



Pace Rapid Transit Program

Pulse Dempster Line

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

June 2017

Version 3.0



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pulse: Pace's Rapid Transit Program

As part of Pace's *Vision 2020* plan to modernize public transportation, Pace plans a 24-line arterial rapid transit (ART) network, Pulse, to enhance mobility and suburb-to-suburb travel options. Seven priority routes have been identified for development over the next 10 years, including Milwaukee Avenue, Dempster Street, Harlem Avenue, Cermak Road, Halsted Street, 95th Street, and Roosevelt Road.

The Pulse Dempster Line was identified as the second Pulse route to be implemented, after the Milwaukee Line.

1.2 Pulse Dempster Line Project Background

The Pulse Dempster Line project corridor, on which Pace plans to construct and operate its second arterial rapid transit service, is approximately fifteen (15) miles in length and runs east-west between the City of Evanston and the City of Des Plaines via Dempster Street, then north-south to the O'Hare International Airport Kiss-n-Fly station, which is currently being redeveloped and relocated by the Chicago Department of Aviation. The project area is located within the communities of Evanston, Skokie, Morton Grove, Niles, Park Ridge, Des Plaines, Rosemont, and Chicago (see Figure 1-1 for the Location Map). Once constructed, the Pulse Dempster Line will connect to the Pulse Milwaukee Line as well as future Pulse lines.

Existing service along the corridor includes Pace Route 250, which operates fixed route service between downtown Evanston and the Des Plaines Metra station via Dempster Street and then south to the O'Hare Kiss-n-Fly Airport Transit Service Station. Route 250 connects with five (5) CTA bus routes and sixteen (16) Pace bus routes as well as CTA and Metra train routes including the CTA Purple Line, Metra UP-North (UP-N) Line, CTA Yellow Line, Metra UP-Northwest (UP-NW) Line, and Metra North Central Service (NCS) Line. It operates under the Posted Stops Only policy allowing passengers to board and alight the bus only at designated stops.

The Dempster Line project area is a mixed-use corridor that includes residential and commercial properties, educational institutions, parks and recreational facilities, medical facilities, cemeteries, and public transit access points. Large destinations/major generators include the Davis Street CTA/Metra Station in Evanston,

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- **Pace's Communications, Marketing, Media Relations, Community Relations and Customer Relations Staff:** To identify stakeholders, serve as liaison between Pace and stakeholders, and perform outreach and public involvement functions.
- **Pace's Rapid Transit Project Manager:** To provide leadership and management of the Pace team as well as technical assistance and coordination with External Relations staff in their efforts to engage and educate the public and obtain information from stakeholders that is relevant to the project.

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2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the SIP is to provide a guide for achieving stakeholder participation on the Pulse Dempster Line project. This document is a blueprint for defining methods and tools to educate and involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process for this project.

2.1 SIP Goals & Objectives

The SIP has been designed to ensure that stakeholders are provided opportunities to be informed and engaged as the project progresses. This integrated approach to problem-solving and decision-making will help build community and agency collaboration and promote involvement throughout the project. The public involvement efforts will be conducted in accordance with Pace protocols.

Early coordination and/or meetings have been conducted with the City of Evanston, Village of Skokie, Village of Morton Grove, Village of Niles, City of Park Ridge, City of Des Plaines, Village of Rosemont, and City of Chicago/Chicago Department of Aviation (CDOA) as a means of introducing the Pulse Dempster Line project, coordinating with local plans within the project area, and identifying interested parties and stakeholders. The collaborative efforts between Pace and its stakeholders enables the sharing of plans and vision for the project area and provides stakeholders the opportunity to express their comments or concerns about project objectives and options. This process improves the ability of the Project Team to understand and address issues.

Stakeholder involvement is critical to project success. The SIP strives to achieve the following:

- Involve stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process **early and often**
- Understand stakeholders' key issues and concerns
- Establish an understanding of the stakeholder's role
- Set a project public involvement schedule
- Apply flexibility in addressing stakeholders' plans and concerns, whenever possible

The goal of the SIP is to actively seek the participation of communities, government officials, public agencies, individual interest groups, and the general public throughout the project. The SIP provides the

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framework for communicating with these stakeholders in order to achieve collaboration and identify solutions for the project. The SIP provides the procedures used to accomplish the following:

- Identification of stakeholders
- Identification of the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency (Table 1, Appendix A)
- Identification of coordinating agencies and agency responsibilities (Table 2, Appendix A)
- Identification of the Corridor Advisory Group and group responsibilities
- Establishment of the timing and type of involvement activities with all stakeholders
- Establishment of stakeholder requirements for providing timely input to the project development process

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3 STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

This SIP serves as a guide for stakeholder involvement throughout the project definition phase and can be carried forward into the project development, 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 stakeholder involvement efforts.

3.1 Corridor Advisory Group

To assist in the development of the Pulse Dempster Line project, a Corridor Advisory Group (CAG) has been established by Pace. The purpose of the CAG is to provide input on various design, operational elements, and options related to the project. The CAG consists of community leaders from the City of Evanston, Village of Skokie, Village of Morton Grove, Village of Niles, City of Park Ridge, City of Des Plaines, Village of Rosemont, and City of Chicago/CDOA, and representatives from the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Metra, and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), as well as other transportation/engineering officials, land use/transportation planning agencies, local municipal staff, environmental and special interest groups, and neighborhood organizations. The CAG members are to represent the views of the communities and transit users within the project area.

The CAG met two (2) times during the early planning and project definition phase of the Dempster Line project. The first meeting was held March 23, 2016 and the second was held June 29, 2016. At these meetings, Pace introduced the overall Pulse program, presented initial recommendations for station locations and discussed station/bus features.

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The CAG is expected to meet two (2) additional times during phase two of the project which includes environmental review and design. These two CAG meetings will allow critical partners/stakeholders an opportunity to provide input during the NEPA process and will help build consensus among municipal leaders to ensure a successful project. NEPA topics expected to be covered include, but may not be limited to: Section 106 process (historic/archaeological sites review), potential community impacts and Environmental Justice analysis. Below is a description of the anticipated discussion themes to be covered at these two (2) CAG meetings.

- Meeting #1 (June 28, 2017): Provide overview/update of the Pulse Dempster Line Project; overview of the NEPA environmental review process; review station locations and gather feedback and discuss issues; request assistance in identifying the potential EJ populations and locations for public meetings; provide an update of the North Shore Project and Pace's Pulse Program.
- Meeting #2: Present update on NEPA process and initial findings; public meeting results; share updated/refined (if applicable) station locations, concepts and features; and gather feedback.

3.2 Municipal Meetings

In addition to CAG meetings, one-on-one meetings will be conducted, as needed, with municipalities to discuss specific topics such as station location specifics and features. These meetings will be conducted with the project team and Pace staff members throughout the project development process on an as-needed basis.

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3.2 General Stakeholder List

A stakeholder is anyone who could be affected by the project and has a stake in its outcome. This includes study area residents, property owners, business owners, state and local officials, special interest groups, transit users, motorists and those interested parties who can directly affect the outcome of a planning process. Stakeholders for the Pulse Dempster Line project may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Project area residents
- Property and business owners adjacent to the project corridor
- Elected/community officials
- Transit users – Route 250 and intersecting routes
- Chambers of Commerce/economic development organizations
- Neighborhood groups and community organizations
- Institutions (Churches, schools, etc.)
- Special interest groups and advocates (environmental coalitions, bicycle organizations, etc.)
- Utility companies
- Others outside the project area with an interest in the project
- Motorists using the Dempster Street corridor or cross streets

The identification of general stakeholders has been accomplished through a combination of internet searches 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. The project mailing/email list will be updated and maintained through the duration of the project.

All stakeholders will be able to participate in the process through various public outreach opportunities. These opportunities may include public meetings, newsletters, press releases, and events (see Section 5). In addition, stakeholders are encouraged to visit the project website where they can access information and submit comments or questions at any time. The Project Team will also be available to meet with stakeholder groups on a one-on-one basis throughout the project, if deemed necessary.

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3.3 Stakeholder Involvement Ground Rules

The stakeholder outreach efforts identified in the SIP 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 SIP must be agreed upon by the stakeholders and, therefore, may be modified based on stakeholder input.

These rules include 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 in consultation with the City of Evanston, Village of Skokie, Village of Morton Grove, Village of Niles, City of Park Ridge, City of Des Plaines, Village of Rosemont, City of Chicago/CDOA, CTA, FTA, IDOT, Metra, and RTA. The feasibility of improvements and services will be dependent, in part, on physical and financial considerations and constraints.

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4 PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The general project development process and tentative schedule, project activities, and associated stakeholder involvement activities are described below.



4.1 Step One: Identify Stakeholders, Develop SIP, Initiate Project

This stage of the process includes identifying stakeholders and initiating key stakeholder outreach efforts. Activities in this stage include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assemble the stakeholder list
- Develop the SIP
- Organize and conduct meetings with key stakeholders to inform them about the project, seek collaboration, and identify transportation/transit plans and issues

4.2 Step Two: Develop Purpose and Need Statement

This stage of the process consists of the identification of transportation/transit issues along the project corridor and the development of project goals and objectives. Project purpose discussions will focus on current and forecasted conditions, transit demand, and the constraints of the operating environment. This will help set the stage for meaningful dialogue about service and infrastructure needs and potential solutions. This information will be used as the basis for the development of the project Purpose and Need Statement. Activities in this stage include the following:

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- Organize and conduct meetings with key stakeholders to gather input on issues/concerns and the project goals and objectives to begin developing a clear statement of the transportation/transit problems to be addressed by the project
- Develop the project Purpose and Need Statement

4.3 Step Three: Define Service and Design Options

Various service and design options that address the project Purpose and Need will be identified and evaluated. Opportunities will be provided for stakeholder input during this process. Activities in this stage include the following:

- Create service and design guidelines
- Develop procedures to be used to identify and evaluate initial service and design options
- Identify and evaluate project elements which may include levels of service, fares, technology, infrastructure, and/or operations
- Present analysis and conclusions to key stakeholders, as needed, to facilitate decision-making

4.4 Step Four: Develop Project Definition Report

Feedback received from key stakeholders will be used to define the project and set the stage for project development, environmental, and engineering work needed to progress the project. Activities in this stage of the process include the following:

- Define the project, based on key stakeholder input and the evaluation of options
- Summarize the findings and conclusions in the Project Definition Report
- Present findings and conclusions to key stakeholders, as needed, to inform them of next steps and associated schedule
- Publish information on the Pulse program website

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4.5 Step Five: Prepare NEPA Documentation

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. Activities in this stage of the process include the following:

- Develop an outline of required NEPA documentation
- Prepare NEPA document
- Conduct FTA coordination meetings
- Present NEPA documentation and preferred route/operations options to the CAG
- Publish information on the Pulse program website

Advanced conceptual design may also be conducted to support the environmental documentation. Stakeholder involvement and outreach efforts will be a priority as the environmental documentation is prepared. Coordination with communities, public officials, and agencies will continue and emphasis will be placed on public involvement and broad community outreach. Project information will be shared with Pace customers, affected property owners, businesses, and the general public through outreach activities, which may include press releases, updates sent via email or mail, newsletters, individual meetings, and public meetings.

4.6 Step Six: Conduct Design and Construction Phase Outreach Activities

Throughout the Construction of the project, outreach activities will be conducted that focus on providing stakeholders with updates on the features and status of the project as well as anticipated impacts. Activities in this stage include the following:

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

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5 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The following Stakeholder Involvement Plan activities are proposed for the Pulse Dempster Line project. The tentative schedule for project development and stakeholder involvement activities is presented in Table 1, Appendix B. Unless noted, the Project Team is the responsible party for activities and coordination. All activities will be approved by Pace before proceeding. The Project Team's designated point of contact is Pace's Rapid Transit Project Manager. The Project Manager will coordinate internal Pace reviews and approvals, consolidate review comments, and resolve conflicting issues.

Below, each public involvement strategy is described, target audiences are identified, and implementation schedules are provided.

5.1 Stakeholder Outreach Meetings

Stakeholder involvement for the Pulse Dempster Line will be an ongoing process throughout project development and will be carried into the Engineering and Construction phases. Various meetings will be held to provide outreach opportunities to stakeholders. Potential meeting opportunities are listed below.

Small Group Meetings

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. 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. Project handouts or other appropriate meeting materials will be prepared for distribution at these meetings.

Agency Coordination Meetings

To ensure that this project meets requirements for state and federal funding, a project design/environmental report, which complies with local, state, and federal rules, regulations and laws, must be prepared. In order to ensure compliance, coordination will be carried out with resource and regulatory agencies periodically throughout the project development and engineering phases. Initially, a general meeting will be held with local, state, and federal resource and regulatory agencies as part of the

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process. As the project progresses, meetings may be held with individual resource and regulatory agencies to discuss environmental findings and compliance with government requirements.

Public Meetings

Public participation for the Pulse Dempster Line 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 developments 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.

Up to two (2) public information meetings may be held to coincide with major milestones during the project.

- **Public Meeting #1 (2016):** present the project Purpose and Need, design and service options, potential project impacts that are being documented as part of the NEPA process, and solicit feedback on the options in advance of the completion of the NEPA process.
- **Public Meeting #2 (2017):** present the final selected station locations and the impacts documented in the NEPA process.
 - The Project Team will convene two sets of two public meetings as part of the Pulse Dempster Line Project. These meetings will provide the public with information about the project, its design, service features, and potential community concerns or opportunities. For each of the two sets of public meetings, two meetings will be held on subsequent days, using the same agenda, format, and materials with one being held in the eastern portion of the corridor and one meeting held in the western/southern portion of the corridor.

Public meetings will be advertised by invitation sent via email or mail, audio announcement on Pace Route 250 buses, public notices placed in area newspapers, and on the project website and social media pages. Opportunities for the public to provide written comments (comment forms) will be available at meetings. Translation services will be provided as they are requested.

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The public hearing for this project, anticipated to occur during the Construction phase prior to the implementation of service or fare changes, will be held as required by FTA and RTA regulations. A project summary report that defines the project engineering elements will be available at the public hearing.

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5.2 Other Mechanisms for Public Involvement

There will be several other methods for the public to obtain information about the project and provide feedback. These methods include the following:

Mailing List

To support the distribution of project information to the public, a mailing list has been developed and will continue to be updated. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be added to the list, as available.

The mailing list includes stakeholders such as property owners; federal, state, and local officials; special interest groups; resource agencies; businesses; residents; and members of the public who have signed up on PaceBus.com/Pulse. The mailing list was developed using online resources, relevant Pace bus route mailing lists, stakeholder lists from other area projects, as well as input from other identified stakeholders. In addition, information was gathered from contacts or meetings with public officials, chambers of commerce, professional associations, neighborhood associations, and special interest groups.

Stakeholders on the mailing list will receive project information, which may include project update emails, newsletters, and meeting/event invitations.

Project Website

In an effort to utilize electronic resources, disseminate information to the public, and receive input and comments on the Pulse Dempster Line, a project website, PaceBus.com/Pulse, has been developed. The project website is a centralized source of information, available to anyone with access to the internet, at any time. Information on the project history and status/schedule, maps, photos, reports, and electronic versions of printed material will be provided. In addition, the project website provides an opportunity for the public to submit comments via the online comment form.

Third Party Outreach

Project information may also be distributed to third party organizations such as chambers of commerce, professional associations, and local community and civic groups to help disseminate information about the project to businesses, residents, interest groups, and others.

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Social Media

Social media is an effective tool for disseminating project information to the public and encourages stakeholders to ask questions and provide comments. A Pulse Facebook and Twitter page have been created and will continue to be updated with project status announcements, event information, and other materials related to the Dempster Line project and the Pulse Program. Pace's Communications and Marketing staff will respond to comments and questions submitted via social media.

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, including press releases, publication pieces, media correspondence, and one-on-one briefings with agency-designated spokespersons.

The goal is to issue a number of press releases throughout the project timeline to announce 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. Indirect public comment will come through the media, non-agency sponsored meetings, and third party websites. It is important to address public comments so all voices from the community are heard and that potential impacts upon the community are recognized.

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6 PLAN AVAILABILITY AND MONITORING / UPDATES

The SIP is a dynamic document that is available to stakeholders and updated as appropriate throughout the duration of the project. This section describes SIP stakeholder review opportunities and plan update procedures.

6.1 Availability of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Pace has made the SIP available to stakeholders for review on the project website. As the project proceeds, Pace will update the SIP on a regular basis to reflect appropriate changes or additions. Pace will advise stakeholders of future SIP updates and post updates on the project website.

6.2 Modification of the Stakeholder 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 through formal and informal channels

Revisions to this SIP may be necessary through all phases of the project. Pace will provide updated versions of the SIP 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 4, Appendix A.

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**Appendix A
Tables**

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Table 1
Lead Agencies

Agency Name	Role
Pace Suburban Bus	Lead Agency

Table 2
Coordinating Agencies and Agency Responsibilities

Agency Name	Role
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)	Coordination/Advisory
Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)	Coordination/Advisory
City of Chicago/Chicago Department of Aviation (CDOA)	Coordination/Advisory
City of Evanston	Coordination/Advisory
City of Des Plaines	Coordination/Advisory
City of Park Ridge	Coordination/Advisory
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Coordination/Advisory
Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)	Coordination/Advisory
Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)	Coordination/Advisory
Village of Morton Grove	Coordination/Advisory
Village of Niles	Coordination/Advisory
Village of Rosemont	Coordination/Advisory
Village of Skokie	Coordination/Advisory

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Table 3
Stakeholder Involvement Plan Revision History

Version	Date	Document Name	Revision Description
1	March 2016	Stakeholder Involvement Plan	Original
2	June 2016	Stakeholder Involvement Plan	Version 2
3	June 2017	Stakeholder Involvement Plan	Version 3

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Appendix B

Project Development Schedule

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Table 1
Project Development Schedule

Meeting Type	Date	Description
Corridor Advisory Group Meeting #1	March 23, 2016	Pulse Program and Dempster Line Introduction and Overview
Newsletter, Issue 1	March 2016	Pulse Program and Dempster Line Overview
Corridor Advisory Group Meeting #2	June 29, 2016	Update on Project and Preliminary Station Locations
Corridor Advisory Group Meeting #3	June 28, 2017	Update on Project, Environmental Review Process and Station Location Refinements
Public Meeting #1	Late Summer/Early Fall 2017	Pulse Program and Dempster Line Introduction and Overview, Station Locations
Corridor Advisory Group Meeting #4	Late Fall/Early Winter 2017	Update on Design, Environmental Review Process and Schedule/Next Steps
Public Meeting #2	Early Winter 2017	Update on Project and Selected Final Station Locations & Features

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Appendix C
Glossary and Acronyms

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Appendix C Glossary and Acronyms

Glossary

Transportation Planning	Balance between mobility, community needs, and the environment while developing transportation projects that improve safety and mobility. This is achieved through involving stakeholders early and continuously, addressing all modes of transportation, applying flexibility in the design, and incorporating aesthetics to the overall project.
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
CAG	Corridor Advisory Group
CDOA	Chicago Department of Aviation
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CTA	Chicago Transit Authority
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PMO	Program Management Oversight Consultant
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority
SIP	Stakeholder Involvement Plan