

INTRODUCTION

Illinois lies at the heart of the nation’s transportation network. The state has one of the largest multimodal transportation networks in the country with thousands of miles of roads and rail, hundreds of airports, and numerous public transportation providers. Each of these modes plays an important role in the state’s robust transportation system. However, one of the most important elements of the system has often been overlooked, the waterway system. The IMTS links the State of Illinois with the Atlantic Ocean via the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway and with the Gulf of Mexico via the Mississippi River. This gives Illinois farmers, manufacturers, and businesses access to international and interstate markets. The system is vital to the state’s economy transporting 90.6 million tons of goods, or 9% of Illinois’ freight tonnage in 2017. Barges flow up and down the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, and Kaskaskia rivers, as well as through the Chicago Area Waterway System and Lake Michigan providing an affordable, efficient, and clean means of transporting goods.



1,118 Miles
OF COMMERCIALLY
NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS



400+
PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE TERMINALS



19
PUBLIC PORT
DISTRICTS



90.6M
TONS OF
GOODS



**Ferries, Water
Taxis, Cruise
Ships**



\$36B
IN ECONOMIC
CONTRIBUTION



¹ Total Illinois MTS mileage slightly exceeds the sum of river mileage due to the inclusion of navigable connecting segments, distance rounding, and other factors. The discrepancies are very small and do not impact the IMTS Plan.



The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) as we know it today was established as an official state agency in 1972. IDOT is a dynamic agency that plans, programs, oversees, and supports multimodal projects across the state. When IDOT was established in the early 1970's, the Division of Water Resources was an integral part of the agency, and as such, IDOT played a major role in the marine transportation system. However, the Division of Water Resources was transferred to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) in 1995, and IDOT's focus on the marine system decreased. The Illinois Marine Transportation System Plan (IMTS Plan) has been undertaken to renew IDOT's commitment to supporting goods movement on the marine system as a mode and to reinvigorate planning and programming activities associated with goods movement.

The purpose of the IMTS Plan is to provide the State of Illinois a comprehensive understanding of the State's marine system from a commerce and transportation perspective. The IMTS Plan is a comprehensive plan that sets the foundation for the state and provides a vision for the IMTS.

The plan was developed by analyzing datasets, reports, and academic papers, as well as by conducting numerous interviews with port officials, terminal operators, businesses, and stakeholders. These activities were critical to provide an accurate holistic view of Illinois' waterway system.

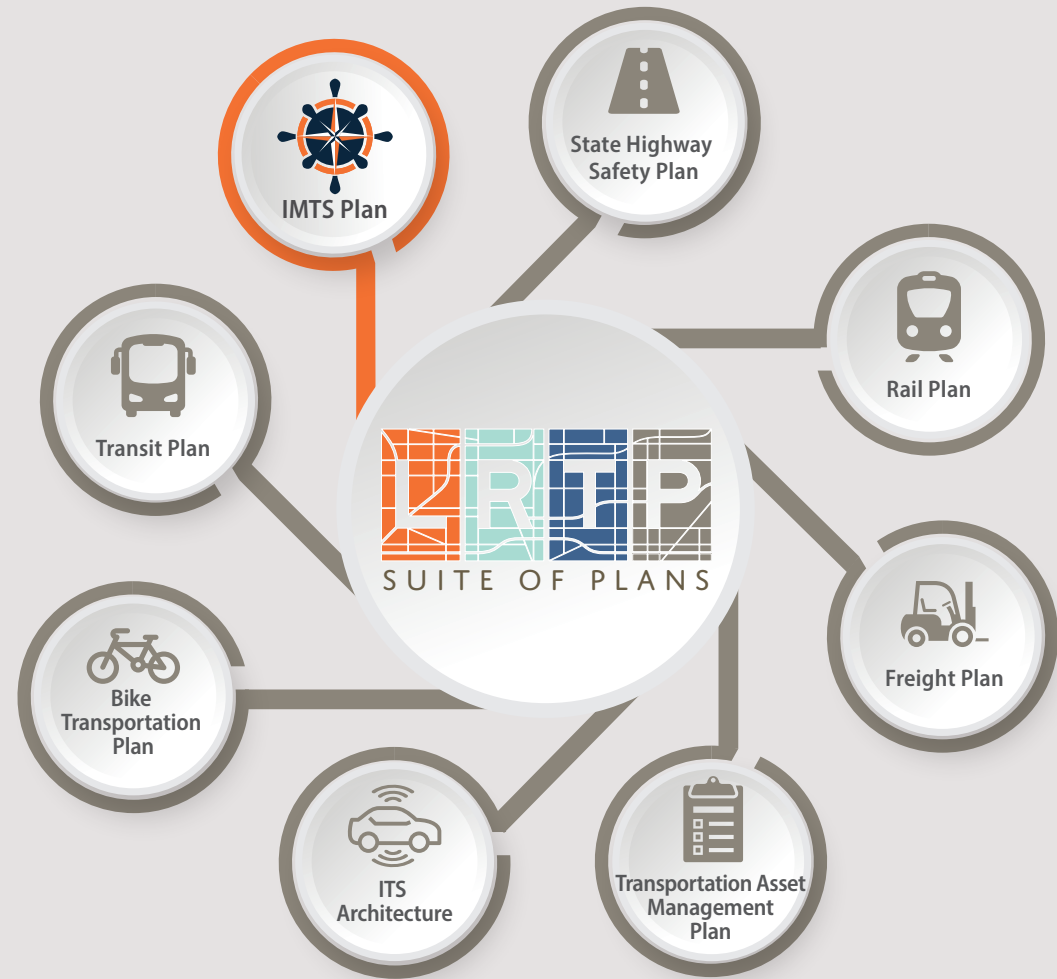
Additionally, the IMTS Plan was guided by a steering committee that was made up of a cross section of public, private, and industry organizations that have a vested interest in Illinois' waterway system. Each organization provided a different perspective on how it views the system and their vision on how the state should approach the waterway system moving forward. Over the course of a year, the committee worked collectively to provide policy and programmatic recommendations; these recommendations can be viewed in later chapters.

1.1 PLAN OVERVIEW

IDOT is a multimodal agency, and the IMTS Plan is one of many IDOT modal plans, the most recent addition to the suite of plans identified in IDOT's most recent Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

All IDOT plans are designed to provide progressive and action-oriented frameworks for Illinois' transportation system. Plan policies provide a framework to guide the sustainable development of an integrated system that is safe, efficient, and reliable; enhances quality of life; supports the economic prosperity of the state; and promotes data-driven, performance-based decision making.

Each mode faces different and unique challenges; the waterway system is no different. However, there remains an inherent set of linkages between each transportation mode IDOT supports. Chapter 5 of the IMTS Plan, *Needs Assessment and Strategy Development*, demonstrates the linkages between the goals of the LRTP and the actions IDOT intends to take to more fully integrate marine system planning and programming into the agency. The IMTS Plan analyzes several items including the waterway system, facilities and their conditions, statewide economic impact of ports, benefits of public investments in ports, and more.





THE PLAN IS ORGANIZED BY THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS:

[1]

INTRODUCTION

[2]

HISTORY AND
SYSTEM OVERVIEW

[3]

PUBLIC PORT
DISTRICT PROFILES

[4]

ECONOMIC VALUE

[5]

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
AND STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT

[6]

IMPLEMENTATION