

# Transportation Newsletter

February 2024  
Volume 16 Issue 2

Northwest Municipal Conference  
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Cover Photo: Village of Mount Prospect



**Northwest Municipal Conference**

## Dates to Remember:

**NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee:**  
Tuesday, February 13, 10:30 a.m. - NWMC  
Offices and *Virtually*

**NWMC Transportation Committee:**  
Thursday, February 29, 8:30 a.m. - NWMC  
Offices and *Virtually*

## North Shore and Northwest Councils Release STP Program for Public Comment

The North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee and the Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on January 18 and 19, respectively, and voted to release each council's draft FFY2025-2029 local Surface Transportation Program (STP-L) for a 30-day public comment period. The [North Shore Council of Mayors](#) and the [Northwest Council of Mayors](#) draft programs are available for review on their respective websites.

Comments on the North Shore Council program should be submitted to Brian Larson, [blarson@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:blarson@nwmc-cog.org) by Monday, February 19, and comments on the Northwest Council program should be submitted to Eric Czarnota, [eczarnota@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:eczarnota@nwmc-cog.org) by Thursday, February 22

## Interested in RAISE-ing the Bar for Transportation Projects

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently released a [Circular Letter](#) announcing that the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has released a [NOFO for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) Grant Program](#). This grant funds surface transportation projects that will have a significant local or regional impact that advance the USDOT priorities of safety, equity, climate, sustainability, workforce development, job quality and wealth creation.

Greenhouse gas reduction in the transportation sector and other environmental impact avoiding projects are encouraged.

USDOT has additional information, including information on how to apply, frequently asked questions, previously recorded webinars and tools to help identify historically disadvantaged communities or areas of persistent poverty on the [USDOT RAISE website](#).

Interested agencies must apply through [Grants.gov](#) by Wednesday, February 28 at 10:59 p.m.

For further information regarding this notice, please contact the RAISE grant program staff, 202-366-9603 or [RAISEgrants@dot.gov](mailto:RAISEgrants@dot.gov). A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 202-366-3993. To request letters of support from IDOT, please contact Bureau Chief of Federal Affairs Tim McMahon, [Timothy.McMahon@illinois.gov](mailto:Timothy.McMahon@illinois.gov), at least two weeks prior to the application deadline.

## Cook County Announces Call for Invest in Cook and CDBG Applications

Cook County recently opened applications for the Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH) [Invest in Cook grant program](#), which aims to assist communities with transportation infrastructure improvements. These grants are available to local governments and agency partners to “prioritize transit and other transportation alternatives, support the region’s role as North America’s freight capital, promote equal access to opportunities, maintain and modernize existing infrastructure, and increase investments in transportation.” For more information and the application for Invest in Cook, please visit the program website.

In addition, the Bureau of Economic Development (BED) is also accepting [Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\)](#) applications to support economic development in the county through capital improvement, public service, and Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) programs. For more information and the project application, please click [here](#).

The Cook County DOTH and BED hosted a virtual workshop on Wednesday, January 31, to provide additional information on how to apply. Staff will forward the workshop link when the recording is posted.

The application deadline for all grant opportunities is Friday, March 22, at 5:00 p.m. If you have any questions or are interested in finding out if Invest in Cook is a good fit for your potential project or need help applying, please email [InvestinCook.CC@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:InvestinCook.CC@cookcountyil.gov) with any questions on the Invest in Cook program. For questions about the Community Development Block Grant program, please contact [info.edev@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:info.edev@cookcountyil.gov).



## IDOT Updates Circular Letter Categorization

On January 18, IDOT released an update to its Circular Letter categorization system. New categorization will help readers quickly identify the categories of communication received. The planned groupings include but will not be limited to: Notices of Funding Opportunities, Informational Item, Policy and Practices Notification and Guidance. To subscribe to the IDOT Subscription Service, please register at <https://idot.click/T2>.

## Applying for federal Transportation Grants? Check the USDOT Checklist!

The USDOT wants you to be putting your best foot forward for federal transportation grant funding. To do so, they have created a [Project Readiness Checklist](#). From generalized background and guidance to planning, compliance or environmental requirements, the checklist can help you identify what your organization needs to accomplish to be at the top of the application list.

## US DOT Soliciting Project Applications for Bridge Investment Program

The USDOT is providing up to \$80 million in Planning Project grants and up to \$9.62 billion for Bridge Projects focused on safety and condition improvements of existing poor condition bridges. USDOT will accept applications for projects for FFY2023-2026. Applications can utilize templates, a cost-benefit tool, and find answers to questions at the Bridge Improvement Program (BIP) website. Due dates depend on the FFY and type of application submitted as follows:

Fiscal Year BIP Funding	Planning Application Deadline	Bridge Project Application Deadline
FY 2023 and 2024	February 19, 2024	March 19, 2024
FY 2025	October 1, 2024	November 1, 2024
FY 2026	October 1, 2025	November 1, 2025

IDOT is available to provide letters of support if given two weeks prior to the application deadline. Please contact IDOT, Bureau Chief of Federal Affairs Tim McMahon [Timothy.McMahon@illinois.gov](mailto:Timothy.McMahon@illinois.gov) if interested. The complete NOFO is available on the [Grants.gov](#)



Village of Lincolnwood

## RTA Seeks Access Pilot Program Promotional Assistance

RTA, Metra, and Cook County are extending their reduced fares for low-income Metra riders through the newly created Access Pilot Program. The Access Pilot Program is now accepting applications from recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) within Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will County through the [GetAccess.org](http://GetAccess.org) web portal.

However, RTA is requesting help to promote the pilot program. RTA has created sample newsletter and social media posts and imagery you can use at the [Access Pilot Program toolkit](#). For questions or assistance with communications related to Access, please contact RTA Communications Director Tina Smith, [tina.smith@rtachicago.org](mailto:tina.smith@rtachicago.org). For questions about the Access program and how to apply, please call RTA Customer Service, 312-913-3110.

## AARP Accepting Quick-Action Community Challenge Grants

The [AARP Community Challenge Grant](#) supports quick-action programs that enable livability for all ages. These small grants range from \$500 to \$50,000 to support flagship projects, capacity-building, and demonstration projects. A Q&A webinar was held on Wednesday, and the recording along with additional information can be viewed on the program website. Applications must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6.

## Biden Administration Announces \$623 million in EV Charging Grants, \$15 million for Illinois

On January 11, [the Biden administration announced \\$623 million in EV charging grants for 47 projects across the nation](#). Funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program, this competitive program plans to build out a "convenient, affordable, reliable and made-in-America national network of EV chargers."

The Illinois Finance Authority received \$15 million in grants for the State of Illinois Community Charging Program, which will help build out [IDOT's EV Charging Corridors and suggested EV Charging Stations network](#). Information on the funding process is forthcoming.



## Take Advantage of Free Technical Assistance for Electric Vehicle Deployment

The Joint Office of Energy and Transportation (Joint Office), in partnership with Federal Highway Administration the Federal Transit Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency, [offers free technical assistance](#) to help plan, deploy, operate and maintain electric vehicle (EV) chargers and infrastructure. This assistance is available in the form of siting analyses, vehicle procurement, storage opportunities, and much more.

## Accessibility Resources Abound at the DOT Navigator

Getting around shouldn't be a chore, but many residents face mobility barriers. The USDOT wants to eliminate these barriers by making it easy to apply best practices towards accessibility-related requirements. With a consolidated [Frequently Asked Questions](#), communities can incorporate accessibility into transportation projects through ADA Transition Maps, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)-funded programs and increase the impact of decision-making practices.

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## Did You Miss It? News Items in Brief

*Illinois Answers:* [Evanston's Streets Have Become Safer for Cyclists. What's the Suburb Doing Right?](#)

*Chicago Tribune:* [Morton Grove looks forward to new train station, park improvements, construction in 2024](#)

*Chicago Sun-Times:* [Metra overhauling fares, eliminating ticket windows](#)

*Daily Herald:* ['Long awaited and longed for': Underpass work in Barrington set to begin](#)

*Daily Herald:* ['Next generation' of tollway transponders is ... a sticker. Here's what you need to know](#)

*Daily Herald:* ['One of the most important infrastructure projects in the country': What's next with I-490, Route 390](#)

*SupplyChainBrain:* [USDOT Provides Update on Transportation Infrastructure Improvements](#)

*Chicago Sun-Times:* [Metra allows bikes on all trains, makes COVID-era policy permanent](#)

*Daily Herald:* [Metra enacts conduct code for riders; Violators could face bans](#)

*Daily Herald:* [Why you may see larger, faster e-bikes on suburban forest preserve trails](#)

*Chicago Tribune:* ['Locked in': Chicagoans who use wheelchairs, mobility aids struggle to navigate city's sidewalks during snowstorm](#)

*Ride Illinois:* [New Initiative Responds to Fatal Crashes](#)

*Pace Suburban Bus:* [Arlington Heights-Rolling Meadows On Demand Service Expansion Pilot begins Monday, January 29](#)

*Pace Suburban Bus:* [Pace's Inaugural Electric Bus Enters Service](#)