

Transportation Newsletter

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Northwest Municipal Conference
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Cover Photo: Village of Prospect Heights



Northwest Council of Mayors Approves Project Cost Increases

On Friday, July 21, the Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met at the *Barrington Village Hall* and gave preliminary approval to two local Surface Transportation Program (STP-L) cost increase requests. The committee approved a \$200,000 increase to the Busse Road-Devon Avenue intersection resurfacing project in *Elk Grove Village*. The committee also approved a \$853,000 increase for the Illinois Avenue project in Palatine. Those recommendations were ratified by the full Northwest Council of Mayors at Wednesday's meeting at the *Palatine Village Hall*.

North Shore Council Technical Committee Discusses STP Changes

The North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on Thursday, July 27 at the Skokie Village Hall to receive updates from agency partners and staff on local projects and initiatives. Staff provided an update on the Council's Surface Transportation Program (STP) for FY2023-2028, including fiscal changes, letting date shifts and information on which communities should anticipate receiving award letters for their projects. The Technical Committee requested further discussion of a proposal to make meetings virtually accessible for non-member participants, which will be an agenda item for the next Technical Committee meeting scheduled for Friday, October 27 at 8:30 a.m. at the Glenview Village Hall.

Apply Today for the FY2023 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Program

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) is now taking applications for up to \$5.575 billion in funding for projects of regional or national significance. This funding supports three major discretionary grant programs that involve surface transportation projects designed to strengthen supply chains, spur economic development, and improve safety and daily life.

Applications for funding through the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA), National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) and Rural grant programs are being solicited together under a single opportunity titled the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program. The deadline for applications is Monday, August 21 at 10:59 p.m. Please visit [the MPDG page](#) for additional information, including the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), Frequently Asked Questions and other helpful resources.

IDOT Releases 2024-2029 Highway and Multimodal Improvement Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently unveiled its [six-year plan](#) that encompasses \$41 billion in federal, state, and local funds to repair and upgrade roads, bridges, airports, rail lines, transit service, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure across the state. Major projects in NWMC-member communities include Illinois Route 53 from U.S. 12 to Illinois Route 62 in *Arlington Heights, Palatine* and *Rolling Meadows* as well as Willow Road from the Des Plaines River to Waterview Drive in *Glenview* and *Prospect Heights*.

Learn About USDOT's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grants

Combining two existing grant programs from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) intends to make it "easier for communities to seek and receive the funding they need to build better, safer, inclusive infrastructure for the future." Over \$3.5 billion in combined funding will be available to help fund community-led projects that mitigate physical barriers to mobility and access (such as train tracks or highways) or projects that remove physical barriers to improve walkability, safety and affordable transportation access, particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

USDOT will launch the new Reconnecting Communities Institute to provide communities and potential applicants with technical assistance. The deadline for applications is Thursday, September 28 at 10:59 p.m. Applicants may visit [transportation.gov](https://www.transportation.gov) to find the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), Frequently Asked Questions and other helpful resources.



Village of Northbrook

FHWA Publishes e-Bike Information Updates

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently published information on [electric bicycles](#) (e-bikes), including a [literature review](#), fact sheet, research, and a series of case studies. According to the website, “E-bikes present an opportunity to reduce car travel, improve health, and increase access for all, especially traditionally underserved populations; however, the relationship between e-bikes and safety, infrastructure, equity, and the environment is not fully understood and remains of interest to decision makers and potential riders. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is advancing research on e-bikes to better understand e-bike trends and impacts, and how jurisdictions around the country are managing them”. FHWA previously published [The Future of E-Bikes on Public Lands Research Study](#).

CMAP Releases New Community Data Snapshots

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has released a new set of [Community Data Snapshots for July 2023](#) to help local leaders and the public track progress and make informed decisions in their communities. These data-rich snapshots – one for each of the region’s 7 counties, 284 municipalities, and 77 Chicago neighborhoods – summarize demographics, housing, employment, transportation habits, and other key details.

Pace Launches New “Pace Connect” Services for O’Hare Businesses

On June 27, Pace Suburban Bus began an on-demand service to link passengers traveling from the Rosemont Transit Center to O’Hare area businesses during the overnight hours. The service was also launched in the south suburbs around the City of Harvey. This “first and last mile” shared ride service is available every day from 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m., providing service to and from businesses on the southern end of the airport. Riders can download the Pace Connect app or contact a call center to arrange travel, which costs \$2 per ride. For more information, please visit the [Pace Connect](#) website.

RTA Seeks Testimonials on the Value of Public Transit

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is conducting a public outreach campaign to highlight the value of public transportation in the region. As part of this effort, they are creating a series of videos featuring individuals who can tell personal stories that illustrate transit’s positive impact on equity, the economy and the climate. Interested individuals or businesses who can speak to the benefit of access to transit or what they’ve gained from switching their commute to transit can contact Eric Czarnota, eczarnota@nwmc-cog.org or Brian Larson, blarson@nwmc-cog.org, to further discuss this opportunity.

Pace Breaks Ground on New ADA Paratransit Transfer Facility

On July 19, federal, state and local officials gathered in *Schaumburg* to help Pace Suburban Bus celebrate and break ground on its American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Paratransit Transfer Facility. The former Schaumburg post office will be demolished to construct the new facility as part of an expanded Northwest Transportation Center. In addition to municipal support, the facility will receive \$8.2 million in Rebuild Illinois funds.

According to Pace's project overview, "the new and fully accessible ADA Paratransit Service transfer facility will offer a comfortable, indoor waiting area with passenger and operator restrooms. The transit center will include an expanded drop-off area and new Pace branded signs with real-time bus departure information." Other amenities include new sidewalks, digital and audio bus arrival information and increased parking capacity to support the I-90 express services.



Village of Schaumburg
photo courtesy of Brian Larson

Public Comment on RTA Projects for Seniors/ Individuals with Disabilities Due August 9

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has released its list of recommended Section 5310 projects for FY2022 and FY2023. This federal program "aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options."

Thirteen projects totaling \$13.7 million in federal funds are proposed for this year's program including those benefiting the following NWMC member communities:

- Clearbrook (*Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Mount Prospect, Rolling Meadows, Wheeling*)
- Ride DuPage Transportation to Work (*Bartlett, Hanover Park*)
- Ride in Kane (*West Dundee*)
- Little City (*Arlington Heights, Grayslake, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Palatine, Schaumburg, Streamwood*),
- McRide Dial-A-Ride (*Fox Lake*)
- CTA Bus Stop Tactile Signage (*Evanston, Lincolnwood, Nilas, Park Ridge, Skokie*)
- Metra ADA Visual Information Signage (general membership).

Public comments are due by Wednesday, August 9 and can be submitted by visiting the [RTA Section 5310 webpage](#).

Pace Awarded Funding for Electric Paratransit Vehicles

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently announced that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has awarded the agency \$12.3 million for new battery-electric paratransit vehicles. As part of the award, Pace Suburban Bus will receive funding to deploy two new electric vehicles as part of the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program. Additional information is available by viewing [IDOT's press release](#).

Register Today for RTA's August 8 Transit is the Answer Coalition Meeting

On Tuesday, August 8, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is hosting a [Transit is the Answer Coalition](#) meeting to learn more about how to support the region's transit system. The virtual meeting will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., followed by an optional 30-minute networking and Q&A session. All are welcome to join for an update on the RTA's planned 2023 activities and a discussion about how to best improve safety and security on transit. Please visit the [registration page](#) to RSVP and for more information.

Help Spread the Word About Metra's Regional Connect Pass

Metra has teamed up with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Pace Suburban Bus to save money and offer additional convenience and flexibility through the new [Regional Connect Pass](#). For just an additional \$30, Metra Monthly Pass holders can have unlimited monthly travel across Metra, CTA and Pace systems. With no time or day restrictions on usage, the Regional Connect Pass offers significant savings and flexibility to travel throughout the region.

Metra is requesting assistance from local governments to publicize the Regional Connect Pass. Metra has created [materials, including social media posts and newsletter content](#) to assist in getting the word out to residents and the region. The Regional Connect Pass is available at any Metra ticket agent or via the Ventra app.

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City of Highland Park