



RTA/Pace I-294 Tri-State Market & Facilities Feasibility Study

Implementation Plan Technical Memorandum

Regional Transportation Authority and Pace Suburban Bus



Regional
Transportation
Authority



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Prepared for:

Regional Transportation Authority and Pace Suburban Bus

Prepared by:

AECOM
303 East Wacker Drive, Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60601
aecom.com

Prepared in association with:

Connetics Transportation Group, Inc.

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Abbreviations

BUILD	Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CIG	Capital Investment Grants (FTA)
C-D	Collector-Distributor ramps
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program
CCDOH	Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
ICE	Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement program (RTA)
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
RAISE	Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority
RSP	regionally significant projects
ROW	right-of-way
TIF	Tax Increment District
TIFIA	Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act
TIGER	Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant program
DOT	US Department of Transportation

1. Study Background and Purpose

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) / Pace Bus I-294 Tri-State Market & Facilities Study (Study) identifies and evaluates ways that Pace buses can capitalize on roadway improvements being constructed by the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority (Illinois Tollway) on portions of the I-294 Tri-State Tollway.

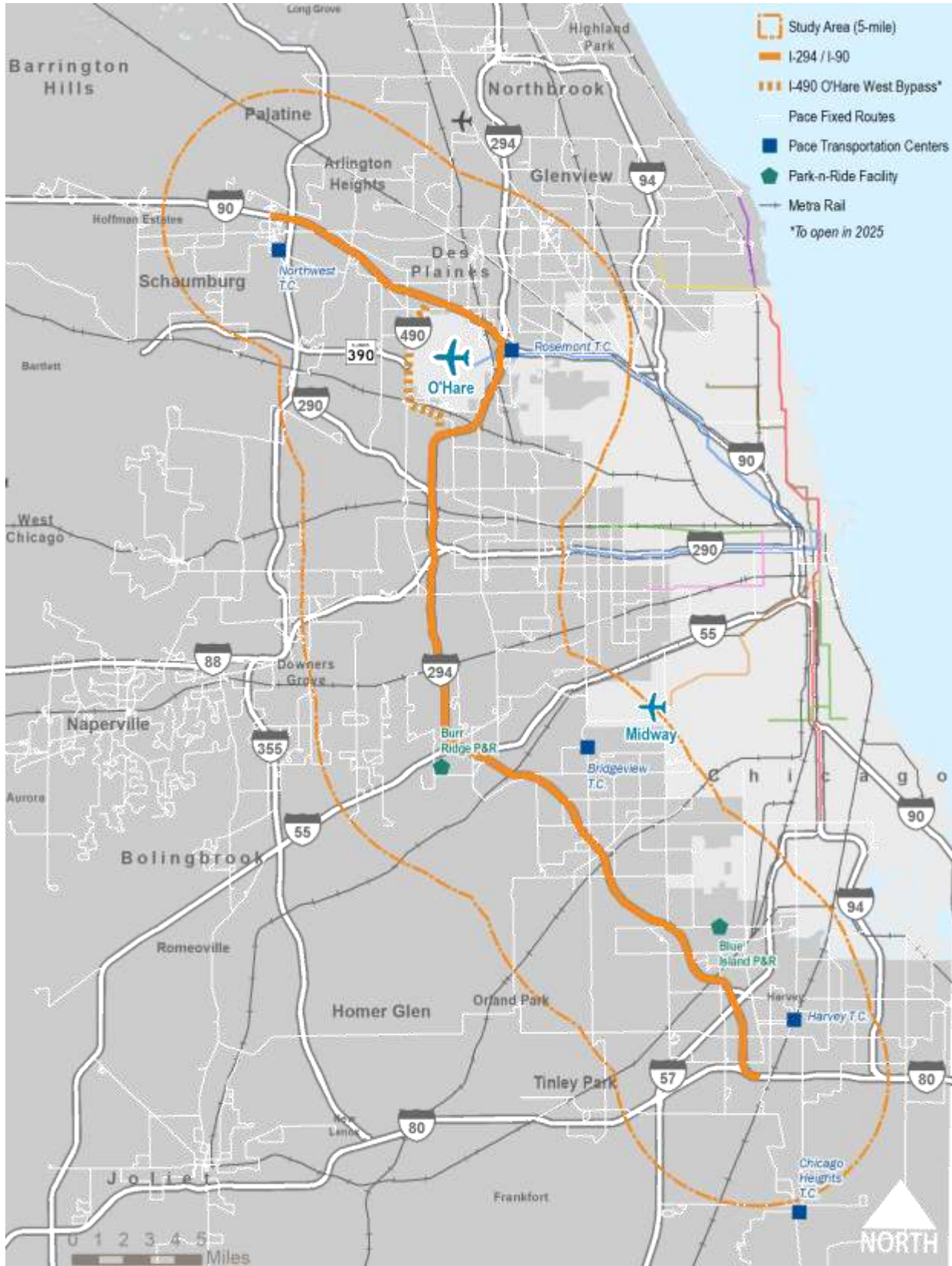
The Tri-State Tollway is a north-south roadway in the Chicago region, providing access to major employment centers and O'Hare International Airport. In 2016, Illinois Tollway initiated its Central Tri-State (I-294) Project, which includes the 22-mile segment between Balmoral Avenue and 95th Street. This segment carries the heaviest volume of passenger and freight traffic and has twice the amount of congestion delays compared to the entire Tollway system. The Central Tri-State Project will incorporate a number of innovations, including Flex Lanes, which will be available to Pace buses to avoid congestion. Pace has identified I-294 as a critical corridor because of its place as a primary travel corridor and the opportunity that Flex Lanes present. The Study will explore three key items:

1. The existing and future travel markets in the corridor,
2. Ways that the Pace network can be improved to better capture riders in the I-294 corridor, and
3. Ways that infrastructure can be added to capitalize on Flex Lanes and other roadway improvements being constructed by the Illinois Tollway.

1.1 Study Area

As shown in Figure 1-1, the Study Area covered a 5-mile radius centered along the 48-mile I-294/I-90 corridor between Harvey and Schaumburg. The roadway Study alignment also included I-490, which by 2025 will connect the I-90 Jane Addams Memorial Tollway, the IL-390 Elgin-O'Hare expressway, and the I-294 Tri-State Tollway along the west side of O'Hare Airport.

Figure 1-1. Pace I-294 Market & Facilities Feasibility Study Area



1.2 Task Overview

The Study involves five tasks that are listed below, including the relevant sub-tasks for Tasks 1 and 2.

Task 1: Existing Conditions and Travel Market

- 1.1 Transit Service
- 1.2 Traffic Conditions
- 1.3 Market Analysis
- 1.4 Identify Most Promising Corridors

Task 2: Conceptual Service Design and Infrastructure

- 2.1 Service Plans
- 2.2 Generic Infrastructure Concepts
- 2.3 Station Concepts & Capital Costs

Task 3: Implementation Plan

Task 4: Public Outreach and Marketing

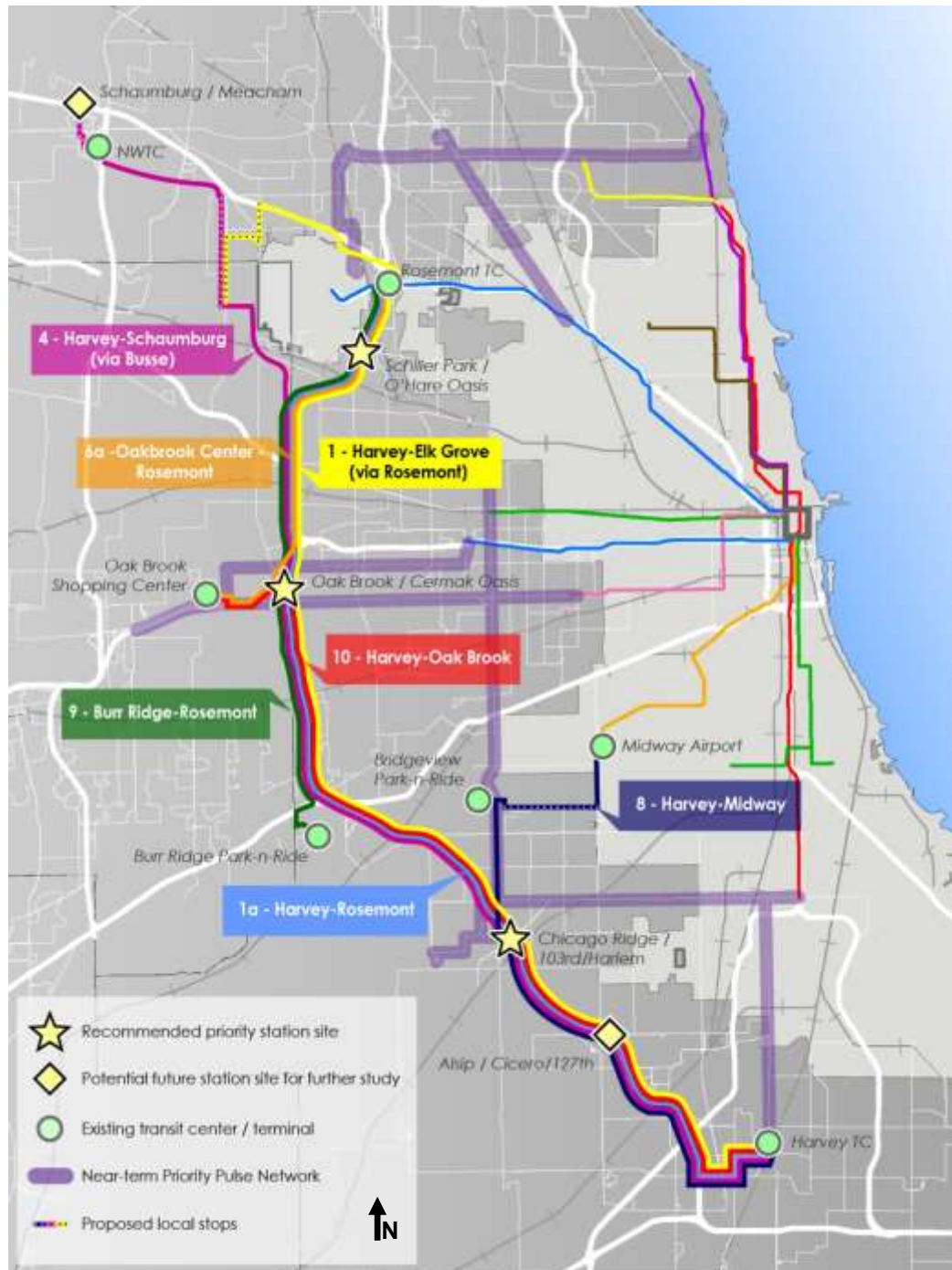
Task 5: Final Report

This technical memorandum covered Task 3 and built on earlier tasks. Recommendations included coordination with the Illinois Tollway’s Central Tri-state project and other potential Tollway-related projects, possible interchanges, and private development initiated by municipalities hosting stations. Integrating the station improvements into these other plans will be a key step towards implementation. Follow-on tasks to further the development of the stations are shown as covering phasing, funding/financing, implementing service plans, including adjustments to existing service, encouraging proposed private development to be supportive of transit, and design and construction.

2. Service Plans and Infrastructure Recommendations

This Study has culminated in two types of recommendations as shown on Figure 2-1: 1) express bus service plans and 2) in-line stations. Details on both service plans and infrastructure concepts are found in the Task 2.1 *Service Plans Technical Memorandum* and Task 2.3 *Station Concepts and Capital Costs Technical Memorandum*.

Figure 2-1. I-294 Service and Infrastructure Recommendations



Implementation of the recommended express bus service plans will be handled internally by Pace and will likely involve additional refinements to the service designs (e.g., terminals, alignments, stops), integration of new routes with existing services, and a financial analysis of costs relative to available operating funds. Construction of the recommended in-line station concepts will require further engineering and design work that will include supplemental data to inform this work such as topographic surveys and geotechnical studies, more detailed capital cost estimating, identification of capital funding sources, procurement, design and ultimately construction. Before these activities occur, Pace will need to finalize the proposed conceptual designs, engage with local stakeholders to assess potential impacts and benefits of the proposed facilities, and develop an approach for advancing the project(s) through the design, procurement, and construction phases. Given that there are many steps that need to be completed prior to implementation, the focus of this planning-level Implementation Plan is on the immediate next steps associated with further developing the three proposed in-line stations described below. Detailed analysis of the conceptual station layouts can be found in the Task 2.3 *Station Concepts and Capital Costs Technical Memorandum*.

2.1 103rd Street

The proposed station is on a site bounded by Harlem Avenue, I-294, and Stony Creek. The area on the west side of I-294 was used previously as a former trucking facility, which is being considered for redevelopment by the Village of Chicago Ridge. Due to the distance between Harlem Avenue on the north and Southwest Highway to the south, platforms were offset to accommodate the longer bus entry ramps and avoid impacts to existing bridge structures. A pedestrian bridge across I-294 would be accessed by ramps on either side. Parking would be provided on both sides of I-294, with larger capacity on the west side compared to the east. Vehicle access from Harlem Avenue would be provided by extending 103rd Street to the east. Provisions for a bus terminal to serve the future Pulse Harlem Line were also included. The conceptual station layout drawing is shown in Figure 2-2.

Figure 2-2. 103rd Street Station Conceptual Layout



2.2 Cermak Toll Plaza

An in-line station at this location is facilitated by the availability of right-of-way (ROW) from the removal of cash toll lanes. Elements include a pedestrian bridge with ramps, new roadway access from Cermak Road on the east, including modifications to the existing traffic signal and land acquisition from Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleums, access to Windsor and Swift Drives on the west, and a parking facility south of the existing Toll Plaza Building and Communications Tower on repurposed Illinois Tollway land. Buses would use the reconstructed Collector-Distributor (C-D) roadway system to access the station platforms. The layout was designed to reserve and maximize space for other Illinois Tollway designated uses to be determined in the future. The conceptual station layout drawing is shown in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3. Cermak Station Conceptual Layout



2.3 O'Hare Oasis (former)

The elimination of the O'Hare Oasis resulted in available ROW that can potentially be used for an in-line express bus station. While a gas station and truck parking facility on each side of I-294 remain, and it is assumed that both activities will continue, reconfiguration of the former Oasis area is anticipated. Since there is some uncertainty about how the site may be re-developed, including a possible interchange, private development, or both, the conceptual layout design was developed based on current conditions. Buses would use the service drive for vehicles leaving the gas stations to return to I-294. Unlike the other two station layouts, ramps would not be needed to access the pedestrian bridge, as the existing profile of the main through lanes is significantly below the "Oasis" areas. The Illinois Tollway has committed to constructing a pedestrian bridge to accommodate pedestrian connectivity that was eliminated when the Oasis bridge was removed. New sidewalk connections would link the Oasis site to the adjacent street grid. The conceptual station layout drawing is shown in Figure 2-4.

Figure 2-4. O'Hare Oasis (former) Station Conceptual Layout



2.4 Other Potential Stations

The *Station Concepts Technical Memorandum* identified five locations as physically feasible, including three that were recommended for further study (i.e., 103rd Street, Cermak, and O'Hare Oasis). In addition, the following two locations were recommended for future consideration as in-line stations.

Cicero Avenue / 127th Street | The proposed location in the Village of Alsip was judged to be physically feasible but offered somewhat less demand potential compared to the 103rd Street site four miles to the north. However, the review indicated that given the way the interchange is configured with I-294 ramps serving both intersecting arterial roadways, it may be operationally feasible to divert express buses from I-294 without a major impact on travel time. Either this scenario or building an in-line station should be considered by Pace in the future.

I-90 Meacham Road | This site would be located just west of Meacham Road in the Village of Schaumburg and could serve major destinations. One of the reasons that this site was not selected for further review as part of this Study is that the service plans recommended that the I-294 service approach Schaumburg from the south, and not from the east via I-90. However, there already exists several Pace express bus routes that use I-90 that would make an in-line station here viable and should continue to be considered by Pace in the future. The Village of Schaumburg is separately studying potential station improvements at Meacham Road.

3. Coordination Activities

All of the three proposed in-line station locations (i.e., 103rd Street, Cermak, and O'Hare Oasis) will require further coordination and engagement with stakeholders, notably with the Illinois Tollway and municipalities hosting stations. There are several projects and initiatives that are planned or currently underway that have the potential to affect the timing and cost of future Pace station projects.

3.1 Illinois Tollway Projects

Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project

The project involves widening and reconstructing the roadway and bridges, and reconfiguring interchanges between Balmoral Avenue in Rosemont and 95th Street in Oak Lawn. The project is currently underway and is expected to be completed at the end of 2026. This major construction project will reconstruct the areas identified in this Plan for the Cermak and O'Hare Oasis station concepts. It is recommended that Pace explore opportunities to incorporate design and construction of certain station elements (e.g., pedestrian bridge piers in the median) while the I-294 work is in progress to capture cost efficiencies in conjunction with obtaining the necessary Illinois Tollway approvals. Resolution of this coordination will impact the implementation timeline of these two stations.

I-490 Tollway

Also known as the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project, construction continues on new interchanges that will link I-490 to the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), the Illinois Route 390 Tollway, and I-294, providing western access into O'Hare International Airport. The project is scheduled for completion in 2025. The by-pass around the south end of O'Hare Airport is not expected to impact any of the proposed Pace in-line stations. However, the alignment is proposed to be used by the Harvey-Schaumburg via Busse express bus route, which was one of seven routes recommended for future implementation as described in the Task 2.1 *Service Plans Technical Memorandum*.

3.2 Initiatives

103rd Street Redevelopment

Plans are underway to raze and redevelop a trucking terminal at 10301 South Harlem Avenue in the Village of Chicago Ridge. The 75-acre property, originally owned by Yellow Freight, lies within a 105-acre Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District stretching along Harlem Avenue, the largest tract of land available for development in the Village. The truck terminal closed in late 2009 and the property has been mostly dormant since, although some commercial developments fronting Harlem Avenue have been built. The Village's goal is to attract mixed-use development for the property.

The TIF District is based on an element of the Village's Comprehensive Plan: *Harlem Triangle Subarea Plan*, Village of Chicago Ridge, May 2012 ([Comprehensive-Plan](#)) and the *Harlem Avenue and 103rd Street Redevelopment Plan and Project*, Village of Chicago Ridge, September 2014 ([Harlem-Avenue-TIF-Plan](#)).

103rd Street Interchange

The Illinois Tollway and the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDOTH) recently studied a possible I-294 interchange at 103rd Street, in part, to relieve congestion at the 95th Street interchange of I-294 (*Interchange Impact Study, 103rd Street/Southwest Highway & Pulaski Road/Midlothian Turnpike*, Illinois Tollway and CCDOTH, 2019). This improvement is no longer being actively considered; however, should an interchange be pursued in the future, it could render an in-line station at this location infeasible.

Cermak Reuse of Toll Collection Lane Area

The Illinois Tollway's decision to convert to all-electronic tolling freed up ROW for other uses. As a part of this transition, the parallel C-D road ramps between Cermak and Roosevelt Roads will require realignment. Since the C-D roads would be used by express buses, the timing of these improvements will impact the development timetable for the station. Additionally, the design of the station's exit and entry ramps will need to be coordinated with the Illinois Tollway's design.

As noted, the placement of station improvements sought to maximize the footprint of the cash toll lane area for other future Illinois Tollway designated uses. As the type of uses are defined, it is recommended that Pace explore where possible synergies lie to achieve an efficient design that meets the goals of each respective project. This may include coordinating the use of available ROW, as well as potential travel markets for the express bus service relative to future land uses.

O'Hare Oasis (former) Redevelopment

The O'Hare Oasis encompassed over ten Village of Schiller Park business establishments prior to its removal in 2019. The Village hopes to restore the lost sales tax revenues by redeveloping portions of the site. The status of area redevelopment plans is unknown at this time, but future redevelopment would ideally include transit-supportive land uses and design elements to reinforce the demand for Pace express bus service. The potential for shared use of assets, such as parking, should be explored. Also, the owners of the gas station facilities on both sides of I-294 will need to review and approve adjacent development that is proposed.

O'Hare Oasis (former) Potential Interchange

Currently, I-294 access at Irving Park Road is limited to travel to / from the north only. In response to the Village of Schiller Park's request, the Illinois Tollway conducted the *Central Tri-State Tollway at Irving Park Road Feasibility Study* to develop concepts for additional I-294 access to the area. Proposed interchange ramps could be placed on either the Oasis site or to the north at Irving Park Road. Based on preliminary drawings from the study, a station would be feasible should new ramps be constructed at the former O'Hare Oasis or at Irving Park Road. However, the design for how the station is configured will be determined by the presence of a new interchange. Currently, the Village is seeking a grant to advance the interchange concept by initiating engineering design.

4. Funding and Financing

Preliminary costs to complete design and construct the three in-line stations based on the high-level conceptual layouts range between \$94 (representing Opening Day) and \$111 million (representing Build-Out) in 2021 dollars. Task 2.3 *Station Concepts and Capital Costs Technical Memorandum* provides more detail on the individual cost elements and methodology as well as potential cost sharing opportunities.

I-294 in-line stations and park-n-rides are included in Pace's 2021-2025 Five-Year Capital Plan (*Pace Suburban Service & Regional ADA Paratransit Budget*, Pace, November 2020). Pace has tentatively identified \$35 million in Rebuild Illinois funds that could potentially be used to fund project development work on any or all of the three in-line stations, including design engineering and/or construction.

The three I-294 station improvements could potentially qualify for the designation of a regionally significant project (RSP). As a constrained RSP, this would be a priority in CMAP's ON TO 2050 long range plan; unconstrained RSPs would be recommended for further study. Constrained projects would be eligible to receive federal transportation funds and obtain certain federal approvals. It would appear that the package of three in-line stations could qualify for the RSG designation, that is, cost at least \$100 million and operate on shared rights of way where transit has priority over other traffic.

Regardless of how the stations are packaged and the outcome of a RSP designation, additional funding could be required beyond the Rebuild Illinois funds. There are a number of potential funding and financing sources that could be considered to augment the anticipated State capital funds as described below.

4.1 Capital Grants

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grants Program (CIG) | The FTA's Section 5309 CIG program includes New Starts, Small Starts and Core Capacity Improvements grants. These discretionary grant programs are intended to fund major new or extended fixed-guideway or bus rapid transit (BRT) projects. A quick assessment of eligibility suggests that the project would not qualify, including the requirement that the majority of the project operate in a separated right-of-way.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity | The RAISE grant program is administered through the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and was formerly known as BUILD and TIGER. This very competitive program is intended to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that will achieve national objectives. Projects are evaluated based on safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership. Within these criteria, the DOT prioritizes projects that can demonstrate improvements to racial equity, reduce impacts of climate change and create good-paying jobs. For the round of RAISE grant applications due July 12, 2021, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single State.

This may be a funding program to consider, although the highly competitive nature of the grant process makes it less viable. The effort to prepare a compelling and visually attractive application can be extensive, requiring an economic analysis of benefits and costs. More information can be found at [RAISE grants](#).

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) | The CMAQ program funds surface transportation projects designed to improve air quality and mitigate congestion. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) administers the program. Northeastern

Illinois is a moderate non-attainment area for the 8-hour ozone standard and a non-attainment area for annual fine particulate matter standard (PM_{2.5}). Both federal guidance and the CMAQ Project Selection Committee give priority to projects that reduce emissions. To carry out these goals of improving air quality and reducing congestion, CMAP uses four objectives in its project selection process:

- Localized Congestion Relief
- Operational Improvements
- Mode Shift
- Direct Emissions Reduction

Among eligible projects, the program will fund the capital costs of transit facility projects that enhance the existing transit system through adding or improving facilities such as stations.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) | STP provides federal flexible funding that may be used by localities for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects. Funds are programmed locally and administered through CMAP and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement (ICE) | This RTA program provides funding to enhance the coordination and integration of public transportation and to develop and implement innovations to improve the quality and delivery of public transportation. Projects funded through this program advance the vision and goals of the RTA by providing reliable and convenient transit services and enhancing efficiencies through effective management, innovation, and technology. The Program is funded at approximately \$10 million per year and distributed to the three service boards at set percentages. Pace's share is 13 percent, or about \$1.3 million per year.

Invest in Cook | The CCDOTH Invest in Cook Program funds planning and feasibility studies, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction associated with transportation improvements sponsored by local and regional governments and private partners.

4.2 Financing

Tax Increment Financing | TIF districts are a common form of value capture. A TIF district with specific geographic boundaries is created for a specific time period—for example, 23 years. Over this time period, the property tax revenue income from the increase (or “increment”) in assessed value from the base year is set aside in a separate fund which can only be used to pay for or finance improvements within the TIF district. In many cases, there is insufficient upfront funding to pay for the infrastructure needed to encourage uplift, which is why TIF funding is often used to finance the debt to enable construction.

The growth in assessed real estate value is typically attributed to public investment in the area, such as the construction of a major piece of infrastructure like a transit station, which nearby private landowners benefit from when their property values increase. The mechanism is typically more politically palatable because it does not involve implementing any new taxes, but still creates a dedicated future revenue stream to service debt. It also ensures that some of the public benefit from the investment feeds back into the project, i.e., when nearby landowners' property rises in value thanks to the investment, their taxes help support the project.

Improvements on the west side of I-294 for the 103rd Street station are included in the Chicago Ridge 103rd / Harlem District. The former O'Hare Oasis site is not currently covered by a TIF district, although the Schiller Park West Gateway 2 District, immediately north and west of the site, includes pedestrian links to the proposed station.

Joint Development | Joint development can take many forms, but generally covers the integrated development of transit and non-transit improvements. A common form is the construction of a transit station coordinated with the development of a physically adjacent and supporting commercial, residential, or mixed-use project. In such an example, the public agency often contributes the land and some or all of capital costs for the transit infrastructure component, while the private developer contributes funding and professional expertise to ensuring a successful and profitable project. This may be accomplished using a public-private partnership and is predicated on sharing both the risks and rewards across the public and private partners. Terms of the joint development are negotiated on a case-by-case basis, including items such as ownership or lease terms, as well as the divisions of rights and responsibilities among parties.

Joint development could provide cost-sharing opportunities at the 103rd Street and former Oasis sites as private developer plans evolve. This could include cost sharing of jointly-used assets such as roads, sidewalks, and parking. Potential opportunities may also exist at the Cermak site, depending on how the Illinois Tollway intends to repurpose the cash tolling areas in the future. Opportunities for sharing the costs of operating and maintaining the jointly-used assets should also be explored; providing these services locally can be more efficient than for a regional agency such as Pace.

Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) | TIFIA provides credit assistance for large-scale, surface transportation projects. An eligible project must be included in the applicable State Transportation Improvement Program and include a capital cost of at least \$50 million.

4.3 Cost-Sharing Opportunities

Infrastructure in I-294 ROW | Some station-related improvements within the I-294 ROW may also be beneficial to the Illinois Tollway. As such, certain project elements present opportunities for cost-sharing with the Illinois Tollway as well as adjacent municipalities. Based on the conceptual designs for the three stations, examples of infrastructure elements that may be of mutual interest to Pace, the Illinois Tollway, and adjacent municipalities may include the following:

- Pedestrian bridges that can be available both to the general public and express bus riders would improve multimodal mobility and access, making the walking environment more usable. Pedestrian improvements may also attract investment from municipalities interested in improving nonmotorized connectivity.
- The Illinois Tollway has previously committed to constructing a pedestrian bridge to replace the function that the O'Hare Oasis provided to cross I-294 on foot. The argument can also be made that connections to the area sidewalk network would need to be part of this investment. This connectively would include a retaining wall, ramp, and stairs to connect to Seymour Avenue on the east, as well as a warning system to permit safe pedestrian passage through the truck parking area.
- The Illinois Tollway's realignment of C-D ramps, barrier walls, and shoulders at Cermak will be integral to the express bus exit / entry ramps.
- The development of an access roadway on the east side of the Cermak station site using the Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleums property should be carefully evaluated by Pace and the Illinois Tollway. Accommodating the proposed access road would also include constructing a turn lane and signal modifications to Cermak Road. Currently, the primary access to Illinois Tollway facilities on the east side of I-294 are limited to two access points within the northbound cash tolling area.

Southbound vehicles must reverse direction at an interchange to reach the northbound-only access to the Toll Plaza site. Providing direct access from Cermak Road could also be advantageous for a future user of the freed-up cash tolling ROW.

It should be noted that Illinois Tollway cost participation opportunities may be limited to new or improved interchange locations proposed by local governments. These agreements follow the policy set forth in the *Interchange and Roadway Cost Sharing Policy*, Illinois Tollway, 2012.

5. Project Phasing

Developing a detailed timeline with specific activities is, at this time, limited by the uncertainty of the plans (e.g., project scope, timeline, priority) of others. Determining how the stations may be augmented by or integrated into the projects of others will inform how to evolve station designs, costs, timing, and even procurement approach(s). As emphasized below, gaining a solid understanding of these projects and initiatives will be a key step in defining a path forward to implementing the recommended in-line stations. The following sections provide suggested steps in completing the Project Development phase, and lists follow-on tasks for implementation, but with less detail.

5.1 Project Development

An immediate next step to this Study will be to coordinate with stakeholders (i.e., Illinois Tollway, Cook County, DuPage County, municipalities hosting stations, developers) who are or may be advancing plans at each of the station sites. As the plans of others become better defined, integrating the station concepts into the larger station area will be completed. Pace may consider developing a thorough timeline of both internal and external coordination activities identifying which stakeholders to engage, how to engage them, and when. Topics for discussion may cover the following, among others:

- Confirm stakeholder support of station concepts.
- Identify station assets that can be shared (e.g., roads, sidewalks, parking) and gauge funding participation. More broadly, this also includes use of properties owned by third parties.
- Pace may consider developing collateral materials to support how components of the station's infrastructure would provide value to others, including cost-sharing examples elsewhere in the region.
- Encourage municipalities to promote transit-supportive land uses and apply design concepts that support high quality transit service. RTA and Pace could lead visioning and corridor development planning to foster these considerations.
- Gather general parameters on the anticipated timing emerging for future projects and initiatives.

Based on these discussions, adjustments to the conceptual layouts and preliminary estimated capital costs will need to be made. In response to the feedback provided on timing, identify procurement approaches to achieve project implementation efficiencies. For example, this may include non-traditional delivery approaches or may include different permutations related to packaging of the projects (i.e., three standalone projects, one combined project, or combinations of one and two station packages).

Other near-term steps to advance the project(s) are:

- Develop a project development plan to serve as a roadmap for executing the project through all phases of planning, design, procurement, and construction. This would include identifying what activities would be done in-house and what would be contracted, a funding / financing plan for how the project will be funded, and other critical elements necessary to advance the project.
- The service plans, which were envisioned as a menu of possibilities for Pace to consider, should be reviewed and priorities established. The results of the STOPS

modeling can be a source for this prioritization, although other factors should also be used. Impediments to implementation should also be identified; for example, Harvey-Schaumburg via Elk Grove requires completion of I-490. The number of vehicles to support the services identified in the Task 2.1 *Service Plans Technical Memorandum* should be confirmed, including spares. Steps to procure vehicles should be determined, which would be a separate process from the construction procurement. The anticipated garage(s) that would be used to support each route should be identified, and the possible need for increasing capacity assessed. Finally, Pace service planning staff should begin to evaluate how the introduction of any of the proposed services will impact current service. Ideally, this work will occur post-pandemic, and available current route ridership data will represent “normal” conditions.

- Upon completion of discussions and coordination with local stakeholders, initiate the land acquisition process for the 103rd Street and Cermak projects. It is anticipated that this process would involve reaching out to CenterPoint Properties to explore ways to provide vehicle and pedestrian access to the southbound platform at Cermak. Also engage the Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleums on acquisition of a strip of ROW for the proposed access drive to Cermak Road on the east side of I-294.

5.2 Initial Phasing Recommendations

Based on information known to date and pending further discussions with stakeholders and partner agencies, the initial recommended implementation plan prioritizes advancing the Cermak and O’Hare Oasis (former) station locations. Details on sequencing these projects from a funding (e.g., cash flow), procurement, and staffing capacity perspective will need to be further assessed. The order of station implementation for the five locations is preliminarily recommended as follows:

1. **Build Cermak and O’Hare Oasis (former) Station Locations** | These projects are ripe for implementation based on the following points:
 - Both locations are located within the Central Tri-State project area, which is already underway and includes Flex Lanes as part of its design and construction. As such, there exists a high level of certainty in how the design of stations can fit within the I-294 ROW. Overall, implementation of the Central Tri-State project presents an opportunity to accelerate the Cermak and O’Hare Oasis station development and capitalize on the benefits that the Flex Lanes impart.
 - Both locations can generally be accommodated within existing footprints given that the respective I-294 ROW that they would use is transitioning from other uses (i.e., Cermak Toll Plaza and O’Hare Oasis). The available ROW that will become available as a result of these transitions results in comparatively less land to acquire (which equate to time and cost) and require a relatively straightforward coordination approach with other entities.
 - Pace’s allocation of Rebuild Illinois funding is a viable funding source for both locations. Depending on the final design and construction costs (inclusive of any potential cost-sharing agreements and other partnerships), there may even be an opportunity to support additional projects in this corridor.
 - Constructing these two stations would be a quick way to expand access to new service in the corridor and tap into part of the latent travel market.
 - Given the readiness of these locations (e.g., few constraints related to planning, funding, environmental, and design), these stations require a comparatively shorter timeframe to advance toward implementation relative to other locations.

2. Continue Planning Activities to Support Future Implementation of the 103rd Street Station | While this station location shows much promise, more planning and agency consultation and coordination with Pace partners will be necessary to further advance this project through the development process. This recommendation is based on the following points:

- Consultation and coordination with property owner(s), the Village of Chicago Ridge, and Cook County is needed to confirm that area redevelopment plans or a potential interchange would not preclude an in-line station from being constructed as conceptually designed or from being built all together.
- Given uncertain redevelopment plans, more time is required to coordinate the placement of infrastructure and how it will interact (i.e., help or hinder) private redevelopment at the site.
- A funding source and potential financing tool would need to be identified to advance the project through environmental, design, and construction.
- Since this site is south of the Central Tri-State project limits, it will be important to determine whether similar roadway improvements, and specifically Flex Lanes, will be part of a future I-294 phase (and when). This will help to minimize or eliminate the need to rebuild components of the station or the station in its entirety. For example, if the Illinois Tollway is contemplating a future roadway widening south of the Central Tri-State project limits, bus exit / entry lanes would ideally be constructed at the same time, not before, to avoid rebuilding the transit investment. Constructing the transit improvements concurrent with the roadway improvements would also open the potential for more cost-sharing opportunities.

3. Plan for I-90 / Meacham and 127th / Cicero | Pace should continue to work with stakeholders / partners on these two possible in-line stations. Should the Cermak and O'Hare Oasis (former) stations prove successful, having additional opportunities to expand this model already identified would be advantageous to the agency, especially if the fiscal landscape changes. As noted in Section 2.4, planning for transit infrastructure at the Meacham Road site on I-90 is in process, led by the Village of Schaumburg.

5.3 Implementation Process

Implementation of the station projects is assumed to generally follow a multi-phased process for planning and building highway improvements. The number of steps and the timeframe to complete varies by the complexity and jurisdictions impacted. As the key questions raised above are resolved, a more definitive implementation process can be prepared.

5.3.1 Phase I Design and Environmental Review

The Phase I Engineering report will cover:

- Introduction / project description
- Purpose & Need
- Existing Conditions
- Stakeholder Coordination and Outreach, including additional ongoing corridor development and associated planning activities carried through the multi-step process
- Engineering Studies - Topographic surveys as well as other engineering studies (e.g., traffic study, structural integrity evaluations, stormwater management study).

- Phase I design plans - Improvements within I-294 ROW would follow Illinois Tollway's Standards and Manual criteria. Plans will also require approval by the Illinois Tollway.
- ROW needs
- Utilities – Document public and private utilities that would be impacted by the project.

While it is believed that the station projects will not be required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this should be confirmed. Should this be a requirement, it is assumed that the level of analysis to be performed will be a documented Categorical Exclusion (CE), although Pace would need to consult and coordinate with the applicable federal sponsoring agency to confirm the NEPA class of action.

5.3.2 Phase II Design

The final design of the station will be completed, including final engineer's estimated costs. Elements of the Phase II work will include:

- Prepare a job site construction plan and develop construction material requirements used to prepare the final contract to be bid on by contractors pre-qualified by the Illinois Tollway.
- Complete contract plans, conduct geotechnical investigation, and complete all bridge and pavement reconstruction reports.
- Conduct land surveys, appraise property, and complete negotiation with land owners to acquire needed land.
- Identify utilities that are impacted by project and prepare utility agreements with local agencies or private entities.
- Prepare agreements with local agencies
- Complete Phase II engineering

5.3.3 Phase III Construction

Through coordination with the Illinois Tollway, confirm cost-participation and constructing agency responsibilities (i.e., Illinois Tollway or Pace). Contract plan preparation and advertisements would be coordinated between the two agencies and potentially IDOT where local access is required. Plans and specifications would need to be prepared according to Illinois Tollway Standards and Manual criteria; contractors would need to be pre-qualified by the Illinois Tollway. Further discussions would be required to confirm whether the letting agency would be the Illinois Tollway.

