

- **WORKSHOP B: Connecting Cook County** / Moderator: Jordan Snow – University of Illinois at Chicago Urban Transportation Center

Presenter: María Choca-Urban – Cook County Bureau of Administration

Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH) has embarked upon the development of *Connecting Cook County*, Cook County's first Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) since 1940. The plan will provide a broad vision and a coherent strategy for transportation investments by tying them to greater economic growth and to making communities desirable places to live and work. The planning process officially began in February 2014 with a joint meeting of the Plan's Advisory and Program Committees and will conclude in September 2015 with a final plan.

Connecting Cook County will marshal the combined resources of 130 mayors in suburban Cook County whose municipalities in aggregate represent an equal number of people, businesses and jobs as there are in Chicago so that the City benefits from having strong suburban neighbors just as suburban Cook profits from having a strong central city.

Other agencies look at transportation through narrower lens: geographically at the municipal level or by type of transportation at the agency level. Our plan will look at the universe of policies and projects and prioritize them from a uniquely Cook County perspective to give us a better return on our investment across jurisdictions.

The federal government requires local governments to have long range plans as a condition for receiving transportation funds. In recent years, the U.S. Department of Transportation has rewarded government innovation by funding key projects that are central to local and regional plans. Cook County has missed out on those opportunities. This plan will change that.

Join us at this session to learn where we are with our analysis of all forms of transportation within the County's borders and how you can participate in the process. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss the plan and provide feedback on the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities facing Cook County.

