

Pace Rapid Transit Program

Milwaukee Corridor ART

Stakeholder Involvement Plan



March 2014

Version 1.0

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pace Rapid Transit Program

Through the *Pace Arterial Rapid Transit Study*, twenty-four (24) corridors were evaluated to determine the routes with the greatest potential for rapid transit service. The study identified the six (6) most viable routes and classified them as the “short-term network”—the first routes to be implemented: Milwaukee, Dempster, Oak Brook, Harlem, 95th, and Halsted. As one of the most viable rapid transit routes, the Milwaukee Corridor has been selected as Pace’s first ART route for further study and implementation.

1.2 Milwaukee Corridor Project Background

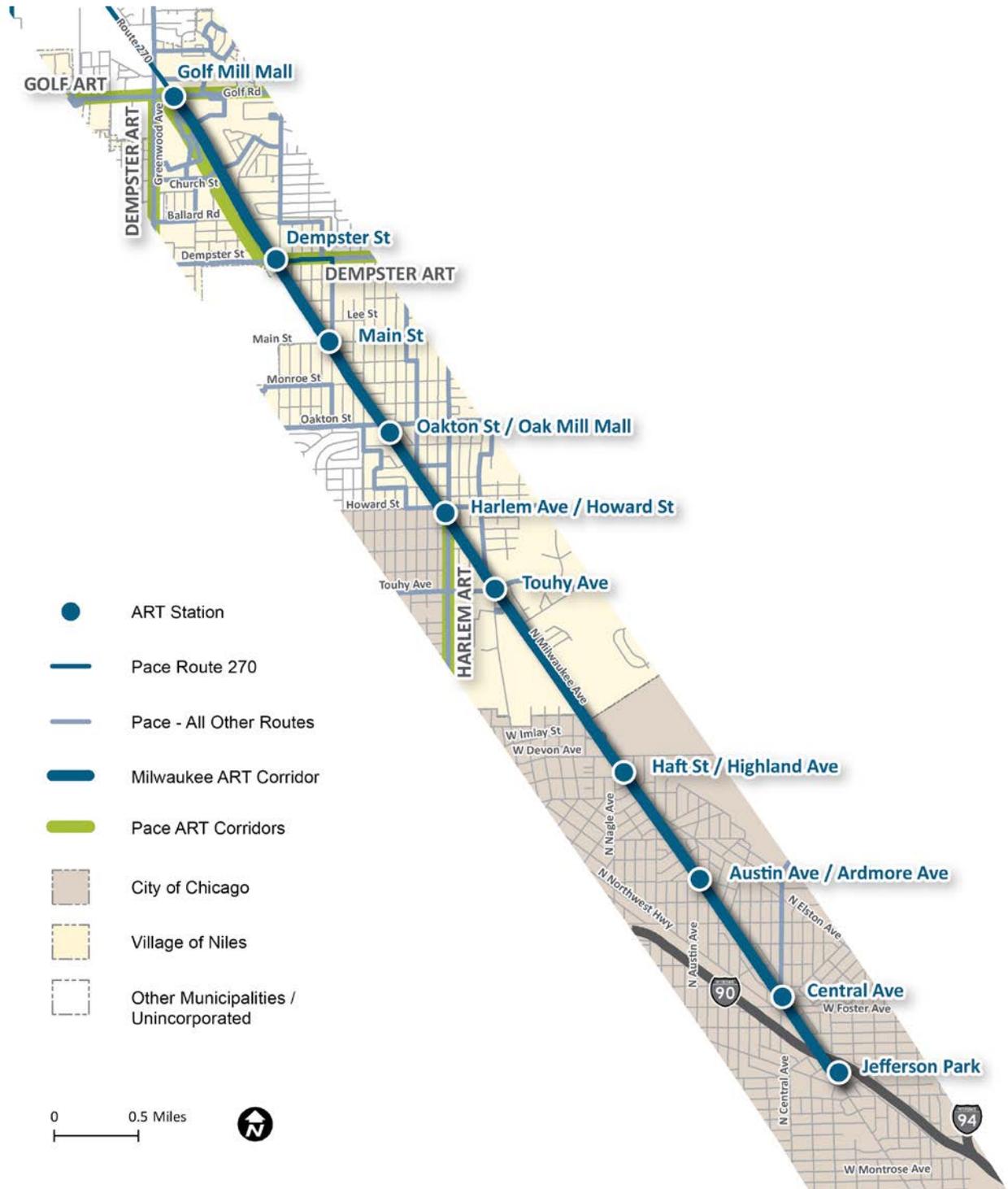
The Milwaukee Corridor Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) project corridor is approximately seven (7) miles in length, traveling on a diagonal, with termini at the Jefferson Park CTA Station and Golf Mill shopping center. The project area is located within the Village of Niles and the City of Chicago (see Figure 1-1 for the Location Map). Milwaukee Avenue is under the jurisdiction of IDOT outside the City of Chicago. Currently, Pace Route 270 operates fixed route service along Milwaukee Avenue between the Jefferson Park CTA Blue Line/Metra Station and the Golf Mill shopping center. Select weekday trips serve AON Service Corporation while other weekday and Saturday trips extend to Glenbrook Hospital and the surrounding area.

Route 270 connects with ten (10) CTA routes, twelve (12) Pace routes including the Niles “Free Bus” community circulator services, the CTA Blue Line, and Metra’s Union Pacific Northwest Line. It operates under the Posted Stops Only policy allowing passengers to board and alight the bus only at designated stops.

Milwaukee Avenue is classified as an urban collector that traverses a primarily commercial corridor. Other land uses along the project corridor include multi-family residential, forest preserve, park district and cemetery properties. Large destinations/major generators include the Jefferson Park Transit Center, Golf Mill Shopping Center, Oak Mill Mall, Caldwell Woods Forest Preserve, and nearby Notre Dame College Prep High School. Access to and from I-90 exists nearby the project area at both Lawrence Avenue and Foster Avenue. I-94/Edens Expressway is located about a mile from the southeastern segment of the project area.

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Figure 1-1 Milwaukee Corridor ART Project Map



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1.3 Project Team

The Project Team provides the leadership, management, expertise, and technical resources needed to implement the SIP. The Team will consist of the following:

- **Program Management Oversight Consultant (PMO):** To provide leadership, management, and oversight in implementing the Milwaukee Corridor project and other projects in Pace's Arterial Rapid Transit program. The PMO's responsibilities include project scoping, management, scheduling, and budgeting as well as the oversight of engineering and construction.
- **Pace's External Relations Deputy Executive Director:** To direct and oversee the marketing, communications, media relations and customer service activities.
- **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 BRT Project Manager:** To provide technical assistance and coordinate with External Relations staff in their efforts to obtain information that is relevant to the project.

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2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) is to provide a guide for achieving stakeholder participation in the Milwaukee Corridor 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. The SIP provides a mechanism for stakeholders to share their plans and vision for the project area and also express their comments or concerns about project objectives and options. This process improves the ability of the Project Team to understand and address issues.

The Plan has been designed to ensure that stakeholders are provided numerous 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 will be conducted with the Village of Niles and City of Chicago as a means of introducing the Milwaukee Corridor project, coordinating with local plans within the project area, and identifying interested parties and stakeholders.

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.

2.1 SIP Goals and Objectives

The goal of the SIP is to actively seek the participation of the general public, communities, government officials, public agencies, and individual interest groups throughout the project—from the time of project definition through implementation. The SIP provides the framework for communicating with these stakeholders in order to achieve collaboration and identify solutions for the project.

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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 Stakeholder Involvement Group (Table 3, Appendix A), member roles, 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 public involvement throughout the project definition phase and can be carried forward into the 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 public involvement efforts with the stakeholder groups.

3.1 Stakeholder Involvement Group

To assist in the development of the Milwaukee Corridor ART project, a Stakeholder Involvement Group (SIG) will be established. The purpose of the SIG is to provide input on the development of the Purpose and Need Statement and on various design and operational elements and options related to the ART project. The SIG is to consist of community leaders from the Village of Niles and the City of Chicago, and can also include, but is not limited to, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the City of Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), and Metra, and as well as other transportation/engineering officials, land use/transportation planning agencies, local municipal staff, environmental and special interest groups, and neighborhood organizations. The SIG members are to represent the views of the communities and transit users within the project area.

The SIG will meet approximately four (4) times, or as needed, throughout the project development process. The meeting program will be designed to encourage timely and meaningful opportunities for input and to encourage information sharing and collaboration between Pace and the SIG.

Any stakeholder outside the project area that shows interest in the project, that is not part of the SIG, will be added to the general stakeholder list, ensuring they will receive meeting invitations, newsletters, and project updates. The Project Team will also be available to meet with organizations on a one-on-one basis throughout the project.

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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 property owners, business owners, state and local officials, special interest groups, transit users, and motorists. Stakeholders for the Milwaukee Corridor ART project may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Area residents
- Property and business owners adjacent to the project corridor
- Elected/community officials, including Chicago Aldermen and Niles Village Trustees
- Transit users – Route 270 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 Milwaukee Avenue corridor or cross streets

The identification of general stakeholders will be accomplished through a combination of desktop 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, ensuring they will receive newsletters, meeting invitations, and project updates. In addition, stakeholders will be informed about the project website where they can access information and submit comments or questions at any time.

All stakeholders will be able to participate in the process through various public outreach opportunities. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, the project webpage, public meetings, newsletters, and press releases (see Section 5). The project mailing/email list will be updated and maintained through the duration of the project. The Project Team also will 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 public 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 IDOT, CTA, RTA, the City of Chicago, and the Village of Niles. 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 outreach efforts. Activities in this stage include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assemble the stakeholder list.
- Develop the SIP and post to the Pace website/project webpage.
- 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 Milwaukee Corridor and the development of project goals and objectives. Project purpose discussions will focus on providing stakeholders with background 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:

- Organize and conduct meetings with the Stakeholder Involvement Group (SIG) and other 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.
- Conduct a Public Meeting to inform the public about the project and seek input on corridor needs and issues.
- Develop the project Purpose and Need Statement.

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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 using stakeholder input.
- 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 the SIG and key stakeholders, as needed, to facilitate decision-making.
- Conduct a Public Meeting to present the final Purpose and Need Statement and gain feedback on infrastructure and service options.

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 engineering and environmental work needed to progress the project. Activities in this stage of the process include the following:

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

4.5 Step Five: Prepare NEPA Documentation

Based on the feedback from the FTA and other stakeholders, the required 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 annotated outline of required NEPA documentation.

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- Prepare NEPA document.
- Conduct FTA coordination meetings.
- Present NEPA documentation and preferred route/operations options to the SIG.
- Conduct a Public Hearing.

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 webpage.
- Press releases.
- Newsletter publication.

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5 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN ACTIVITIES

The following Stakeholder Involvement Plan activities are proposed for the Milwaukee Corridor 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 BRT 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, identifies a target audience, and includes an implementation schedule.

5.1 Stakeholder Activities

Stakeholders are identified as all residents, business owners and property owners within the project area, transit users, and those interested parties who can directly affect the outcome of a planning process. In addition to the general public, key groups of stakeholders identified for this project include those who have decision-making capabilities related to implementing transportation investments and those with public standing that speak for the general public and can influence the broader spectrum of public opinion. These representatives, divided into two groups, include:

- Local, regional, state and federal elected and appointed officials, and agency representatives with jurisdiction over transportation investments and affected environmental, historic, cultural and economic resources.
- Professional associations, and local, regional and potentially statewide community, civic and environmental organizations.

Media publication and broadcast groups, critical to informing the public and affecting public opinion, are addressed later in this section.

5.2 Public Outreach Meetings

Stakeholder involvement for the Milwaukee Corridor ART project will be an ongoing process throughout Project Development and will be carried into the Engineering and Construction phases. Various meetings

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will be held to provide outreach opportunities to all 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 agencies periodically throughout the Project Definition and Engineering phases. Initially, a general meeting will be held with local, state and federal resource agencies as part of the process. As the project progresses, meetings may be held with individual resource agencies to discuss environmental findings and compliance with government requirements.

Public Meetings

Public participation for the Milwaukee Corridor ART 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 in advance of the NEPA process, the proposed project design at the conclusion of the NEPA process, and construction impacts before and during implementation.

At least two (2) public information meetings and one (1) public hearing will be held to coincide with major milestones during the project. Public information meetings may be coordinated with the two public meetings planned for the Niles Community Circulator Modernization project. Please note that the dates shown below in parentheses are tentative and therefore subject to change.

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- **The first Public Meeting (Spring 2014)** serves as an opportunity to provide information regarding the project and objectives, and gain public feedback on transit issues and project concerns.
- **The second Public Meeting (Summer 2014)** will present the project Purpose and Need and design and service options, as well as solicit feedback on the options in advance of the completion of the Project Definition.
- **The third meeting, the Public Hearing (Spring 2015)**, will present the Project Definition and its impacts as documented in the NEPA process.

These meetings will utilize various public informational techniques such as project boards, handouts, and PowerPoint or multimedia presentations summarizing the project work and findings to date. The meetings will be advertised by postcard invitations, public notices placed in area newspapers, on the project website, and on third party websites. Opportunities for the public to provide written comments (comment forms) will be available at the meetings. Translation services will be provided as they are requested.

The public hearing for this project, anticipated as noted above during the Engineering phase, will be held as required by NEPA. A project summary report that defines the project engineering elements will be available at the Public Hearing.

5.3 Other Mechanisms for Public Involvement

In addition to the meeting opportunities described in the preceding section, there will be several other methods for the public to obtain information about the project. These methods (noted below) will provide information and opportunity for feedback regarding upcoming public meeting events, project schedule, and general project status updates.

Mailing List

To support the distribution of public meeting invitations and newsletters, in addition to expediting other direct public contact, a mailing list will be developed and updated. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be added to the list, as available.

The mailing list will include stakeholders such as landowners; federal, state, and local officials; special interest groups; resource agencies; businesses; and members of the public. The mailing list will be

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developed using existing resources (names and addresses of officials from other recent projects in the area), as well as input from other identified stakeholders. The mailing list will include government and business leaders in the immediate project area. This list will be updated throughout the project through various means of communication, such as meeting sign-in sheets and correspondence from the project webpage.

Project Webpage

In an effort to utilize electronic resources, disseminate information to the public, and receive input and comments, a Milwaukee Corridor ART project webpage will be developed for Pace's website. The project webpage will be 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. Also, the webpage can be used to direct the public to project related surveys, if applicable. The project webpage should be part of a larger section of Pace's website dedicated to the Rapid Transit program. Two-way communication through the use of e-mail and/or online comment forms will be available. For consistency, major updates will be made to the webpage on the same schedule as the project's major milestones.

Newsletters

A common communication tool for a project is the use of newsletters. To assist with the delivery of information on the progress of this project, three (3) newsletters will be produced and distributed at key project milestones. These newsletters will not only expound upon the basic information found on the webpage but also update readers on the project's progress. Newsletters are intended for staff use as well as for the public in an effort to ensure that the correct and consistent information is relayed in response to questions and inquiries.

Note: For written materials produced and distributed prior to the development of the Rapid Transit system branding, a temporary project logo and communication design theme, based on Pace's main logo, will be created for printed materials.

Media Strategies

An effective method of informing the general public about a project and its results is through broadcast and print media. To effectively use the media, a number of media strategies will be employed to provide accurate and frequent coverage of the project. Media strategies to be used include press releases,

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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. Incorporating the key message, these press releases will announce public meetings, 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 webpage), standard mail, phone calls, and comment forms from meetings and briefings. Indirect public comment will come through the media, non-agency sponsored meetings, and third party websites. It is important to address public comment so that the public understands that its concerns and opinions are being recognized, to monitor indirect public comment, and to be able to respond to potentially problematic issues such as misinformation.

Mail and e-mail responses offer the time to develop a personalized response, yet timeliness is important as well. Four weeks for developing, editing, approving and mailing the response is a proposed time frame throughout the process.

Phone calls and standard mail will be answered by Pace, unless the Project Team is requested to complete the response. Monitoring other meeting activity, third party websites, and media reports will continue throughout the project. Reports on the activity will be detailed and stored as they occur.

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6 PLAN AVAILABILITY AND MONITORING / UPDATES

The SIP is a dynamic document that will be 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 will make the SIP available to stakeholders for review at public meetings and on the project webpage. The review period for the SIP will be 15 days from date of release. As the project proceeds forward, 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 webpage.

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	Other Project Roles	Responsibilities
Pace Suburban Bus	Lead Agency		

Table 2
Coordinating Agencies and Agency Responsibilities

Agency Name	Role	Cooperating Agency Response	Other Project Roles	Responsibilities
IDOT	Coordination/ Advisory			
Village of Niles	Coordination/ Advisory			
City of Chicago, CDOT	Coordination/ Advisory			
FTA	Coordination/ Advisory			
CTA	Coordination/ Advisory			
Metra	Coordination/ Advisory			

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Table 3
Stakeholder Involvement Group (SIG) Members

Agency Name	Contact Person/Title	E-mail & Mailing Address
Alderman John Arena - 45 th Ward		
Alderman Margaret Laurino - 39 th Ward		
Alderman Mary O'Conner - 41 st Ward		
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce		
City of Chicago CDOT		
City of Chicago Police Dept.		
Cook County Forest Preserve District		
CTA		
Federal Transit Administration		
Glenbrook South High School		
Golf Mill Shopping Center		
IL Department of Transportation		
Leaning Tower YMCA		
Metra		
Village of Niles		
Niles Police Dept.		
Niles Park District		
Niles Public Library		
Niles Senior Center		
Niles Chamber of Commerce		
Notre Dame High School		
RTA		
Shure Incorporated		
Shore Community Services		
St. Andrew Life Center		
Woodward, Inc.		

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Table 4
Stakeholder Involvement Plan Revision History

Version	Date	Document Name	Revision Description
1	February, 2014	Stakeholder Involvement Plan	Original

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Appendix B

Project Development Schedule

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Table 1
Project Development Schedule

Meeting Type	Date	Description
SIG #1	Spring 2014 (May)	Project Overview, Collaboration, Issues/Concerns
PM #1	Spring 2014 (May)	Project Overview, Objectives, Input on Issues/Concerns
SIG #2	Summer 2014 (June/July)	Analysis of Design and Operational Options
PM #2	Summer 2014 (August)	Purpose & Need Statement, Input on Improvements
SIG #3	Fall 2014 (October)	Project Definition Report—Findings and Conclusions
SIG #4	Winter 2015 (January)	Update on NEPA Findings/Overview of PH
PH	Spring 2015	Project Definition and NEPA Documentation

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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
CDOT	Chicago Department of Transportation
CTA	Chicago Transit Authority
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority
SIG	Stakeholder Involvement Group
SIP	Stakeholder Involvement Plan