



South Halsted Bus Corridor Enhancement Project

Public Involvement Plan

November 2019

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CORRIDOR BACKGROUND

Pace Suburban Bus (Pace) and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) are jointly pursuing the South Halsted Bus Corridor Enhancement Project ("the Project") to provide improved transit service to this important transit corridor located in southern Cook County. The Project will include improvements along approximately 11 miles of South Halsted Street, 79th Street, 95th Street, Morgan Street, and Park Avenue. The Project corridor will span from 79th Street in the City of Chicago to a southern terminus at the Pace Harvey Transportation Center near 154th Street in the City of Harvey, servicing the communities of Harvey, Phoenix, Calumet Park, Riverdale, Dixmoor and the City of Chicago neighborhoods of West Pullman, Morgan Park, Roseland, Washington Heights, and Auburn Gresham. The Project corridor includes east-west segments at 79th Street and 95th Street that connect with the existing CTA Red Line 79th and 95th/Dan Ryan rail stations, respectively. Current transit service on the corridor is provided primarily by CTA routes #108 and #8A and by Pace routes #352 and #359. Pace routes #348 and #350 also serve portions of South Halsted. The corridor serves approximately 11,500 transit customers on an average weekday.

Figure 1-1 South Halsted Project Corridor Map

1.2 PROJECT TEAM

The project team provides the leadership, management, expertise, and technical resources needed to implement the Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The team members and their roles are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Project Team Roles

Organizations and Departments	Role
Pace - Rapid Transit Program - Strategic and Capital Planning - Service Planning and Scheduling - Capital Finance and Infrastructure - External Relations - Operations/Safety	Lead Agency
CTA - Strategic Planning & Traffic Engineering - Legislative Affairs & Community Relations	Lead Agency
HNTB	Program Management Oversight Consultant (Responsible for all project administration tasks)
Images, Inc.	Public Involvement Lead
Beaman	Public Involvement Support

2 GOALS AND OVERVIEW

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines the goals, activities, and timeline for public and stakeholder outreach. In addition, the PIP educates stakeholders and project team members on project goals and deliverables. The project team will use the framework established in the PIP to guide the collection and organization of input from all stakeholders. Stakeholder input will be used to identify the best solutions to any issues or problems that arise as the project progresses through its technical analyses. The PIP is an active document that will be revised and updated as necessary throughout the duration of the project.

The purpose of public involvement efforts is to engage stakeholders over the course of the project to gain their input and expertise on ways to improve the project outcome. Overall, the goals of the public involvement activities are:

- Engage local municipalities, agencies, institutional stakeholders and public entities that represent a diverse group of interests on the corridor
- Inform key stakeholder groups of the project's intent
- Gather corridor-specific input on the issues and opportunities for improvement along the corridor

The PIP will accomplish these goals through several outreach activities including outreach to the general public. A Corridor Advisory Group, composed of key stakeholders, will help provide overall guidance to the project. The project team will also engage elected officials at select points in the project process to provide updates and receive feedback.

3 STAKEHOLDERS

This PIP serves as a guide for public involvement during Project Development (including project definition and environmental documentation) and will be carried forward into the engineering and implementation phases. Strategies identified within the plan are coordinated with the project schedule and designed to reach various audiences. Execution of this plan requires the commitment and efforts of all project participants and includes actions, responsibilities, and timing. The Project Team will be responsible for the overall development, implementation and coordination of the public involvement efforts with the stakeholder groups.

3.1 CORRIDOR ADVISORY GROUP

A Corridor Advisory Group (CAG) was established to help guide the overall study. The CAG is composed of representatives from the local municipalities, transit agencies, regional government entities, and chambers of commerce. The membership list can be found in Appendix A – Corridor Advisory Group Members. The purpose of the CAG is to help guide the project team on overall direction of the project and help identify challenges and solutions for potential improvements. The CAG members were selected with the goal of creating a group that represents the views of communities and transit users within the project area. Engaging and soliciting feedback from the CAG helps to ensure that the analysis and subsequent recommendations correspond to local conditions and solutions. Additionally, CAG members provide guidance and support for issues within their area of expertise. The CAG has met during the study at key project milestones, to receive updates, review progress and preliminary decisions, and provide feedback to the study team. The CAG will continue to meet as the project progresses.

3.2 ELECTED OFFICIALS

In addition to CAG meetings, one-on-one meetings were and will continue to be conducted with elected officials, or their designees, to discuss topics specific to their constituents. Prior to the first CAG meeting conducted during the project definition phase, aldermen and other elected officials within the study area were notified by email from the project team of the project initiation, purpose, and timeline. Elected officials were provided the CAG list for review and input. CTA and Pace followed-up with elected officials to confirm the CAG list and next steps. Additional notifications to aldermen and other elected officials were made prior to the final CAG meeting near the conclusion of the project definition phase. During the environmental documentation phase, elected officials will be invited to attend the CAG meetings and the public meetings.

3.3 STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders are identified as anyone who could be affected by the project and has a stake in its outcome who therefore should be able to directly engage in the planning process. This includes study area residents, property owners, business owners, state and local officials, special interest groups, current or potential transit users, motorists and other interested parties. In addition to the general public, key groups of stakeholders identified for this project include those who have decision-making capabilities related to implementing transportation investments and those with public standing that speak for the general public and can influence the broader spectrum of public opinion. These representatives, divided into two groups, include:

- Local, regional, state and federal elected and appointed officials, as well as agency representatives with jurisdiction over transportation investments and affected environmental, historic, cultural and economic resources

- Professional associations, and local, regional and potentially statewide community, civic and environmental organizations

The identification of general stakeholders will be accomplished through a combination of research and input from local government officials and agencies. It is anticipated that new stakeholders will be added to the initial stakeholder list throughout the project. All stakeholders expressing interest in the project will be added to the project mailing/email list, ensuring they will receive newsletters, meeting invitations, and project updates. In addition, stakeholders will be informed about the project website where they can access information and submit comments or questions at any time.

All stakeholders will be able to participate in the process through various public outreach opportunities. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, the interactive project website and public meetings. The project mailing/email list will be updated and maintained through the duration of the project. The Project Team also will be available to meet with stakeholder groups on a one-on-one basis throughout the project, if deemed necessary.

4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT GROUND RULES

The public outreach efforts identified in the PIP will be conducted based on a set of ground rules that forms the basis for the respectful interaction of all parties involved in this process. The ground rules established in the PIP may be modified based on stakeholder input.

These rules include, but are not limited to the following:

- Input on the project from all stakeholders is duly considered in order to yield the best solutions to problems identified by the process.
- Input from all participants in the process is valued and considered.

- The list of stakeholders is subject to revisions/additions at any time as events warrant.
- All participants must keep an open mind and participate openly, honestly, and respectfully.
- All participants should work collaboratively and cooperatively to seek a solution.
- All participants in the process must treat each other with respect and dignity.
- The project must progress at a reasonable pace, based on the project schedule.

Final project decisions will be made by Pace and CTA in consultation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and municipalities. The feasibility of improvements and services will be dependent, in part, on physical and financial considerations and constraints.

5 PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The general project implementation process and tentative schedule, project activities, and associated stakeholder involvement activities are described below. Steps one through four occurred in the project definition phase.

5.1 STEP ONE: IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS, DEVELOP PIP, INITIATE PROJECT

This stage of the process included identifying stakeholders and initiating outreach efforts. Activities in this stage included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Assembling the stakeholder list
- Developing the PIP
- Organizing and conducting meetings with key stakeholders to inform them about the project, seek collaboration, and identify transportation/transit plans and issues

5.2 STEP TWO: DEVELOP PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT

This stage of the process consisted of the identification of transportation/transit issues along the South Halsted Bus Corridor and the development of project goals and objectives. Project purpose discussions focused on current and forecasted conditions, transit demand, and the constraints of the operating environment. This helped set the stage for meaningful dialogue about infrastructure and service needs and potential solutions. This information was used as the basis for the development of the project Purpose and Need Statement. Activities in this stage included the following:

- Developing the draft project Purpose and Need Statement
- Requesting comment from the CAG
- Organizing and conducting meetings with key stakeholders to gather input on issues/concerns and the project goals and objectives to develop a clear statement of the transportation/transit problems to be addressed by the project
- Refining the project Purpose and Need Statement

5.3 STEP THREE: DEFINE SERVICE AND DESIGN OPTIONS

Various infrastructure improvement options that addressed the project Purpose and Need were identified and evaluated. Opportunities were provided for stakeholder input during this process. Activities in this stage include the following:

- Developed measures of effectiveness to identify and evaluate initial infrastructure improvement options
- Identified and evaluated project elements including running way improvements and station locations
- Presented analysis and conclusions to key stakeholders, as needed, to facilitate decision-making

5.4 STEP FOUR: DEVELOP PROJECT DEFINITION CORRIDOR EVALUATION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND PROJECT STRATEGY FINAL REPORT

Feedback received from key stakeholders was used to define the project and set the stage for engineering and environmental work needed to progress the project. Activities in this stage of the process included the following:

- Defined the project, based on key stakeholder input and the evaluation of options
- Summarized the findings and conclusions in the Project Definition Corridor Evaluation, Recommendations, and Project Strategy Final Report
- Presented findings and conclusions to key stakeholders, as needed, to inform them of next steps and associated schedule

5.5 STEP FIVE: PREPARE NEPA DOCUMENTATION AND ADVANCE THE DESIGN CONCEPTS

Based on the feedback from the FTA and other stakeholders, the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation that describes the major impacts of the project will be developed from the Purpose and Need statement and advanced conceptual design plans. Activities in this stage of the process include the following:

- Develop advanced conceptual design plans
- Develop an outline of required NEPA documentation
- Analyze impacts of proposed design and prepare NEPA document
- Conduct coordination meetings or briefings with the following entities:
 - FTA
 - Impacted Agencies
 - Stakeholders
- Agency coordination meetings
- Stakeholder meetings and/or briefings
- Present NEPA documentation and preferred infrastructure improvements and operations options to the CAG and public

- Publish a project website
- Issue Press releases
- Newsletter and Fact Sheet Publication
- Conduct Public Meetings

5.6 STEP SIX: CONDUCT ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION PHASE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The Engineering and Construction phases follow the Project Development phase and is beyond the scope of the current study. During Engineering and Construction, outreach activities will be conducted that focus on providing stakeholders with updates on the features and status of the project as well as anticipated project timelines and construction impacts. Activities in this stage include the following:

- Agency coordination meetings
- Stakeholder meetings and/or briefings
- Updates to the project website
- Issue press releases
- Newsletter publication

6 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN ACTIVITIES

The following Public Involvement Plan activities are proposed for the South Halsted Bus Corridor Enhancement Project. Unless noted, the Project Team is the responsible party for activities and coordination. All activities will be approved by Pace and CTA before proceeding.

6.1 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH MEETINGS

Stakeholder involvement for the South Halsted Bus Corridor has already begun and will continue to be an ongoing process throughout Project Development and into the Engineering and Construction phases. Various meetings will be held to provide outreach opportunities to all stakeholders. Potential meeting opportunities are listed below.

Corridor Advisory Group (CAG) Meetings

Meetings with CAG members have and will continue to be held to seek input on the overall direction of the project and help identify challenges and solutions for potential improvements. A total of five (5) meetings are anticipated to be held over the course of the project with three (3) having occurred during Project Definition and two (2) occurring during the NEPA phase.

In addition to presentations, other materials that include relevant project information, such as fact sheets, have been made available at CAG meetings and online. The handouts may include information relating to project goals, timeline and scope. Presentations and other meeting materials are to be posted on the project webpage following each CAG meeting. Public materials will be translated into Spanish or other languages if necessary.

One-on-One and Small Group Meetings

One-on-one and small group meetings engage stakeholders, share information and foster discussion by addressing specific project issues, allowing for more specialized discussions and input, and providing the general public with an understanding of the project goals and objectives. One-on-one and small group meetings will be ongoing throughout the project. These meetings will include the Project Team, local agencies and organizations including forest preserve and park districts, if appropriate, members of the business community, special interest groups, and various property owners, as needed. Project handouts or other appropriate meeting materials will be prepared for distribution at these meetings.

Agency Coordination Meetings

To ensure that this project is well coordinated among the various agencies who have jurisdiction related to the corridor, meetings and other communications will be carried out with resource and regulatory agencies periodically throughout the Project Development and Engineering phases. This will be conducted in a way that meets requirements for state and federal funding and facilitates the preparation of the required project design/environmental report, which complies with local, state and federal rules, regulations and laws.

Public Meetings

Public participation for the South Halsted Bus Corridor Enhancement Project also will include opportunities for a broader range of involvement, which may include public meetings, stakeholder workshops, and a public hearing. These large-scale meetings will encourage public attendance and foster public awareness of project activities and options that are being considered and evaluated. These meetings also will provide a forum for general public input, including concerns and comments

regarding project options being considered as part of the NEPA process, the proposed project design at the conclusion of the NEPA process, and construction impacts before and during implementation.

Three (3) public information meetings will be held to coincide with major milestones during the project. These meetings will utilize various public informational techniques such as project boards, handouts, and multimedia presentations summarizing the project work and findings to date. The meetings will be advertised by email, public notices placed in area newspapers, on the project website, and on third party websites. Opportunities for the public to provide written comments (comment forms) will be available at the meetings. Translation services will be provided as they are requested.

Table 2 – Stakeholder Involvement Activities Schedule

Meeting	Anticipated Timeframe	Topics Covered
Elected Official Outreach	April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Kick off • CAG configuration • Project Background
CAG Meeting #1	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Conditions • Needs & Deficiencies
CAG Meeting #2	October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Purpose and Need • Draft Initial Corridor Improvements
CAG Meeting #3	February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Recommended Improvements (<i>CAG Preferred Alternative #3</i>)
Elected Official Outreach	February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Recommended Improvements

Public Meeting #1	January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Review Kick Off • Present Project Definition Report Findings to the Public
CAG #4	Summer 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refined Recommended Improvements • Initial Environmental Review Findings
Public Meeting #2	Summer 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refined Recommended Improvements • Initial Environmental Review Findings
CAG #5	Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended Improvements • Environmental Review Findings • Capital Costs
Public Meeting #3	Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended Improvements • Environmental Review Findings • Capital Costs

6.2 OTHER MECHANISMS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In addition to the meeting opportunities described in the preceding section, there will be several other methods for the public to obtain information about the project. These methods (noted below) will provide information and opportunity for feedback regarding upcoming public meeting events, project schedule, and general project status updates.

Electronic Announcements

To provide information about upcoming meetings and project updates, the Project Team will distribute electronic announcements via email to the stakeholder list (see Section 3.3) as well as CTA and Pace distribution lists. E-mail addresses received via the project website, meetings, and other activities will continue to be added to the stakeholder list.

Project Website

In an effort to utilize electronic resources, disseminate information to stakeholders, and keep the public apprised of project activities, a project webpage was developed. Information about the project was displayed on both CTA and Pace websites. To ensure consistency and reduce duplication, all content will be migrated to Pace's website at PaceBus.com/Pulse and the original CTA website will direct the public to Pace's website. Information on project background, timeline, corridor map, and project contact information will be made available on the project webpage for public reference. The project webpage will continue to be updated with new materials as the project progresses.

Newsletters

A common communication tool for a project is the use of newsletters. To assist with the delivery of information on the progress of this project, newsletters will be produced and distributed. These newsletters will not only expound upon the basic information found on the website but also update readers on the project's progress. Newsletters will be made available on the Pulse website and for pickup at public outreach events such as public meetings as well as at local government offices, community facilities (such as libraries and community centers), CTA and Pace corporate offices, and other appropriate outlets.

Media Outreach

An effective method of informing the general public about a project and its results is through broadcast and print media. A number of media outreach strategies will be employed to provide accurate and frequent coverage of the project. Media outreach strategies to be used include press releases, publication pieces, media interviews and correspondences, and one-on-one briefings with agency-designated spokespersons.

The goal is to issue a number of press releases throughout the project timeline. Incorporating the key message, these press releases will announce public meetings, work to date, important results, and next steps.

Public Response and Communication

Throughout this project, direct public comment will come in the form of e-mail (via a direct link from the website), standard mail, phone calls, and comment forms from meetings and briefings. Indirect public comment will come through the media, non-agency sponsored meetings, and third-party websites. It is important to address public comment so all voices from the community are heard and that potential impacts upon the community are recognized.

7 PLAN AVAILABILITY AND MONITORING / UPDATES

The PIP is an active document that will be available to stakeholders and updated as appropriate throughout the duration of the project. This section describes PIP stakeholder review opportunities and plan update procedures.

7.1 AVAILABILITY OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Pace will make the PIP available to stakeholders for review at public meetings and on the project website. As the project proceeds, Pace will update the PIP on a regular basis to reflect appropriate changes or additions. Pace will advise stakeholders of future PIP updates and post updates on the project website.

7.2 MODIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis for continued effectiveness and updated as appropriate. Plan administration includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Maintaining a current list of project stakeholders
- Maintaining a detailed public involvement record (log) that includes records of all stakeholder contacts, meetings, and comments
- Ensuring two-way communication and timely responses to stakeholders

Revisions to this PIP may be necessary through all phases of the project. Pace will provide updated versions of the PIP to all agencies involved, as necessary. Cooperating and participating agencies should notify Pace of staffing and contact information changes in a timely manner. Plan updates will be tracked in Table 3, Appendix B.

Appendices

Appendix A – Corridor Advisory Group Invitees

Stakeholder	Contact Person	Title
City of Harvey	Richard Seput	Public Works Superintendent
City of Harvey	Rufus Fisher	Public Works Director
City of Harvey	Eric J. Kellogg	Mayor
Village of Phoenix	Terry Wells	President
Village of Dixmoor	Juanita Darden	Clerk
Village of Dixmoor	Dorothy D. Armstrong	President
Village of Riverdale	Timothy Williams	Intergovernmental Affairs, Manager
Village of Riverdale	Lawrence Jackson	President
Village of Calumet Park	Ronald Denson	President
Village of Calumet Park	Marci Smith	Public Works Director
City of Harvey, Village of Dixmoor, Village of Calumet Park	Ronald E. Smith	Robinson Engineering
South Suburban Mayors & Managers	Leslie Phemister	Transportation Planner
South Suburban Mayors & Managers	Kristi DeLaurentiis	Executive Director
Ward 6	Roderick T. Sawyer	Alderman
Ward 9	Anthony A. Beale	Alderman
Ward 17	David H. Moore	Alderman
Ward 21	Howard B. Brookins, Jr.	Alderman
Ward 34	Carrie M. Austin	Alderman
House District 34	Nicholas K Smith	State Representative
House District 31	Mary E. Flowers	State Representative

House District 27	Justin Slaughter	State Representative
House District 28	Robert Rita	State Representative
House District 30	William Davis	State Representative
Senate District 14	Emil Jones III	State Senator
Senate District 15	Napoleon Harris, III	State Senator
Senate District 16	Jacqueline Y. Collins	State Senator
Senate District 17	Elgie Sims	State Senator
Illinois Department of Transportation	Abigail Robinson	District I – Area Permit Engineer
Illinois Department of Transportation	Joe Iacullo	Office of Intermodal Project Implementation – Section Chief
Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways	Maria Choca Urban	Director of Strategic Planning and Policy
Chicago Department of Transportation	Brenda McGruder	Coordinating Planner
RTA	Peter Fahrenwald	Manager of Regional Planning
Metra	David Kralik	Department Head, Long Range Planning
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning	Doug Ferguson	Senior Analyst - Transportation
Metropolitan Planning Council	Jeremy Glover	Transportation Associate
Active Transportation Alliance	Kyle Whitehead	Government Relations Director
Riverdale Chamber of Commerce	Kevin Patterson	President
Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce	Heather Haynes-Jones	Executive Director
Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation	Carlos Nelson	Executive Director

Far South CDC	Dorian Johnson	Director of Special Service Area #45
Cook County Forest Preserve	Arnold Randall	Superintendent

Appendix B - Tables

Table 2

Coordinating Agencies and Agency Responsibilities

Agency Name	Role
Illinois Department of Transportation	Coordination/ Advisory
City of Chicago/Chicago Department of Transportation	Coordination/ Advisory
Federal Transit Administration	Coordination/ Advisory
Regional Transportation Authority	Coordination/ Advisory
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning	Coordination/ Advisory
Cook County	Coordination/ Advisory

Advisory

Table 3
Public Involvement Plan Revision History

Version	Date	Document Name	Revision Description
1	April 2018	Public Involvement Plan	Original
2	November 2019	Public Involvement Plan	Revision 1 for NEPA

Appendix C – Glossary and Acronyms

National Environmental Policy Act The federal law that requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Environmental Assessment (EA), or Categorical Exclusion (CE) for a federally funded action. Also referred to as NEPA.

Acronyms

ART	Arterial Rapid Transit
CDOT	Chicago Department of Transportation
CTA	Chicago Transit Authority
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority
CAG	Corridor Advisory Group
PIP	Public Involvement Plan