

Transportation Newsletter

April 2021
Volume 13 Issue 4

Northwest Municipal Conference
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Cover Photo: Village of Fox Lake



Northwest Municipal Conference

Dates to Remember:

Thursday, April 15, 8:30 a.m. — *North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee*

Tuesday, April 20, 10:30 a.m. — *NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee*

Thursday, April 22, 8:30 a.m. — *NWMC Transportation Committee*

Friday, April 23, 8:30 a.m. — *Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee*

Transportation Committee Discusses Fair Transit South Cook Pilot Program

At their March 25 meeting, the Transportation Committee received several updates from regional partners as well as a presentation from Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways Director of Strategic Planning and Policy Jesse Elam. He discussed the three-year pilot project, Fair Transit, which is aimed at exploring avenues to increase transit ridership through the reduction of fares and improvement of interagency operability between Metra, Pace, and CTA. Finally, staff discussed the NWMC's response to the Regional Transportation Authority's Recovery Strategy submitted during their public comment period in early March.

Bike-Ped Committee Hosts Public Art Panel Discussion

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee hosted a panel discussion focusing on how public art can contribute to bicycle and pedestrian safety along roadways. The panel on March 16 featured local artist and owner of Overbite Studios Mary Fedorowski, Evanston Transportation and Mobility Coordinator Jessica Hyink and Wheeling Community Development Director Ross Klicker. Panelists discussed their experience with public art projects and highlighted key takeaways for communities who are looking to implement these projects. The committee also continued discussions related to signage along the NWMC Multi-modal Plan bicycle corridors and staff provided an update on GIS tools in development.

Bloomberg Philanthropies Providing Public Art Infrastructure Grants

Applications are open for Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative, which provides grant funding and technical guidance to cities implementing arts-driven street redesign projects intended to improve safety and revitalize public spaces. The program will provide as many as 20 cities with up to \$25,000 each in funding for these projects. Applications are open to all U.S. cities and are due Monday, April 19. Please visit the [Asphalt Art Initiative's website](#) for past project examples, implementation guidance and application requirements.

IDOT Clarifies At-Risk Project Pre-Agreement Authority for Preliminary Engineering Policy

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently released [Circular Letter 2021-10](#) in response to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) memorandum on Section 1440 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). The FHWA's memorandum sought to clarify Section 1440, which authorizes the FHWA to reimburse projects for Preliminary Engineering (PE) costs incurred prior to project authorization, with the firm understanding that the costs for these projects are for eligible activities on eligible projects. Understanding the importance and opportunity the memorandum provides, IDOT partnered with the Illinois Division of the FHWA to craft the policy outlined in their circular letter. Please contact IDOT Local Project Implementation Engineer Greg Lupton, 217-785-1670 or Greg.Lupton@illinois.gov with any questions about the policy.

Members of Congress Soliciting Community Project Funding Requests

The next focus of the Biden Administration will be the pursuit of a new federal infrastructure package. It has been announced that each Member of Congress is eligible to submit up to 10 Community Project Funding (CPF) requests on behalf of their district for federal fiscal year 2022, which begins on October 1, 2021. More information is available on the [website](#) of the House Committee on Appropriations. Municipalities are encouraged to contact their Member of Congress for applications and additional information about this prospective funding opportunity. The deadline to submit applications is Friday, April 9.



Village of Bannockburn

IDOT Announces Third Installment of Rebuild Illinois Bond Grants

On March 18, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) released [Circular Letter 2021-12](#) announcing the third installment of the \$1.5 billion grant program from the local government component of the REBUILD ILLINOIS capital bill program. This third installment consists of \$250 million that will be distributed based on the regular Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) formula. These funds are not MFT distributions, but rather represent grants made from bond sale proceeds that must be deposited into each Local Public Agencies' (LPA) MFT account and must be expended for transportation use with IDOT oversight. If you have any questions regarding this circular letter, please contact IDOT Local Program Development Engineer Stephane B. Seck-Birhame, Babilible.Seck@illinois.gov or 217-782-3972.

FHWA Extends Public Comment Period for Proposed Revisions to MUTCD

On December 14, 2020, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced proposed changes to standards, guidance, options and supporting information relating to the traffic control devices in all parts of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD). The proposed changes are intended to update the technical provisions to reflect advances in technologies and operational practices, incorporate recent trends and innovations and set the stage for automated driving systems as those continue to take shape. The deadline for comments was recently extended from March 15 to May 14, 2021. To view the proposals and submit comments, please visit [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

AARP Accepting Applications for 2021 Community Challenge Program

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Community Challenge provides small grants to fund quick-action projects from local governments and non-profits that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. Applications are accepted for projects that improve public spaces, housing, transportation, civic engagement, coronavirus recovery, diversity and inclusion and more. For the 2021 cycle, applications are due via the [online application](#) by 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 12. For more information, please visit the [Community Challenge website](#), or contact CommunityChallenge@aarp.org.

National Roadway Safety Awards Call for Nominations

The 2021 National Roadway Safety Awards Program is currently accepting applications. This program opens biennially to recognize innovative and cost-effective roadway safety projects and programs that move the country toward zero deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roadways. States and local agencies are encouraged to submit an application for awards in two categories – Infrastructure and Operational Improvements, and Program Planning, Development, and Evaluation.

Entries are evaluated by a panel of judges in Washington, DC. Award winners normally are flown to Washington for a recognition ceremony, luncheon and meet-and-greets with national transportation officials and elected leaders. Please note that decisions about this year's in-person event has not yet been confirmed and may be moved to a virtual platform. Applicants will be notified of any travel restrictions if applicable. Applications should be submitted via the [Roadway Safety Foundation's online application](#) by Friday, May 28. For more information, please visit the [Federal Highway Administration's](#) website or contact Norah M. Ocel, norah.ocel@dot.gov.

IDOT Announces FY 2023 Local Highway Safety Improvement Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is requesting candidate projects for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) that will be initiated in FY 2023. Applications for this funding program will be accepted through Friday, May 7 at 5:00 p.m., with the announcement of selected projects scheduled for the week of July 26. IDOT provided a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on March 12 via [Circular Letter 2021-11](#).

In addition to the information contained within this Circular Letter, applicants are directed to visit and explore the HSIP website which contains additional information on the IDOT HSIP Policy and analysis tools which may be used to guide the applicant through the application process. Questions concerning the Local HSIP may be directed to IDOT Local Program Development Engineer Stephane B. Seck-Birhame, Bablibile.Seck@illinois.gov or 217-782-3972.



Village of Skokie

RTA Accepting Applications for Section 5310 Funding

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has opened a Call for Projects for the [Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program](#) through noon on April 22.

Section 5310 is a federal program which aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options. This year, approximately \$9.7 million in funding is available for local governments, private non-profit organizations, and transportation providers through an open competitive process. Appropriations for Section 5310 from the most recent COVID relief bill, the American Rescue Plan of 2021 (ARP), are currently unknown but will be added to the total amount available for this Call for Projects. If you have any questions regarding the Section 5310 program or need assistance while developing your [application](#), please contact Fluturi Demirovski at 312-913-3239 or via e-mail at Section5310@rtachicago.org.

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America Walks Awarding Pair of Flashing Beacons for Safe Crosswalk Project

America Walks, through a donation from Carmanah Technologies, is making available a pair of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons for the purpose of creating a safe crosswalk to a qualifying community in several states, including Illinois. Projects that center the concerns of BIPOC residents, reach across the demographics of communities to build coalitions, and/or create unique civic partnerships with new perspectives will be given special consideration. [Applications](#) are open now through May 31. Because of the unique nature of this grant opportunity, applicants for this grant must meet the specific criteria outlined on [America Walks' website](#).



Village of Grayslake