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# Route 53 land-use plan ready for public review



The Route 53 Expressway ends at Lake Cook Road.



**Mick Zawislak**

With recommendations of how local communities could help pay for the extension of Route 53 into Lake County under consideration, the less known review of how the road would impact surrounding land is moving ahead.

A 170-page draft of the land-use strategy for the Route 53/120 corridor was revealed Thursday, and will soon be available for review from communities, residents, organizations or other interested parties.

Public open houses also are being planned for Oct. 14 and 15, at locations to be announced. The plan will be available online Monday morning at [www.lakecorridorplan.org](http://www.lakecorridorplan.org).

"It's information to help decision making -- good suggestions, good data, good maps," said Jason Navota, principal with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which is guiding this aspect of the Route 53 work. "If these truly are the goals of the corridor, here are some good ideas to achieve that."

The report outlines and identifies a variety of issues associated with a road of this magnitude. It uses market forecasts for 2040 to recommend land use approaches in different areas, and provides guidance and recommendations for a corridor-wide strategy designed to stimulate economic development while protecting the environment and enhancing transportation options.

"We know the corridor is a very diverse group. How do we try to tie this together?" asked Daniel Grove, principal with The Lakota Group, a consultant working on the plan.

Comments and suggestions will be incorporated in the final draft, which would then be pitched to towns early next year, with the goal of having an acceptable working document ready by the end of 2016. However, individual communities are not required to get on board.

"There's no requirement municipalities adopt it," said Barry Burton, Lake County administrator. "Whether they do or not, they (will) have other ideas, a broader vision," to consider in their planning, he added.

Modifications already were made to the plan after wary communities along the path, including Hawthorn Woods, feared a loss of local control over development.

"We've heard very clearly this needs to give guidance, but it shouldn't be prescriptive on a parcel-by-parcel basis," Grove said.

A to-be-determined intergovernmental agreement among corridor members could be a stumbling block.

"The ideas are great, the work is terrific, but unless we know the gums and teeth it's going to be a tough sale," said Hawthorn Woods Mayor Joe Mancino.

The Route 53 extension is envisioned as a four-lane boulevard style toll road, but the exact configuration has not been determined. Earlier this year, a committee of public officials and other stakeholders forwarded to the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority a list of recommendations, such as a 4-cent per gallon gas tax, to fund the local share of the \$2.35 billion to \$2.65 billion project.

Lake County has asked the tollway to advance the project by commissioning an environmental-impact statement. No decision has been made or scheduled, although it can proceed independent of the land use plan. Details of what that entails are available at <http://ilroute53.org/> (<http://ilroute53.org/>).