

Transportation Newsletter

December 2025
Volume 17 Issue 12

Northwest Municipal Conference
1600 E. Golf Rd. Suite 0700 Des Plaines, IL 60016
Phone: 847-296-9200 www.nwmc-cog.org
Cover Photo: Village of Skokie, NWMC Staff Photo



Northwest Municipal Conference

Dates to Remember:

NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian and Transportation Committee Networking Social: Tuesday, December 9, 10:30 a.m. — NWMC Offices

North Shore STP-L Call for Projects Closes: Friday, December 19, End of Business

Northwest STP-L Call for Projects Closes: Tuesday, December 30, End of Business

Time to Respond to the Councils of Mayors 2027-2031 STP-L Call for Projects

Time is running short to submit projects during the North Shore and Northwest Councils of Mayors Call for Projects for 2027-2031 Surface Transportation Program-Local (STP-L) funding. The [North Shore Call for Projects](#) will be open until Friday, December 19, and the [Northwest Call for Projects](#) will be open until Tuesday, December 30. Project selection methodologies and application documents are available on each Council's website.

The NWMC held a STP-L workshop last month where staff reviewed the Call for Projects timeline, STP-L funding overview and council-specific application requirements. A [recording of the workshop](#) can be found on the NWMC YouTube Channel. Additionally, the North Shore Council of Mayors hosted a

(Continued on page 2)

Time to Respond to the Councils of Mayors 2027-2031 STP-L Call for Projects

(Continued from page 1)

workshop in partnership with McHenry County on the Safe Systems Approach process, which is now part of the Council's project selection criteria. A [recording of that workshop](#) is also available on the NWMC YouTube Channel.

For questions about the North Shore Council call for projects, please contact Brian Larson, blarson@nwmc-cog.org and for the Northwest Council, please contact Eric Czarnota, eczarnota@nwmc-cog.org.

NWMC Transportation Resources Webpage Updated

The NWMC has updated its [Transportation Additional Resources page](#) to include materials on e-mobility devices, Walk Bike and Roll to School Day, and an updated list of anticipated call cycles for various funding opportunities. For communities developing e-mobility device ordinances, [a recording of the recent NWMC e-mobility devices summit](#) is now available on the NWMC website, as are [examples of community outreach materials](#). If your community would like to share their outreach materials, please send them to Eric or Brian to be included in the folder. The NWMC's April 2024 presentation on [Walk Bike and Roll to School Day](#) and its slides has also been added to the resources page.

Access to Transit Call For Projects Now Open, Featuring New Trail-Supportive Development Category

From our partners at the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA):

The call for projects is now open through Friday, January 16 for RTA's [Access to Transit program](#), which improves access to the regional transit system for people walking and biking, implementing recommendations from planning studies completed through the RTA's [Community Planning program](#). To date, Access to Transit has funded 51 projects in municipalities throughout the region for a total investment of \$23.8 million.

Eligible projects include ADA accessibility improvements, bicycle infrastructure, intersection improvements, sidewalk gap connections, wayfinding, and more. Newly eligible this year from [Senate Bill 2111](#) are Trail-Supportive Development infrastructure improvements that are located within one-quarter mile of a public trail and are designed to facilitate access to and use of public transit.

RTA staff are offering a virtual Open House session during which applicants can ask questions about the application process, about specific project ideas, and anything else related to the call for projects. Potential applicants can participate at any time during the Open House session on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 – 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. [Register here](#).

Applicants can email questions to applications@rtachicago.org or contact RTA Government Affairs staff to be connected to the Local Planning team.

US DOT BUILD Grants Call for Projects Now Open

The U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program is now open and accepting applications. BUILD is a competitive grant program, that provides funding for “planning or constructing surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve safety; environmental sustainability; quality of life; mobility and community connectivity; economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism; state of good repair; partnership and collaboration; and innovation.” Eligible projects include Title 23 federal-aid highways and bridges \$1.5 billion dollars in funding will be available, with awards ranging from \$5 million to \$25 million for urban capital projects. Read more at the [BUILD NOFO](#). Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 24, 2026.

Cook County Seeks Feedback on O'Hare Area Bike Network Study

The Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) is currently conducting a [public survey](#) on its [O'Hare Area Bike Network Study](#). Results from the survey will guide the development of the network and identify areas and types of improvements to implement. This is a key component of the stakeholder engagement process and support sharing the study on social media. DoTH has developed a [flyer](#), [social media graphics](#), suggested language, and [the survey](#), which can be added to existing communications. Assistance sharing this survey among newsletters and social media is greatly appreciated.

CMAP Launches the Century Plan

From our partners at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP):

The father of urban planning and co-author of the visionary 1909 Plan of Chicago, Daniel Burnham, famously said, “Make no little plans.” A century later, regional leaders are embarking on the next BIG plan for this region.

Nearly 1,000 people, including state officials, mayors, and county board chairs, along with transportation, business, and civic stakeholders, came together to kick off The Century Plan — a shared, overarching vision for the seven- county region that will guide policies for transportation, the environment, and the economy for decades into the future. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) hosted a first-of-its-kind State of the Region event on November 4th to inspire and catalyze a regional initiative to shape the future. The gathering also celebrated CMAP's 20th anniversary and two decades of regional planning progress.

Over the next two years, CMAP will engage with government, business, and civic groups, along with residents and communities to develop The Century Plan, with a targeted adoption by the CMAP Board and the MPO Policy Committee in fall 2027.

At the State of the Region event, which took place at the iconic Old Post Office in Chicago, guests got a first look at data trends that will help drive conversations around key quality of life issues, including housing and the economy, flooding and transportation, the region's aging population, and more.

To learn more, visit cmap.is/the-century-plan and [sign up for CMAP newsletters](#) to stay informed about The Century Plan; transportation, planning, and data news; and other CMAP updates.



Village of Wheeling

Where Would You Like To See New Rail Stations?

From our Partners at the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH)

Please help the Cook County DoTH promote a survey by sharing the [attached flyer](#) with your members, which can also be accessing at www.cookrailsurvey.com. The survey will run through December 31.

The survey is part of a study DoTH is leading to investigate where additional transit rail stations should be considered along existing transit rail lines within Cook County. This effort is called the Rail Infill Station Study and is being conducted in partnership with CDOT, CTA, and Metra. The expected results of the study include a set of prioritized stations for the agencies and stakeholders to further investigate and develop, as well as a vision for how key stations may fit into both the local context and the broader transit network. Work on the study is expected to be completed in 2026.

Both CTA and Metra rail networks are being evaluated, and we are seeking input through the online survey from the general public and local and regional stakeholders. These survey results will help us better understand and prioritize opportunities for future rail stations. Social media posts and car card advertisements for the survey will begin appearing on CTA and Metra trains in the coming weeks so please be on the lookout for those as well. We also welcome COG and COM staff to complete the survey. Kindly limit to one response per organization or municipality.

Please direct any questions about the survey or study to Sam Waldorf (Samuel.Waldorf@cookcountyil.gov), Nicholas Riehle (Nicholas.Riehle@cookcountyil.gov), or Ryan Ruehle (Ryan.Ruehle@cookcountyil.gov).

I-290/I-88 Pace Express Feasibility Bus Study Second Survey

From our Partners at Pace Suburban Bus:

Pace Bus is in the final stages of an I-290/I-88 Express Bus Study to explore potential transit opportunities within a five-mile radius of the Interstate 290 Eisenhower Expressway corridor and the I-88 Ronald Reagan Memorial Tollway. This study evaluates potential expressway-based bus services, including bus-on-shoulder operations, connecting key destinations such as the CTA Forest Park Blue Line Transit Center, the Oak Brook Center/Cermak-Butterfield corridor, and the Schaumburg/Woodfield region.

This feasibility study assesses the potential for faster and more efficient transportation options for commuters traveling between various west suburban locations and Chicago. The study explores the viability and demand for proposed I-290 and I-88 Pace Express service, which would offer limited-stop service, ensuring reduced travel times while maintaining key connections to major suburban hubs.

Designed to integrate seamlessly with Metra and CTA rail service, the proposed express service would provide a reliable, affordable alternative to driving, particularly during peak commute hours. The feasibility study analyzes various factors, including ridership demand, travel patterns, and operational logistics, to determine the most effective design for an express bus service. The study seeks to address growing demand for improved public transit options, enhancing accessibility and reducing congestion along the corridors. By providing an expedited service, the potential routes could significantly enhance mobility for residents, workers, and visitors who rely on public transportation for their daily commutes.

Community input plays a vital role in finalizing the study's findings.

Pace's collaboration with local stakeholders ensures that service meets the needs of commuters.

You are encouraged to participate in the upcoming public open house on Tuesday, December 9th, at the Howard Mohr Community Center, 7640 Jackson Blvd. - Forest Park, IL 60130 from 6 PM – 8 PM.

We seek your input on preliminary route and station concepts. At the open house, attendees can comment on proposed service plans, station locations, and connections to area communities like Oak Park, Oak Brook, Forest Park, and Schaumburg. A separate activity table for children will be provided, and families are welcome and encouraged to attend.

We hope to see you there!

If you are not able to attend, please take the survey to share your insight on the proposed routes and stations.

Be sure to take the [I-290/I-88 Study Survey](#) and learn more.

BikeSafetyQuiz 2.0 Rolls Out To Schools

Ride Illinois has rolled out its newest iteration of its [BikeSafetyQuiz](#), and is inviting communities and schools to make use of its grant program to fund outreach efforts to reach three different audiences: child bicyclists, adult bicyclists, and motorists/drivers. As part of IDOT's Injury Prevention funding, Illinois schools can be reimbursed \$2 per student for staff time and use of the BikeSafetyQuiz. Contact Ride Illinois at education@rideillinois.org with questions about the quiz and other teaching resources.

Webinar: Safe Streets and Roads for All

From our partners at the United States Conference of Mayors Local Infrastructure Hub:

The Local Infrastructure Hub will be offering a new series of Workshops beginning in Fall 2025. Registration is open and dates will be confirmed at a later date. During a half-day workshop, participants will gain grant-specific guidance on high-value federal funding opportunities and learn how to navigate application requirements, align projects with funding criteria, and strengthen implementation readiness. Participants will also have access to office hours with subject-matter experts. The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program provides funding to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries. Cities can use this funding to develop safety action plans, redesign high-risk corridors, or implement infrastructure improvements like sidewalks and crosswalks. This workshop will explore how local governments can apply SS4A Planning and Implementation funding to advance roadway safety and address the needs of all road users. **This workshop will take place on Dec 11, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.** [Register for Event.](#)

City of Evanston
NWMC Staff Photo

2026 Regional Transportation Plan: Refined Financial Forecasts and Project Evaluations

From our partners at CMAP:

CMAP continues to advance the [2026 Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) through extensive research, data analysis, and public engagement.

To meet federal requirements for fiscal constraint, CMAP is developing long-range financial forecasts for the RTP to estimate baseline revenues and expenditures and identify additional reasonably expected revenues. Working with a [financial plan resource group](#), CMAP has refined transparent and accurate forecasting methods to guide investment priorities through 2050. A forthcoming **Financial Plan Risk Assessment** will evaluate key uncertainties and identify realistic and resilient mitigation strategies.

Through coordination with partner agencies, CMAP has identified 137 regional capital projects (RCPs) for possible inclusion in the RTP. [A draft RCP Benefits Report](#) summarizing the benefits that each proposed project offers to the region is now available. The RCP candidates can also be viewed in an [interactive map](#). CMAP will continue to update and refine this report through the end of the year.



Upcoming Transportation-Related Webinars

LIH: [Safe Streets and Roads for All](#) —Thursday, December 11 at 2:00 p.m.

FHWA: [Designing Smarter Roads: Permeable Pavements & Culverts](#) —Thursday, December 18 at 1:00 p.m.

AT: [Designing Events that Engage Your Community in 2026](#) —Thursday, January 15 at 12:00 p.m.

Did You Miss It? News Items in Brief

Chicago Tribune: [Illinois lawmakers pass mass transit funding bill. Here's what that means for CTA, Metra and Pace riders](#)

Chicago Sun-Times: [What Illinois' new transit spending bill means for riders, drivers](#)

Chicago Sun-Times: [Metra, Pace approve budgets with no fare hikes](#)

Chicago Sun-Times: [CTA board approves no fare increase in 2026 budget, questions when new transit bill money will come](#)

Governing: [How Illinois Made a 'Transformational' Investment in Transit](#)

Vision Zero Network: [A Decade of Vision Zero: Gauging Progress & Barriers](#)

Daily Herald: [Pace's rideshare program gets a lifeline after transit funding boost](#)

Daily Herald: ['The winning touchdown': Metra exhales, passes budget without fare hikes, fiscal cliff](#)

Capitol News Illinois: [From new train lines to parking regulations: What else is in Illinois' transit bill](#)

Daily Herald: [Illinois driver's licenses, state IDs now fit in your iPhone](#)

Daily Herald: [Biking smarter: Statewide quiz educates 70,000 Illinois students](#)

Suburban Chicago Bicycling: [Behold Streamwood's new bike-ped bridge over Route 59](#)

Streetsblog USA: [PART III: Policy Solutions to the E-Moto Problem](#)

Vision Zero Network: [A Decade of Vision Zero: Gauging Progress & Barriers](#)

Urban Institute: [Federal Infrastructure Spending on Transportation, Four Years after the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#)

The Record North Shore: [Trustees favor dedicated bike lanes, altered trail crossing, more for Lake Avenue](#)

Journal and Topics: [Metra Holiday Train Returns To Northwest Suburbs In December](#)

WBBM: [Metra says all hands are on deck during Chicago winter storm: "We know that people rely on us during inclement weather"](#)

AP: [No car? No problem. Building apartments near public transit could help address the housing crisis](#)

Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC): [Microtransit Programs: Key Takeaways for Local Governments](#)

Daily Herald: ['A transformational bill:' Transit measure gets a victory lap but questions remain on cost, local control](#)

Daily Herald: [You asked about nonstop Route 53 work, missing trees and speeders. Here are the answers](#)

Daily Herald: [Mount Prospect looking at ways to slow traffic through Hatlen Heights neighborhood](#)

Daily Herald: [Should I-290 and I-88 be next routes for express buses? Pace wants to know](#)

Rocky Mountain Institute: [Building Smarter: How Investing in More Transportation Choices Cuts Infrastructure Costs](#)

Northwest Municipal Conference
1600 E. Golf Rd Suite 0700
Des Plaines, IL 60016
Phone: 847-296-9200 | www.nwmc-cog.org

Eric Czarnota: 847-296-9200 ext. 128

ECzarnota@nwmc-cog.org

Brian Larson: 847-296-9200 ext. 131

BLarson@nwmc-cog.org