

BEYOND 2012

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Transforming Transportation for Tomorrow embodies an emerging concept for the future of transportation planning and programming – that all modes of transportation need to be integrated, coordinated, planned and built with the idea that present and future travel options and access be user focused, economically balanced, ecologically sensible, and information centric. With this concept in mind, the Illinois Department of Transportation intends to lead the state to a vision for what transportation systems should look like by 2050, considering population changes, freight demands, mobility trends, safety factors, corporate needs and housing development.

Transportation planning and programming for the future must provide travelers with as many viable alternatives as possible to enable logical and sensible choices that ensure access, safety, efficient use of travel time, and maximum mobility, while conserving natural resources, improving information availability, maximizing the use of human capital and ensuring improved opportunities and quality of life for all Illinoisans.

This multi-modal systemic programming approach goes beyond previous individual modal programming efforts to identify and provide needed and dynamic links among various modes where possible, and to encourage public use of those links and all available options. Modal programs now and in future years must be designed as steps toward a comprehensive vision as seen through a multi-modal lens with reasonable and beneficial connections among highways, public transportation, rail, airports and ports serving inland waterways.

These planning and programming processes must incorporate federal plans and a multitude of local and regional transportation plans to envision and fully realize changes and evolving solutions needed to make Illinois' offerings as effective and cost-efficient as possible over the next 40 years or longer. Highway projects must consider connections with public transportation terminals, rail terminals, freight terminals, ports, and airports. Roads, rail and public transportation modes must integrate with bicycle-pedestrian options to encourage more energy efficient travel and to improve community life. Public transportation, rail terminals and airports must allow for adequate parking and access to facilities, and must offer connections and easy access to community business centers. Freight-oriented terminals must be designed for maximum access by all modes and ensure the free flow of traffic. All modes must be designed to accommodate city-to-city travel options in a seamless matrix.

In these ways, transportation systems can be made to anticipate and meet the fast-changing economic and mobility demands of the coming decades. By adding high-speed fiber and wireless network capabilities to move information faster and more completely, transportation managers of the future can more effectively manage traffic in real time by providing travelers instantaneous information about traffic movement, current congestion issues, alternative routes or modes of travel, and vital safety information.

By aggressively pursuing this vision, transportation planners during the first half of the 21st Century can renew the foundation for the kinds of transportation changes that will need to take place to serve changing populations and economic needs by the time the second half of the century arrives. Taken together, this comprehensive vision of modal interaction and coordination will ensure Illinois a firm foothold in the global transportation network, along with global travel connections for residents, and continuing global competitiveness for business and industry.

Much of the new vision for long-range transportation in Illinois will be outlined in IDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan, as required by the Illinois General Assembly by Dec. 31, 2012. This long-range plan and vision will include plans for improvements in highways, transit, rail and aeronautics, along with bicycle and pedestrian travel, resource sustainability, human capital needs and fiber development, all as part of the integrated statewide multi-modal concept.

By working together with local, state and federal organizations and officials to comprehensively plan the transportation vision for Illinois, leaders can devise more effective ways to coordinate the development and promotion of multi-modal approaches that can remain poised to achieve a variety of long-range transportation goals even as technologies become more sophisticated and travel needs expand.

Long-range goals always will be geared to meet current and future user needs along with ongoing expectations for public access, safety, mobility, and preservation and improvement of the existing statewide transportation system. But the overall goal of integrated and coordinated travel modes and options for the long-range future will be to incorporate and develop all travel modes together as integral parts of one system for all of Illinois.