

Section 1: Introduction

In three separate efforts, Kane County, McHenry County and the City of Woodstock requested funding assistance from the State of Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) through the Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Grant Program to address planning issues associated with growth along the Illinois Route 47 Corridor (Corridor). The Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Grant Program is a balanced growth initiative that helps local municipalities integrate land development, transportation and infrastructure needs. IDOT awarded a single Illinois Tomorrow Corridor Grant to all three of the agencies on the condition that they work together to prepare a single corridor planning study. The Corridor is located in the Chicago metropolitan area and extends from the Illinois-Wisconsin border south to the Kane County-Kendall County border.

Purpose, Goal, and Objectives

The purpose of the Illinois 47 Corridor Planning Study (Study) is to provide municipalities and other government agencies with an understanding of the planning challenges associated with growth and to recommend strategies or tools that can be used to address these challenges.

The goal of this Study is to encourage a healthy population and economy through the promotion of sustainable land use, complete streets that improve safety, and development that adheres to the following smart growth principles:

- Encourage mixed land use
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive municipalities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing municipalities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encourage stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

Building upon the smart growth principles and discussions with municipal, county, regional and state officials, the following objectives have been identified for this Study:

- **Keep Traffic Moving** – As growth occurs, Illinois Route 47 (IL 47) is getting congested and travel times are increasing. Roadway expansion and transportation improvements cannot keep pace with growth. Creating a network of streets can decrease the dependence on a single thoroughfare and provide alternative routes to destinations. It also can promote alternative forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling.
- **Coordinate Local, Regional and State Decision-Making** – Land use decisions are made by local government while IL 47 is under the jurisdiction of IDOT. Public transportation decisions are made by regional transit agencies. This Plan suggests the need to coordinate local and regional planning efforts. Throughout much of the Corridor, the municipalities are or will be responsible for decision-making about the future land use. The municipalities utilizing cooperative planning can create an exciting future for the Corridor. Kane and McHenry Counties, due to the nature of their jurisdiction, are well-poised to lead this coordination effort.
- **Improve Economic Development** – IL 47 is a vital transportation corridor that will bring traffic flow and commercial development that can result in an important source of tax revenue. Still, it needs to be recognized that the push to encourage economic development also can generate traffic that will cause congestion.
- **Encourage Growth Nodes That Promote Transit and Walking** – The use of transit, bicycling, and walking are healthy, active alternatives to driving and should be promoted in the Corridor. In order for these modes to become viable transportation alternatives, a built environment that supports this form of transportation is needed.
- **Protect Natural Areas** – A key component of smart growth is the active preservation of natural areas. This includes areas designated for groundwater recharge, prime agricultural land, floodplain, and wetlands. Much of the undeveloped parts of the Corridor provide beautiful natural vistas. These will be transformed as growth occurs. Important natural and environmental features need to be protected.
- **Promote Placemaking** – New development should be unique and provide an identity that is memorable. The historic municipalities in the Corridor provide a sense of place. As a general rule, municipalities do not want the Corridor to look like a typical suburban corridor. It will be important to develop new areas that have identity and create a sense of place.
- **Strengthen Existing Developed Areas** – Development should be promoted in areas with existing infrastructure that can handle growth. It is more cost-effective to utilize or improve existing infrastructure rather than build anew. This objective deals with the historic municipalities and newer municipalities that have developed extensive infrastructure in the last two decades.

Municipalities

There are fifteen municipalities in the Corridor that participated in this planning process. These municipalities (see **Figure 1.1: Current Municipal Boundaries**) will be responsible for land use control in most of the Corridor. The municipalities' effect on the Corridor will vary due to the socio-economic characteristics and geographic location. For this purpose, the municipalities in the Corridor are described below as regional centers, historic municipalities and edge municipalities.

Regional Centers

- Woodstock
- Huntley-Pingree Grove-Hampshire
- Sugar Grove

These regional centers have the most influence on the Corridor due to population, jobs, the concentration of economic activity, and growth opportunities.

Woodstock is a regional center that is the largest municipality in the Corridor. Due to its large size and historic nature, it is unique among the municipalities in the Corridor. It historically developed as a small urban center separate from the Chicago metropolitan area. The city is an employment center and the McHenry County Seat. As the Corridor grows, Woodstock will continue to be an important employment center. IL 47 is the main north-south arterial that provides access to Woodstock.

Huntley and Sugar Grove are the other two regional centers in the Corridor. They are respectively the second and third largest municipalities in the Corridor. They have experienced rapid growth within the last decade due to their proximity to I-90 and I-88 and the overall growth of the Chicago metropolitan area. They have and will continue to have extensive commercial development along with high levels of traffic. Pingree Grove and Hampshire are just south of Huntley. These two municipalities are part of the Huntley Regional center due to their close proximity to Huntley and the I-90 interchange.

These three regional centers will have the greatest influence on the Corridor. They will witness the majority of the population, employment and economic growth in the Corridor.

Historic Municipalities

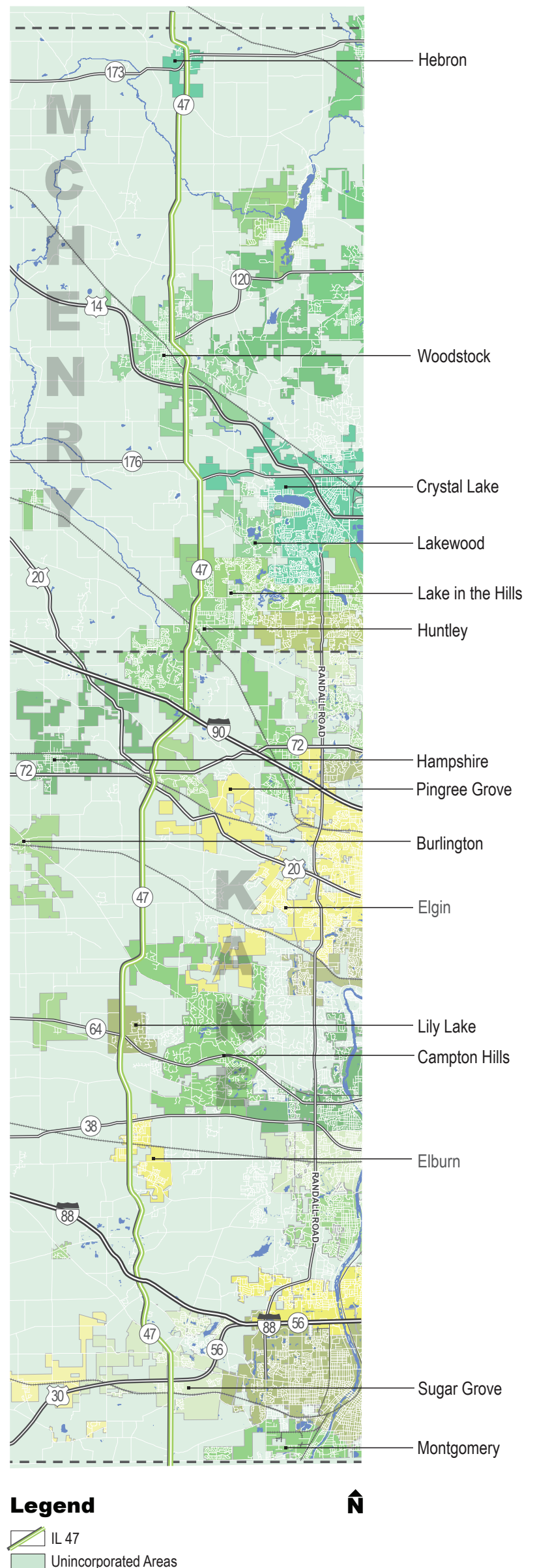
- Elburn
- Hebron
- Huntley (at Main Street)
- Lily Lake
- Woodstock

Historic municipalities originally developed along IL 47. These municipalities have a distinctive character in the Corridor. IL 47 is the primary north-south roadway through these municipalities. The future widening of IL 47 in these municipalities is complex due to existing development conditions. There is a strong need to balance land use and transportation with future IL 47 expansion efforts. Some of these municipalities have plans or would like to develop a plan to have an IL 47 bypass to alleviate traffic congestion and provide an alternate route. Woodstock is a historic regional center and is the most unique municipality in the Corridor.

Edge Municipalities

- Burlington
- Crystal Lake
- Campton Hills
- Elgin
- Hampshire
- Lake in the Hills
- Lakewood

**Figure 1.1:
Current Municipal Boundaries**

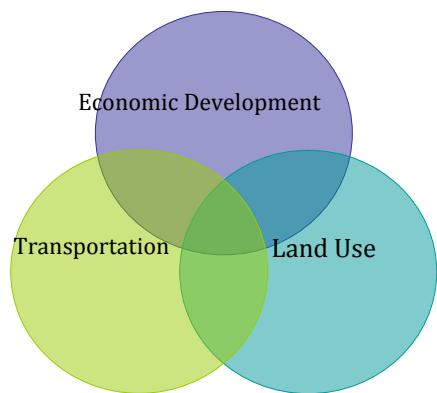


- Montgomery
- Pingree Grove

Edge municipalities are not centered on IL 47 but they are growing towards IL 47. Most of the municipalities are growing in an east to west fashion that is related to the overall growth of the Chicago metropolitan area. Two of the municipalities, Burlington and Hampshire are growing from west to east towards IL 47. The edge municipalities' land use control over the Corridor will not be as significant as the regional centers and historic municipalities. Still, they will have a significant impact on land use and transportation in the Corridor. Hampshire and Pingree Grove have been listed as edge municipalities since they share characteristics of the other edge municipalities. However, due to their high growth forecast and proximity to the IL 47/I-90 interchange, they also have been listed as part of the Huntley Regional Center.

Economic Development, Planning Challenges and Tools

Economic development involves a process of change that focuses on the betterment of the municipality through the development of land and the creation of jobs. Public sector land use policy and infrastructure investments will greatly affect the Corridor. This Study brings attention to the relationship between economic development, land use planning and transportation planning and encouraging coordinated municipal, county, regional and state decision-making.



The relationship between economic development, land use planning and transportation planning will affect the future of the Corridor

IL 47 is under the jurisdiction of IDOT. It is a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) as defined by IDOT and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). Strategic Regional Arterials are a network of highways designed to accommodate significant volumes of long distance regional traffic to supplement the expressway system and complement the region's major transit and highway facilities. **Figure 1.2: Strategic Regional Arterial Network** shows the location of IL 47 within the Chicago metropolitan area SRA network. IL 47 historically has functioned as a 2-lane rural highway, running through historic municipalities, commercial crossroads, strip malls and farmland. There currently are a few 4-lane segments and one 6-lane segment along IL 47. Growth of the Chicago metropolitan area has been advancing into the Corridor and will continue to bring development that will increase travel along IL 47. Transportation planners have forecasted the need to expand most of IL 47 to 4 or 6 lanes over the next 20 years.

IL 47 is a strategic north-south roadway that connects the 15 municipalities in the Corridor. Many of the municipalities view IL 47 as an economic engine that will bring tax revenue, economic development and prosperity. The push to spur economic development is represented in the large amount of commercial land use that has been shown along IL 47 in the municipal comprehensive plans. However, uncoordinated growth will cause congestion along IL 47. Coordinated land use and transportation planning can alleviate many of the growth problems that these municipalities will face. Issues associated with growth are presented in the following sections:

Section 2: Economic Development

Section 3: Land Use

Section 4: Regional Land Use Influences

Section 5: Transportation

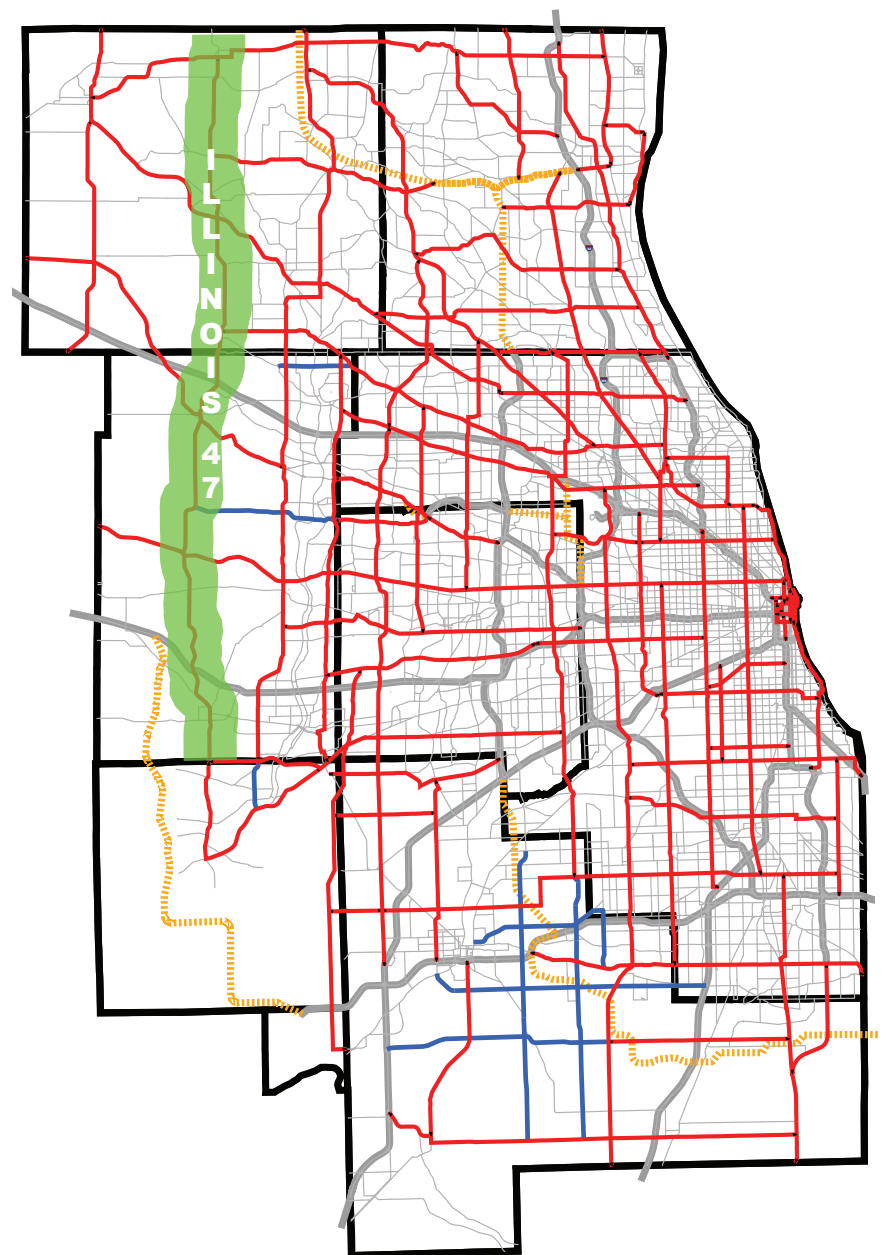
Section 6: Active Living

At the end of each section, planning challenges associated with growth impacts are presented. The planning challenges are a result of analysis and discussions with municipal and other government officials that were conducted as part of this Study. These planning challenges hinder or prevent the achievement of the Study objectives. Several tools are presented that can address these challenges.

Section 7: Stakeholder Involvement Process discusses how input was obtained from the municipalities and other government agencies during the preparation of this Study.

Section 8: Toolbox for IL 47 In response to the planning challenges, tools to overcome the planning challenges are presented. The **Toolbox for IL 47** provides tools that municipalities can use to ameliorate the impacts of growth and improve the quality of life in the Corridor.

Figure 1.2: Strategic Regional Arterial Network



Legend

- Illinois Route 47
- Strategic Regional Arterial
- Proposed Strategic Regional Arterial
- Selected Capital Addition
- Arterial
- Major Highway

Source:

Chicago Area Transportation Study. 2003.

