New River Road

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<sup>4</sup> Five Percent Report, Federal Highway Administration Highway Safety Improvement Program, Illinois Department of Transportation, September 2009.

## 4.0 Inventory of Projects, Plans, and Programs

The planning and implementation of transportation facilities and service in the study area are provided by a number of state, regional and local agencies. The following describes projects and plans by agency:

### 4.1 Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

IDOT is a state agency in charge of state-maintained public roadways. The agency also provides funding for rail, public transit and airport projects and administers fuel tax and federal funding to local jurisdictions in the state. The state is divided into nine districts with District 1 representing northeast Illinois including Will County. IDOT's multi-year program is the list of highway projects that are used to create the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is required for federal transportation funding to flow to Illinois. Major area planned and programmed projects include:

- I-55 resurfacing Grundy County Line to south of I-80
- I-55, IL 129 to Lorenzo Road widening and resurfacing, IL 129 and Lorenzo Road interchange reconstruction
- New I-55/Arsenal Road interchange
- I-80, Grundy County Line to US 30 Phase I and II design
- I-80, US 6 and Des Plaines River Bridge rehabilitation
- I-80 Center St to US 30 resurfacing
- Manhattan Road, Baseline Road to IL 53 reconstruction
- St. Louis St. Mississippi Avenue to IL 53 relocation (bend St. Louis to connect with IL 53 at a right angle)
- Illiana Expressway: Co-sponsored with Indiana DOT, this study evaluated a proposed roadway between I-65 and I-57. The Study's recommendations are being considered by the states' departments of transportation. A "Phase 1" study, involving engineering and environmental analysis, would be the next step.

As part of the IDOT I-55 Study at Lorenzo Road and Illinois Route 129, proposed improvements are being evaluated to address operational, safety and future capacity deficiencies of access to and from I-55 between Coal City Road and Lorenzo Road northwest of Wilmington. One problem identified in the study is that the existing Illinois Route 129 interchange does not provide access to the west side of I-55. A full interchange is being studied, and will include a new north-south arterial roadway which will extend from I-55 to Lorenzo Road.

IDOT is part of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC), a compact including ten Midwestern states. MIPRC promotes both current improvements and long-range plans for intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest. In early 2010, it was announced that Illinois' high-speed rail signature route, Chicago to St. Louis, will receive \$1.1 billion for corridor improvements, allowing speeds of up to 110 mph. Study area access to the improved intercity passenger rail service would be provided at the existing Joliet Union Station in downtown Joliet, serving Amtrak and Metra's Rock Island District and Heritage Corridor lines.

### 4.2 Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

CMAP is the official regional planning organization for the seven northeastern Illinois counties including Will County. By state and federal law, CMAP is responsible for developing GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first truly comprehensive regional plan. To be implemented in fall 2010, the plan will be based on a diverse, coordinated set of strategies to address projected population, which has significant implications for transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. Prior to the adoption of the GO TO 2040 plan, the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan serves as the long-range plan for the metropolitan area. This Plan was last updated in October 2008. Key elements that impact southwest Will County include the following:

- I-80: Add lanes between US 45 and Grundy County line
- I-55 Improvements including add lanes, new interchange at Arsenal Road, interchange improvements in the Wilmington area, and reconstruct and improve IL 59 interchange
- South Suburban Corridor: Extend I-355 from I-80 to I-57
- I-57/IL394 Connector: Extend the proposed South Suburban Extension from its proposed terminus at I-57 east to I-394 in the vicinity of the proposed South Suburban Airport
- Illiana Expressway: Extend the proposed I-57/IL394 Connector from its proposed eastern terminus at IL394 to I-65 in Indiana.
- Prairie Parkway: New highway facility connecting I-80 to I-88 in Kane and Kendall Counties
- CMAP's System of Strategic Regional Arterials (SRA): Multi-year planning and design studies have been completed for arterials in the region designated as SRAs. Designated and proposed routes in the study area include:
  - IL 53 between Wilmington-Peotone Road and downtown Joliet
  - Wilmington-Peotone Road-IL53-New River Road between IL 1 and I-55
  - Proposed, Gouger Road from Wilmington/Peotone Road to the I-355 Extension
  - Proposed, Arsenal/Manhattan Road from I-55 to US45
  - Proposed, Laraway Road between I-57 and US6
- Metra Suburban Transit Access Route (STAR Line): Vision for non-radial commuter rail service including use of the Canadian National Railway (CN) rail line.
- Metra Heritage Corridor: Upgrade from a peak-only to a full-service operation
- Metra Rock Island: Upgrade infrastructure to allow higher service levels. Extend route to Minooka
- Metra SouthWest Service: Upgrade infrastructure and service levels; construct connection to Rock Island line at 75<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago (element of CREATE Plan) shifting downtown terminal from Union Station to LaSalle Street Station; extend to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

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- Pace Express Bus Transit System: Network of express bus routes providing regional connectivity and point-to-point service between well-defined origin-destination pairs. Study area corridors for express service include I-55 from Arsenal Road north and I-80 from I-55 east.

### 4.3 Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)

In 2007 RTA published its Regional Transportation Strategic Plan,<sup>5</sup> a companion document to the *Moving Beyond Congestion* Program. This program advocated for increased public funding to modernize and expand the region's transit network. As a part of the *Moving Beyond Congestion* Consensus Framework, a list of projects was developed representing a 30-year vision of the region's transit system. Projects impacting southwest Will County included the following:

- Metra Suburban Transit Access Route (STAR): Suburb-to-suburb commuter line between Joliet and O'Hare Airport
- Metra STAR Line, East Segment: Future phase of STAR line between Joliet and Lynwood
- Metra SouthWest Service: Full service levels, connection to Rock Island Line at 75<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago (shift downtown terminal from Chicago Union Station to LaSalle Street Station), and an extension to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
- Metra Rock Island District Service Improvements: Infrastructure investments in tracks, signals, bridges and yards to increase express and reverse commute service
- Metra Heritage Corridor Service Improvements: Upgrade infrastructure, signals, rail-to-rail grade crossings to allow more frequent peak and off-peak service
- Pace Arterial Rapid Transit Network: US 30 Joliet to Lynwood
- Pace Suburban Express Bus System
  - 159<sup>th</sup> Street, Joliet-Orland Park-Hammond, Indiana
  - I-55 Corridor, I-80 to Chicago
  - I-80 Corridor, I-55/Joliet to Lansing
  - I-355/IL 53 Corridor, New Lenox to Lake-Cook
  - Express Joliet Union Station to Rosemont/O'Hare Airport
  - Express Joliet Union Station to Schaumburg
  - Express Joliet Union Station to Naperville

### 4.4 Metra

Metra is the name used to identify the services provided by the Commuter Rail Service Board of the Regional Transportation Authority. The Metra system is comprised of a network of eleven rail lines serving all six counties of northeast Illinois. Metra's submission to CMAP's GoTo 2040 Plan

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<sup>5</sup> 2007 – The Year of Decision, Regional Transportation Strategic Plan, Regional Transportation Authority with CTA, Metra and Pace, February 8, 2007.



## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

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process included a number of capital projects in or near the study area. The final regional decision regarding which projects are identified in CMAP's GoTo 2040 plan has not been made as of the writing of this report. The project given the highest priority by Metra within the study area was Phase I of the Suburban Transit Access Route (STAR) between Joliet (Division Street; north of US 30 and east of I-55) to O'Hare Airport. The line would use the CN (EJ&E) alignment between Joliet and Hoffman Estates and the Northwest Tollway between Hoffman Estates and O'Hare. Other area projects submitted to CMAP were the following:

- Rock Island District (RID) Extension from Joliet to Minooka (11 miles)
- SouthWest Service (SWS) Extension from Manhattan to Midewin (five miles)
- Heritage Corridor Full Service (service frequency and hours comparable to other Metra lines)
- SWS Full Service (service frequency and hours comparable to other Metra lines)
- STAR Line potential future extension (east CN segment from Joliet to Lynwood, 31 miles)
- SWS Infrastructure Upgrades, including connection to RID at 75<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago (shifts downtown terminal from Chicago Union Station to LaSalle Street Station), and installation of Positive Train Control
- RID Infrastructure Upgrades, including triple tracking north of 51<sup>st</sup> Street, expanding 47<sup>th</sup> Street Yard, and installing Positive Train Control

### 4.5 Pace

The suburban bus division of the Regional Transportation Authority, known as Pace, was created by legislation that restructured the RTA in 1983. In 2002, Pace launched its long-range plan, Vision 2020: Blueprint for the Future.<sup>6</sup> The plan is designed to create a faster network that is more convenient and simpler to understand for the suburban reaches of Chicagoland. Elements of the Plan that affect southwest Will County include:

- Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ART): The ART system will improve regional connectivity by providing premium quality, fast frequent and reliable service. Among long-term corridors is service on US 30 in the northern part of the study area.
- Express Bus Network: The Vision 2020 Plan includes a network of express routes to operate on regional expressways to provide long distance connections between sub-regional activity centers. Service is proposed on I-55 and I-80.
- Restructuring Initiatives: Major service restructuring plans have been completed or are underway in several area of the Pace region, including South Cook County/Will County.<sup>7</sup> Recommended service and routing changes to the Joliet system were implemented in

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<sup>6</sup> Pace, Vision 2020: Blueprint for the Future, Comprehensive Operating Plan Update, December 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Pace, South Cook County/Will County, Pace Board of Directors presentation handout, July 2, 2008.

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2008. These changes included a comprehensive restructuring which provided faster, more direct connections between area destinations.

### 4.6 Will County

The County's Department of Highways, in coordination with the Land Use Department, published the Will County 2030 Transportation Plan<sup>8</sup> in March 2009. The Plan provides a framework for decisions on short-range and long-term transportation and related land-use activities. Roadway Plan elements that impact the Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan include:

- I-55: Widen to six lanes, from current six-lane segment to IL129
- I-80: Widen to six lanes, I-55 to I-355
- US 30: Widen to four lanes, Kendall County Line to Harlem Avenue (SRA)
- IL 53: Widen to four lanes, current four-lane segment to West River Road
- US 6: Widen to four lanes IL 53 to East County Line
- Manhattan Road-Monee Road: Widen to four lanes, US 52 to US 45
- US 52: Widen to four lanes, Baker Road to Manhattan Road-Monee Road
- Cedar Road: Widen to four lanes, Manhattan Road-Monee Road to US 6
- Gougar Road: New road US 52 to Laraway Road, widen to four lanes Laraway Road to US 6
- Briggs Road: Widen to four lanes, Spencer Road to I-80
- Briggs Road/US 52: New road, Schweitzer Road to Spencer Road
- Laraway Road: Widen to four lanes, IL 53 to Harlem Avenue
- Arsenal/Manhattan Road: Widen to four lanes, Baseline to US 52
- Wilmington-Peotone Road: Widen to four lanes, IL 53 to I-57
- Strawn Road: Widen to four lanes, Baseline to IL 53
- Hoff Road: Widen to four lanes, Governors Highway to IL 53
- Illiana Expressway: New freeway Indiana to I-55

The Will County Transportation Plan also included an unconstrained public transportation plan involving commuter rail and bus concepts. Commuter rail plan elements included the following:

- Extend Metra Rock Island Line to Minooka in western Will County
- Increase the number of Metra Rock Island trains that operate limited-stop service between Joliet and LaSalle Street Station in Chicago
- Identify an additional station site between New Lenox and Joliet on the Rock Island
- Increase service frequency on the Metra Heritage Corridor
- Explore transit corridor between Joliet and Wilmington as possible extension of Heritage Corridor
- Expand Metra SouthWest Service frequencies south of Orland Park to the same levels as north of Orland Park
- Support development of Metra commuter rail service on the entire STAR Line.

The Will County Bus Concept Plan focused on identifying corridor and infrastructure improvements that will help accommodate future bus service. Elements of the Plan include:

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<sup>8</sup> Will County, op. cit. (page 19).

## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

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- Identification of transit centers which would serve as major points of interchange between public transit services. Proposed sites in southwest Will County include:
  - Joliet (Joliet Union Station)
  - Manhattan (Metra SWS station)
  - New Lenox (Metra SWS Laraway Road Station/future STAR station)
  - Elwood (potential Metra Heritage Corridor station)
  - Wilmington (potential Metra Heritage Corridor station)
- Potential corridors for upgraded bus service using Transit Signal Priority (TSP), operating with the characteristics of bus rapid transit (BRT). Identified corridors are:
  - IL 59: US 52 to Metra BNSF Route 59 Station
  - IL 53: Joliet Union Station to Lisle
  - US 30: Joliet Union Station to Plainfield
  - US 30: Joliet Union Station to Park Forest
  - US 52: Joliet Union Station to IL 59/I-55
- Will County express bus corridors were also recommended as part of the unconstrained County Plan, including:
  - Extending Pace's I-55 Flyer service to a southern terminus in Joliet
  - I-80/I-57 from Joliet to Chicago
  - I-355 from New Lenox to Schaumburg

### 4.7 Center for Economic Development

The Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) is not-for-profit foundation, created by the business community in 1981. Governed by a 50-member board and managed by a professional staff, the CED is responsible for attracting and retaining jobs for Will County. As a part of its mission, CED advocates for transportation investments that will benefit economic development in the County. A priority list of projects is included in the CED Transportation Blueprint, which was approved by the CED Board of Directors in March 2007. Projects relevant to the Joliet Arsenal Area include:

- State Road Projects (priority is based on next best available funding source)
  - Construct new interchange at I-55 and Arsenal Road.
  - Widen Route 59 from Shorewood to Plainfield/I-55.
  - Widen Route 30 from Joliet to Harlem Avenue.
  - Improve state highways that feed into the I-355 Extension (US 6, IL 7/159th Street)
  - Construct new interchange at I-55 and IL 59.
  - Identify and preserve the route of the "Daniel Burnham Outerbelt" which includes the Prairie Parkway, the Illiana Expressway and the I-55/I-57 Interconnect.
  - Phase I engineering to add lanes on I-80 from Route 45 to the proposed Prairie Parkway southern terminus.
  - Initiate engineering and land acquisition to widen I-55 from I-80 to the Will County line.
  - Construct full interchange at I-55 and IL 126.
  - Reconstruct the US 6 and I-55 interchange.

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- Local Road Projects
  - Improve arterial roads along the I-355 corridor to handle the influx of traffic.
  - Improve primary county arterials (e.g., Laraway Road, Cedar Road, Wilmington-Peotone Road, Weber Road, etc.) as identified in the County's 2030 Transportation Plan.
  
- Rail/Transit Projects
  - Create multiple trans-load facilities along Class I railroads in Will County.
  - Assess rail freight congestion throughout the Chicago metro region.
  - Extend Metra service from Manhattan to CenterPoint.
  - Initiate Metra service on the Rock Island line west of Joliet.
  - Initiate Metra service on the STAR Line.
  - Support Pace in their planning to improve bus service throughout the region.
  - Identify and promote non-traditional transit alternatives such as van/carpooling, Arterial Rapid Transit, and locally based bus service.
  
- State and Federal Water Projects
  - Initiate CED research on conditions and need for improvements to the lock and dams on the Des Plaines and Illinois Rivers.
  - Identify other issues that may negatively impede the flow of commerce on the rivers.

### 4.8 Municipalities

**Figure 10** provides a composite map of municipal road plans for the study area.

The following summarizes transportation plans for study area municipalities:

- Village of Channahon – The Village's Comprehensive Plan was approved in December 2008. Relative to study area, the Village has recommended improvements to the I-55/US 6 Interchange, including development of a frontage road system. The Village also recommends developing a collector road east of I-55 between US 6 and Bluff Road. This would provide better access to this isolated area between I-55 and the Des Plaines River.
  
- Village of Elwood – The Village's Comprehensive Plan was approved in October 2008. Roadway recommendations in the Plan include extending Baseline Road north from Arsenal Road (in construction as of March 2010), extending Strawn Drive east of IL 53 to Hoff Road, and extending Mississippi Avenue east of Chicago Road to Ridge Road.
  
- City of Joliet – The City's South Side Comprehensive Plan was prepared in March 2007. The proposed transportation network has sought to separate industrial and residential traffic, using Baseline Road and Brandon Road to handle much of the Industrial traffic. Recommended roadway improvements include:
  - Extend Ridge Road north ultimately ending at Laraway Road.
  - Extend Baseline Road north to align with Vetter Road.
  - Extend Laraway Road westward beyond Patterson Road. A bridge crossing the Des Plaines River has been identified as a potential major access point to the area, linking up with Empress Road.

## Joliet Arsenal Area Transportation Plan Update

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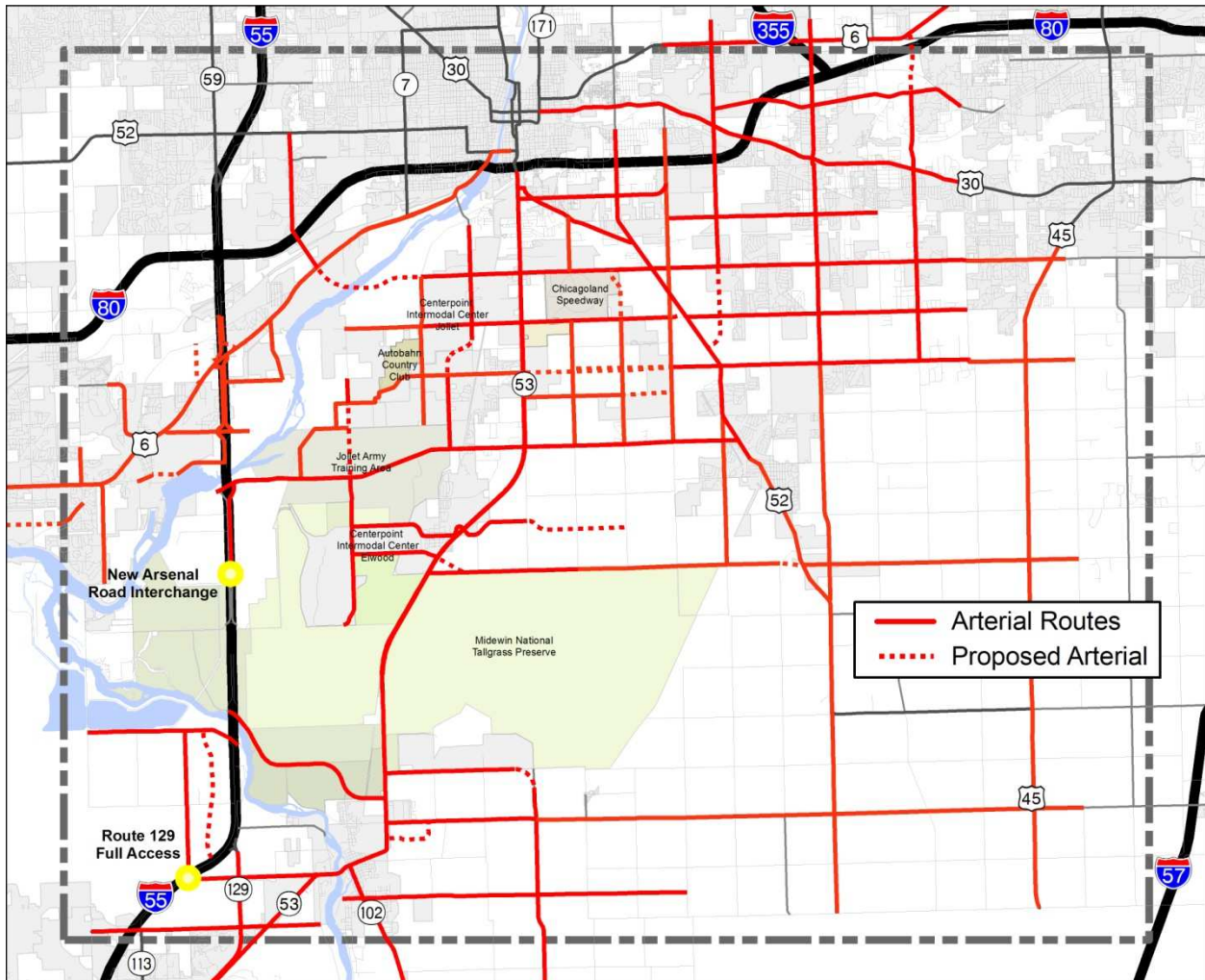
- Extend Millsdale Road east beyond Route 53, ending at Cherry Hill Road. Grade separate crossing of UP Intermodal Yard lead. Widen to 3 lanes between Patterson Road and IL 53.
- Develop West Millsdale-Patterson as a through roadway.
- Extend Schweitzer Road east beyond Cherry Hill Road, in order to meet up with US 52.

In addition to the City's South Side Plan, a Comprehensive Development Plan for Downtown Joliet was in preparation as of the March 2010. A key element of the Plan is the proposed Joliet Regional Multi-Modal Transportation Center which would combine all current transit services and add new transit modes into one central facility adjacent to the National Register Historic Joliet Union Station.



Rendering of proposed Joliet Multi-Modal Facility

Figure 10. Municipal Roadway Plans



- Village of Manhattan – The Village Transportation Plan is dated June 2007. The Plan includes a potential South Suburban Expressway, connecting I-80 near US 30 and I-57 south of Monee. New regional arterials are proposed for Gougar Road between 159<sup>th</sup> Street and Wilmington-Peotone Road, Cedar Road between Illinois Highway in New Lenox and US 52, Laraway Road between IL 53 and Harlem Avenue, and Baseline Road/Hoff Road/Pauling Road between Arsenal Road and I-57.
- City of Wilmington. The Plan dated September 2008 recommends that the I-55/IL 129 interchange be expanded to full access permitting connection to the west side of I-55. Major thoroughfares in the City should be designed to provide regional access; local access should be limited. The facilities include IL 53, IL 102, IL 129, Old Chicago Road, Lorenzo Road, New River Road, Wilmington-Peotone Road, and Arsenal Road.

## 5.0 Summary of Agency Projects, Plans, and Programs

As a way of formulating a set of recommended transportation improvements that build upon and update the 2004 Joliet Arsenal Area Long-Range Transportation Plan, the projects from each of the entities shown in the previous chapter were summarized in table form. The recommended projects contained in the 2004 Plan are indicated in each table. These tables were organized into three categories: freeway projects, arterial roadways and transit, with **Tables 2, 3, and 4** corresponding to each. Finally, for each project a priority rating was assigned that drew upon the problems and issues identified in Chapter 3.

A three-tiered system of priority was used, with Priority 1 having the most significant benefit to the core area of the larger study area. This core area can be generally described as south of I-80, east of I-55, north of Wilmington-Peotone Road and generally west of IL 53. It is important to understand that a Priority 3 rating does not imply that a project is not needed or worthy of funding; rather, its lower rating means that it is not viewed as being central to the needs of the core JADA area. Readers should not interpret ratings by the study's sponsors of 2 or 3 as reflecting opposition to the projects; instead, a Priority 3 project would be viewed neutrally, in comparison to higher-rated projects.

The assignment of priority considered the following guiding criteria:

**Priority 1** projects generally exhibit:

- A critical need
- An identified short-term capacity or safety issue
- Direct benefit to JADA Study core area

**Priority 2** projects generally exhibit:

- A future need (not short-term or immediate)
- Secondary benefit to JADA Study core area

**Priority 3** projects generally exhibit:

- A lower anticipated or identified need
- No clear benefit to JADA Study core area
- Local municipal need or issue
- Deemed infeasible

### 5.1 Freeway Projects

**Table 3** provides a matrix of area freeway projects by the agencies that include each of the projects in their respective plans. The list includes lane addition projects, new/improved interchanges, and new freeways. The right-most column on Table 2 indicates priority rank of projects based on these criteria. Projects are grouped in the three levels of priority.

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**Table 3. Summary of SW Will County Planned and Programmed Freeway Projects**

#	Improvement	JADA 2004	IDOT	GMAP 2030 Plan	Will Co. 2030 Plan	Will County CED	Village of Channahon	Village of Manhattan	City of Wilmington	JADA 2010 Priority Rating*
1	I-80 – add lanes US 45 to Grundy County line	X	X	X	X	X				1
2	Illiana Expressway - I-65 to I-57		X	X	X	X				1
3	Illiana Expressway – I-57 to I-55				X	X		X		1
4	I-55 – widen to six lanes, from current 6-lane segment to IL129	X		X	X	X				1
5	I-55 - reconstruct / improve US 6 interchange					X				1
6	I-55 - new interchange at Arsenal Road			X		X				1
7	I-55 - interchange improvements in the Wilmington area		X	X		X			X	1
8	I-80/IL 53 Interchange Reconstruction									3
9	South Suburban Extension (of I-355) - I-80 to I-57	X		X				X		3
10	I-55/IL 59 - expand to full interchange					X	X			3
11	Prairie Parkway – I-80 to I-88		X	X		X				3

\*1=Highest Priority; 3=Lowest Priority

### 5.2 Arterial Roadway Projects

**Table 4** presents non-freeway roadway projects that have been programmed or planned by other agencies. Projects serving more of a collector function received a lower rating. Projects with the higher priority rating are those that enhance the core area’s regional roadway grid, which mitigate the impact of physical barriers.



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**Table 4. Summary of SW Will County Planned and Programmed Arterial Projects**

#	Improvement	JADA 2004	IDOT	CMAP 2030 Plan	Will County 2030 Plan	Will County CED	Village of Channahon	Village of Elwood	City of Joliet	Village of Manhattan	City of Wilmington	JADA 2010 Priority Rating*
1	Laraway Road - extend west over Des Plaines River linking to Empress-Houbolt Roads	X		X					X			1
2	IL53 – widen to four lanes, South Arsenal Road to New River Road	X		X	X							1
3	Baseline/Vetter - extend north over DesPlaines River, link to Empress/Houbolt (Baseline is now being extended from Arsenal to Millsdale)											1
4	US 6 – widen to 4 lanes east County Line to IL 53	X			X							2
5	Laraway Road – widen to 4 lanes, IL 53 to Harlem Ave				X	X				X		2
6	Millsdale Rd - extend east IL 53 to Cherry Hill; improve west to Patterson; grade separate UP lead track								X			2
7	Strawn Road – widen IL 53 to Baseline Rd; extend east to align with Hoff Rd				X			X				2
8	Wilmington-Peotone Road-IL53-New River Road between IL1 and I-55, designate as SRA	X		X	X	X						2
9	US 30 – widen to 4 lanes, Harlem Ave. to Kendall County Line (SRA)				X							3
10	Schweizer Road - extend east beyond Cherry Hill Road to US 52	X							X			3
11	Arsenal/Manhattan Road – widen to 4 lanes, Baseline Rd to US 52; designate as an SRA	X		X	X						X	3
12	Manhattan Road-Monee Road – widen to 4 lanes, US 45 to US 52	X			X							3
13	Hoff/Pauling - I-57 to US 52, widen									X		3
14	Mississippi Ave - extend to Ridge Rd							X				3
15	Cedar Road – widen to four lanes, US 6 to Manhattan Road-Monee Road	X			X	X				X		3
16	Gougar Road - 159th and Wilmington-Peotone Road, new regional arterial	X		X	X					X		3
17	Briggs Road – widen to 4 lanes I-80 to US 52				X							3
18	US 52 - widen between I-80 and Wilmington-Peotone Road	X			X							3
19	Ridge Road - extend north to Laraway								X			3
20	Realign Brandon Rd to connect US 6 to Arsenal Road	X							X			3
21	St. Louis St. - Mississippi Avenue to IL 53 relocation		X									3
22	New N-S road from IL 129 at I-55 to Lorenzo Road		X									3
23	New N-S road US 6-Bluff, east of I-55						X					3

\*1=Highest Priority; 3=Lowest Priority

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### 5.3 Transit & Rail Projects

**Table 5** provides a list of transit and passenger rail projects. Projects are grouped into five categories: passenger rail, arterial rapid transit, express bus, transit centers, and local transit.

**Table 5. Summary of Southwest Will County Planned and Programmed Transit Projects**

Type	#	Transit Projects	JADA 2004	IDOT	CMAP 2030 Plan	RTA Strategic Plan	Metra	Pace Vision 2020 Plan	Will Co. 2030 Plan	Will County CED	City of Joliet	JADA 2010 Priority Rating*
Passenger Rail	1	Heritage Corridor - infrastructure investments to allow full service	X		X	X	X		X			1
	2	High Speed Rail Chicago-St. Louis		X								1
	3	Metra SWS - infrastructure investments to allow full service levels	X		X	X	X		X			2
	4	Metra SWS - extension from Manhattan to Midewin (5 miles)	X		X	X	X			X		2
	5	Metra Rock Island – infrastructure investments to expand service			X	X	X		X			2
	6	Metra Rock Island - extension from Joliet to Minooka (11 miles)			X		X		X	X		2
	7	Metra Rock Island - new station between New Lenox and Joliet							X			2
	8	Heritage Corridor - extension to Wilmington	X						X			2
	9	STAR Line - Phase I Joliet to O'Hare	X		X	X	X		X	X		2
	10	STAR Line - Joliet to Lynwood	X		X	X	X		X	X		2
Arterial Rapid Transit	11	US 30, Joliet to Lynwood				X		X	X			3
	12	US 30, Joliet to Plainfield				X		X	X			3
	13	US 52, Joliet to IL 59/I-55							X			3
	14	IL 53, Joliet Union Station to Lisle							X			3
Express Bus	15	I-55, Arsenal Road north			X	X		X	X			1
	16	I-80 Corridor, I-55/Joliet to Lansing			X	X		X	X			3
	17	159th St., Joliet-Orland Park-Hammond				X						3
	18	I-355/IL 53, New Lenox to Lake-Cook				X			X			3
	19	Joliet to Rosemont/O'Hare				X						3
	20	Joliet to Schaumburg				X						3
	21	Joliet to Naperville				X						3
Transit Centers	22	Joliet (Joliet Union Station)							X		X	1
	23	Elwood (potential Heritage Corridor station)							X			2
	24	Wilmington (potential Heritage Corridor station)							X			2
	25	Manhattan (Metra SWS station)							X			3
	26	New Lenox (SWS Laraway Rd Station and future STAR Line station)							X			3
Local Transit	27	Study improved transit connections between JADA area and Joliet Union Station	X									1

\*1=Highest Priority; 3=Lowest Priority

## 6.0 Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

This report illustrates the unique locational advantages of the study area, offering a global reach through the presence of Class I railroads and interstate highways. Recognition of the area's function as a transportation and distribution hub is seen in the growth in industrial development generally and logistics-related development in particular. As growth continues, so does the risk that unique transportation advantages will be minimized or lost by congestion. As such, insuring that the localized transportation infrastructure efficiently complements the national and international transport systems is crucial. The area's transloading facilities for freight handling have been a key factor in attracting development, but also bring with it the challenge of significant levels of truck traffic on area roadways. Accommodating the growth in commercial traffic will be challenging, especially considering growth in traffic associated with area attractions (e.g., Chicagoland Speedway, Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie). Finally, providing the necessary carrying-capacity of the area roadway system is complicated by physical barriers, especially Midewin and the Des Plaines River.

The recommended highest priority projects from the previous chapter are listed on **Table 6** and mapped on **Figure 11**. It should be noted that the culling of projects from the longer list should be regarded as a starting point of a dialogue among area stakeholders.

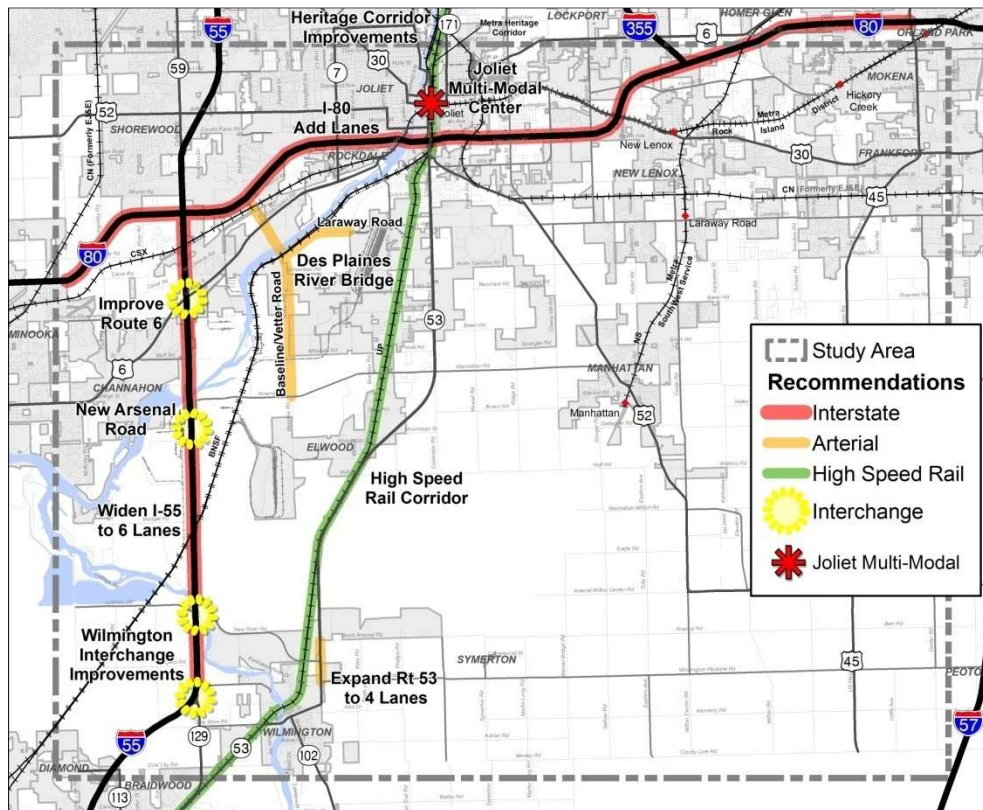
The intent for developing a short-list of transportation projects is to garner agreement among stakeholders on which projects are most critical to the area's future, and then in turn build support for their implementation. One possible forum for the promotion of an agenda of key projects is the TMA recommended by JADA. It is important to emphasize that the TMA would not replace or supplant the work of other agencies or groups; rather it would serve to facilitate dialogue among these agencies and groups towards reaching consensus and promoting implementation of projects that will benefit the southwest area of Will County. The TMA could also assist in brokering plans for roadway alignments that involve multiple jurisdictions. Creating a forum focused exclusively on this specific geographic area will result in a better positioning of its transportation needs to funders and implementers.

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**Table 6. Recommended Higher Priority Freeway, Arterial and Transit / Rail Projects**

Catg.	#	Priority 1 Projects
Freeway	1	I-80 – add lanes US 45 to Grundy County line
	2	Illiana Expressway - I-65 to I-57
	3	Illiana Expressway – I-57 to I-55
	4	I-55 – widen to six lanes, from current 6-lane segment to IL129
	5	I-55 - reconstruct / improve US 6 interchange
	6	I-55 - new interchange at Arsenal Road
	7	I-55 - interchange improvements in the Wilmington area
Arterial	1	Laraway Road - extend west to an extended Baseline/Vetter Road
	2	IL53 – widen to four lanes, South Arsenal Rd to New River Rd
	3	Baseline/Vetter - extend north over Des Plaines River, link to Empress Road/Houbolt Road
Transit / Rail	1	Heritage Corridor - infrastructure investments to allow full service
	2	High Speed Rail Chicago-St. Louis
	15	Express Bus - I-55, Arsenal Road north
	22	Transit Center - Joliet (Joliet Union Station)
	27	Study improved transit connections between JADA area and Joliet Union Station

**Figure 11. Recommended Higher Priority Freeway, Arterial and Transit / Rail Projects**

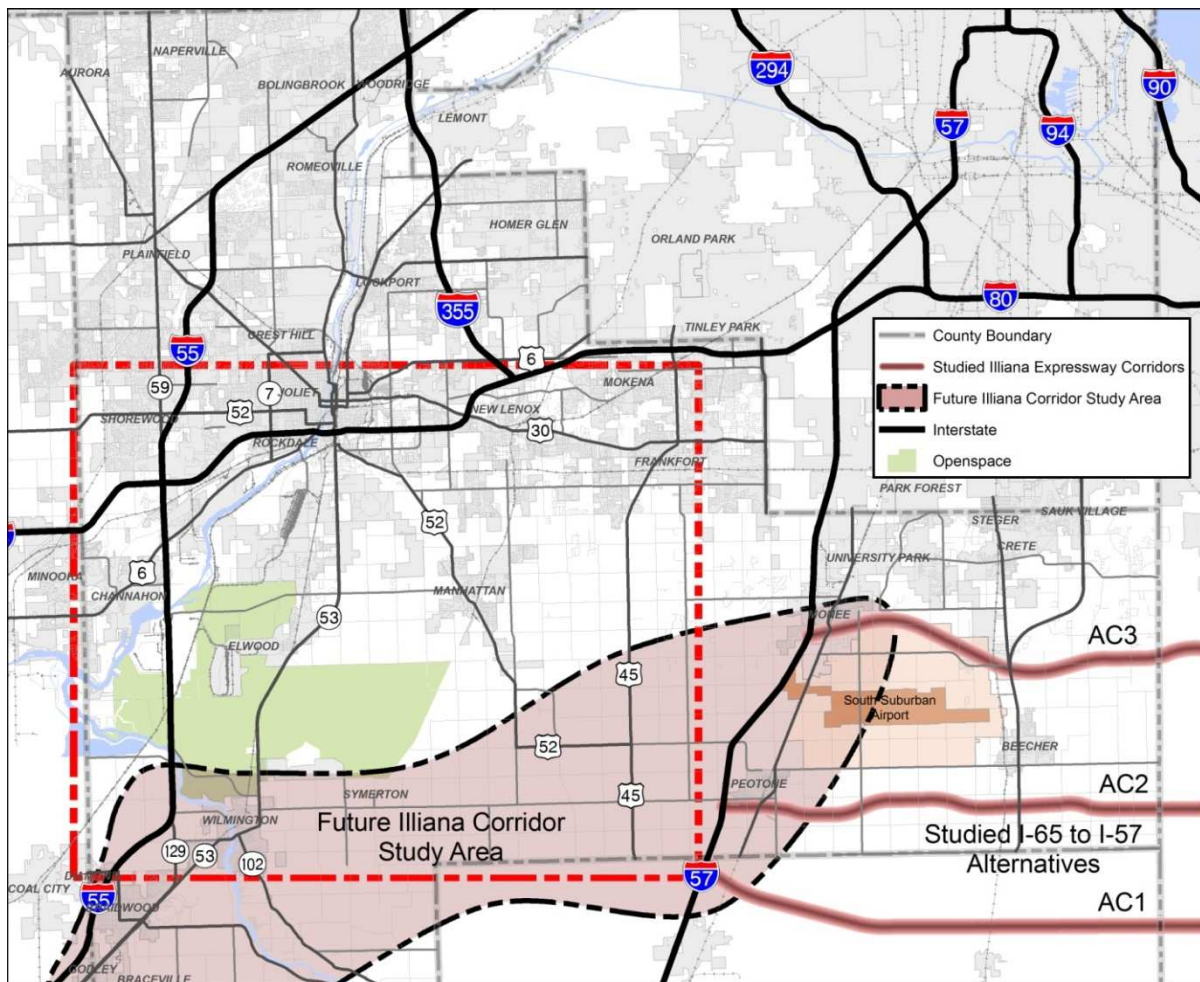


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Several of these and other possible projects deserve additional comment, including:

- **Illiana Expressway:** The Illiana limited-access roadway facility could be beneficial as an alternative to I-80 in routing traffic to and from the area. As noted earlier, IDOT in collaboration with Indiana DOT completed a preliminary engineering study which recommended three alternative alignments between I-65 and I-57. More recently, the State of Illinois has pledged \$50 million over 5 years to begin required environmental studies for the project. The Illinois Legislature is considering legislation to build the expressway through use of a public-private partnership; Indiana has similar legislation in place. It would seem preferable to conceive the proposed roadway as a single corridor I-65 to I-55, and not as two separate segments. **Figure 12** shows the three alignments recommended east of I-57 and a shaded area reflecting a future generalized corridor that could be studied for the Illiana segment between I-57 and I-55.

**Figure 12. Possible Illiana Expressway Study Area**



- **I-80/IL 53 Interchange improvements:** This key interchange did not appear on any of the agency plans, although it was included on Table 3 (Summary of SW Will County Planned and Programmed Freeway Projects). A project at this location has not advanced because of the

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severe physical constraints of the site, which limit the ability to upgrade the facility to a modern design. Solutions to this problem should be researched, and might include seeking logical traffic bypasses to the use of this interchange. While the constraints are recognized, additional study for improving access and safety at this location remains a high priority. The importance of this location is amplified by the City of Joliet's view that this is a major gateway to their downtown and is seen as a tool to revitalizing the City's core.

- **Des Plaines River Crossing:** Two alternatives were identified to provide a new bridge crossing of the Des Plaines River; both of which would tie into Empress Road/Houbolt Road on the north side of the River. The option previously proposed (Arterial #1 on Table 3) would extend Laraway Road west over the River then bend north into Empress Road. A new alternative would preserve the north-south orientation of Empress Road/Houbolt Road by extending Baseline Road/Vetter Road north over the River from Millsdale Road. As of this writing, an extension of Baseline Road from the T-intersection at Arsenal Road northward to Millsdale Road is in construction. Baseline Road will connect to Vetter Road at Millsdale. This option would be especially useful to more directly route truck traffic to/from the UP Intermodal facility. One concept is to design special truck-only lanes on the facility. Of the two River crossing options, the preferred approach is to extend Baseline Road/Vetter Road northward. Extending Laraway Road west to the extended Baseline Road/Vetter Road remains a high priority, including providing other improvements to the roadway that result in a continuous arterial route to address the Plan's stated need for better east/west mobility in the study area.
- **Strategic Regional Arterials:** Several Priority 1 and 2 projects are recommended for SRA designation. The SRA system is an integral part of Northeastern Illinois regional transportation plan and involves a network of high-design roadways which serve to supplement the freeway system. Routes designated as SRA are subject to guidelines for integration of land use planning, roadway design, and access control.
- **Transit Connecting Service, Joliet-JADA Area:** While not representing a capital project, the development of expanded connecting transit service from Joliet Union Station to the JADA area could help mitigate roadway congestion as well as provide access to jobs and attractions by persons without an auto or who do not drive. One possibility would be to expand connecting shuttle bus service to travel generators in the study area. This could involve additional trips on Pace Route 511 or added routes to expand the coverage of the connecting service. Other non-traditional services (e.g., ride-sharing, vanpools, route-deviated service) could also be considered. Various service options could be evaluated by a TMA, which has been proposed by JADA.

Finally, an important step in implementing major transportation projects is inclusion in the metropolitan area's long range plan. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. By state and federal law, CMAP is responsible for developing the region's long range plan. The GO TO 2040 plan<sup>9</sup> is currently being developed and is expected to be finalized in fall 2010. Coordination with CMAP should be made to insure that southwest Will County priority projects are addressed in the Plan.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.goto2040.org/>.



