

Transportation Newsletter

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Northwest Municipal Conference
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Cover Photo: NWMC Staff



Northwest Municipal Conference

Dates to Remember:

NWMC Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee:
Tuesday, January 14, 10:30 a.m. — NWMC
offices and virtually

**North Shore Council of Mayors Technical
Committee:** Thursday, January 16, 8:30 a.m.
— Village of *Skokie*

NWMC Transportation Committee:
Thursday, January 23, 8:30 a.m. — NWMC
offices and virtually

**Northwest Council of Mayors Technical
Committee:** Friday, January 24, 8:30 a.m. —
Village of *Barrington*

Final Reminder for Feedback on the Pace Suburban Bus ReVision Survey

Pace Suburban Bus is soliciting feedback on its proposed ReVision future service concepts and has extended the deadline to complete its [online survey](#) to Friday, January 24. The [ReVision project](#) “seeks to reimagine Pace’s transit network, informed by shifts in travel patterns and rider feedback.” As part of the project, Pace is seeking input from frequent riders and elected officials through this online survey. Pace is also requesting help to spread the word about ReVision and its survey via a [toolkit that features shareable content, graphics, text and links to use in newsletters and on social media](#). Your assistance providing the municipal perspective and encouraging resident participation is greatly appreciated.

USDOT PROTECT Grants Make Transportation Infrastructure Resilient to Natural Hazards

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has opened applications for the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Discretionary Grant Program. This program will offer \$576 million in FFY 2024-2025 for planning and construction of surface transportation facilities to be resilient to natural hazards such as climate change, flooding and extreme weather events. Learn more about the PROTECT grant and how to apply by visiting the program [webpage](#).

Fund Your Small-Scale Biking Projects with a Community Spark Grant

Whether you're developing a local traffic garden, creating a placemaking pop-up toolkit, installing bike racks, or your own creative idea, the League of American Bicyclists is offering communities the chance to implement projects and programs "that spark change and catalyze a community's ability to create places where bicycling is safer, easier, and more accessible" through [Community Spark Grants](#). These mini-grants, in partnership with General Motors (GM), will offer \$2,000 each to 10 communities throughout the U.S. The deadline to apply is Friday, January 17 at 4:00 p.m. To learn more and apply, visit [Community Spark Grants](#).

IEPA Electric Vehicle Rebate Program Now Open

For communities seeking to incentivize residents' adoption of electric vehicles, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) will open its next all-electric vehicle rebate application cycle on Tuesday, January 21, with applications closing on Wednesday, April 30. Approximately \$14 million in rebates will be available this year, with low-income applicants receiving priority. For more information, please visit the [Electric Vehicle Rebate Program](#).

Raise the Bar for Transportation Projects with a RAISE Grant

The USDOT has released [its NOFO for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) Grant Program](#). This grant is available for planning or construction of surface transportation projects that will have a significant local or regional impact as well as advance the USDOT priorities of safety, equity, climate mitigation, sustainability, workforce development, job quality and wealth creation.

Capital projects must have a minimum cost of \$5 million, and projects in areas of persistent poverty or historically disadvantaged communities are eligible for up to 100% federal funding. Please visit [USDOT RAISE](#) for additional application information, including frequently asked questions, previously recorded webinars and tools to help identify historically disadvantaged communities or areas of persistent poverty. All interested applicants must submit applications in [Grants.gov](#) no later than 10:59 p.m. on Thursday, January 30.

Road Violence is No Accident! Prevent It with a Community Traffic Safety Grant!

From the USDOT:

Do you have a project or program that can put Road to Zero's pillars into practice, advance the Safe System Approach and help reduce roadway deaths and serious injuries? The application for the Road to Zero Community Traffic Safety Grants, funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), is now open. These 12-month grants fund organizations in the U.S. that are working on innovative and promising approaches for implementing evidence-based strategies. Applications are due by 10:55 p.m. on Friday, January 17, and awards will be announced in March 2025. For more information and to apply, [visit Community Traffic Safety Grants](#) where you can also view the work of current and past grantees. If you have questions that are not answered there, contact RoadToZero@nsc.org.

Invest in Cook Grants Opening Soon!

The 2025 Invest in Cook grant program will open on Wednesday, January 15. This funding resource supports planning, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction for municipal projects that follow [Connecting Cook County](#), the county's long-range transportation plan. For more information, including a list of previously funded projects, visit [Invest in Cook](#), or email InvestinCook.CC@cookcountyil.gov.

Looking to Brighten Your Crosswalks? Tap a Grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies!

Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative is offering up to \$100,000 each in grants available to communities looking to create "asphalt art" projects on city streets. Cities with populations greater than 50,000 are eligible to submit a single application. Up to 10 cities will be selected. To learn more, visit the [Asphalt Art Initiative webpage](#), with additional information in this [Smart Cities Dive article](#). The deadline to apply is Friday, January 31.

Be Ready for PROWAG with IDOT's January Trainings

Recently, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements were upgraded with the adoption of Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). In response, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has scheduled two free, full-day trainings on PROWAG this month at the *Schaumburg* District Office. Attendees can sign up for either Tuesday, January 14 or Tuesday, January 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with virtual options available. Register for either date by clicking on the [IDOT roster spreadsheet](#), scrolling to the bottom and on the first open line, enter your name, affiliation, planned date of attendance, and marking whether your attendance will be virtual or in person.



NWMC Staff

UTC Seeking Employer Perspectives of Hybrid Work

The Urban Transportation Center (UTC) at the University of Illinois at Chicago is conducting research on employer perspectives regarding hybrid work. Research results will assist the UTC in identifying future office work and travel need trends, as well as how land-use and multimodal transportation needs will change. UTC has developed an [online survey](#) and requests the viewpoints of “human resources managers, corporate executives, and project leaders from all public and private sectors.” Additional information is available in the [project flyer](#).

USDOT Updates Transportation Community Explorer Tool

The USDOT has expanded its [Transportation Community Explorer Tool](#) with new data and analytics, including transportation insecurity, place-based burdens, population-based vulnerabilities, the 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimate data, roadway divisions and an updated user interface. Communities can use the tool to identify areas to prioritize transportation projects that can reduce resident transportation costs or target policies to incentivize different transportation modes. To learn more about all the changes, please visit the [Federal Register page](#).

Address Transportation-Caused Climate Impacts with the USDOT Climate Strategies that Work Playbook

The USDOT has released its Climate Strategies that Work Playbook, providing a comprehensive resource that local communities and their partners can implement to reduce transportation sector greenhouse gas emissions most efficiently. Implementable strategies include cost effectiveness analyses, identification of complementary approaches, and funding sources. Learn more and find the path forward by visiting the [USDOT Climate Change Center](#).

Tackle the Next Generation of Bike Infrastructure with the New AASHTO Bike Design Guide

It's been 12 years since the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) released the fourth edition of its Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities. In that time, research and new types of infrastructure have created additional ways of getting bicyclists around town. To address these changes, AASHTO has released the Fifth Edition of the guide, providing guidance on choosing specific bikeway types, shared-use path design, signals and intersections. [Read more in this AASHTO article](#) and visit the [guide's page on the AASHTO store](#) to purchase a copy.

FHWA Publishes Guide for Maintaining Active Transportation Infrastructure for Enhanced Safety

The USDOT has developed an active transportation facility maintenance guide to assist communities in achieving mobility, accessibility, safety and equity goals. The Guide offers common maintenance issues impacting pedestrians, bicyclists and micromobility users, including repairs, snow, ice, debris and vegetation removal. Designed not only for local governmental bodies, the Guide can also be distributed to individual homeowners and land management groups. Download the [PDF version of the Guide](#) from the USDOT.

NACTO Releases New Urban Bikeway Design Guide

The third edition of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide is available for purchase beginning Tuesday, January 14. Updated for the first time in a decade with new detailed policy, planning, and project development guidance, the guide will enable cities to plan and implement bike networks that address the multiple bikeway users. Streetscape illustrations showcase how communities can implement high-quality improvements and interventions within existing space. Read more in [this Streetsblog summary](#), and visit the [guide's store page](#) to purchase a copy.

Advance Pedestrian and Biking Accessibility with Project Sidewalk Map-a-thon Trainings!

The greatest obstacle to knowing where barriers to pedestrian and biking accessibility can be due to insufficient community knowledge. The Active Transportation Alliance (Active Trans), in partnership with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Project Sidewalk team, is seeking to address this through [Project Sidewalk](#), an easy-to-use virtual tool that identifies these barriers.

Active Trans and UIC will host a Project Sidewalk map-a-thon virtual training for municipal staff and resident volunteers on Thursday, January 16, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., with [Zoom registration here](#).

The NWMC Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee recently hosted Active Trans and UIC staff for a discussion on Project Sidewalk at the November meeting. If you are interested in learning more about this topic, NWMC staff can direct you to the appropriate resource.

Chicago Region Needs Input in the Safe Travel for All Safety Action Plan Process

As part of a regionwide initiative called [Safe Travel for All](#), CMAP has partnered with Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties to develop and implement a Safety Action Plan for each county. The goal of these plans is to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the region. Utilizing a nearly [\\$4 million federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grant](#), the counties will develop individualized safety action plans that will operate in a regional framework for future coordination. To participate in each county's safety survey and to sign up to receive updates, please visit each county's corresponding Safe Travel for All page:

[Cook County](#), [DuPage County](#), [Kane County](#), [Lake County](#), [McHenry County](#)

The Cook County steering committee is also looking to promote community engagement at your local events. If you have upcoming events where the County can staff a table, please contact Brian Larson, blarson@nwmc-cog.org, to get involved.

Lake County Opening on the Metra Board

Lake County residents are encouraged to apply for an upcoming opening on the Metra Board of Directors. Current Director Melinda Bush of *Grayslake* recently announced that she has stepped down from her position effective Friday, January 3. The Lake County Board requests that interested residents submit a resume, letter of interest and recommendations by Friday, January 17 to countyboardoffice@lakecountyil.gov.

Next Round of Public Engagement for IDOT'S Long-Range Transportation Plan

IDOT has begun the next phase of Move Illinois: the 2024 Long-Range Transportation Plan. The plan will strategically outline goals, objectives and strategies for Illinois' diverse transportation network for the next 20 to 30 years. This is a multi-phase effort that will take place into 2025. The first phase of the plan was focused on transportation studies and public engagement to determine preferences for transportation goal areas. During the second phase, IDOT is focusing on potential actions and strategies to include in the plan. Residents are invited to provide feedback for the plan by filling out a [survey](#) and staying informed via the online meeting that can be found [here](#). The project team works with residents, business owners and transportation professionals from across the state in an advisory group. This group combines the transportation expertise and information gathered from the community in each phase to help form the goals, objectives and strategies of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.



Upcoming Transportation-Related Webinars

USDOT: [Action Plans for Implementing the U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization](#)—Monday, January 13, 1:00 p.m.

League of American Bicyclists: [An overview of FHWA's Separated Bike Lanes on Higher Speed Roadways: A Toolkit and Guide](#)—Tuesday, January 14, 2:00 p.m.

Vision Zero Network: [Lessons from the Strong Towns Crash Analysis Studio](#)—Wednesday, January 15, 11:00 a.m.

Safe Routes Partnership: [Kickstart Your 2025 Projects: How to Secure Federal Funding for Biking, Walking, and Safe Routes to School](#)—Wednesday, January 15, 12:00 p.m.

USDOT: [Navigating Climate Challenges: Enhancing Transportation Resilience](#)—Wednesday, January 15, 1:00 p.m.

NADTC: [Introducing the Community Conversation on Transportation Equity Toolkit!](#) - January 28, 1:00 p.m.

Did You Miss It?

News Items in Brief

Daily Herald: ['A completely different look': \\$4 million streetscape improvement planned for downtown Lake Zurich](#)

Daily Herald: ['Starved for so long': Pace wants riders to comment on service revamp, \\$150 million boost](#)

Briefs, Continued

Chicago Tribune: [Gov. JB Pritzker names Gia Biagi state transportation chief](#)

Sightline Institute: [Parking Reform Alone Can Boost Homebuilding by 40 to 70 Percent](#)

Newsweek: [More Americans Are Taking the Train Than Ever](#)

Streetsblog Chicago: [Illinois could beat the transit fiscal cliff by shifting federal funding from highways to public transportation](#)

Chicago Tribune: [North suburban leaders respond to spike in fatal bike, pedestrian crashes](#)

Daily Herald: [With new deal, Barrington moves a step closer to building Route 14 underpass](#)

Daily Herald: [More Pace buses coming to Cook, DuPage and Lake](#)

Daily Herald: [Barrington plans to spend big to transform village infrastructure](#)

Evanston Now: [Transit faces year of reckoning in 2025](#)

Center for Transportation Studies: [Lowering speeds, adding signs could encourage yielding for pedestrians](#)

Bloomberg: [EV Driver Survey Sees Owners Staying Loyal to Battery Models](#)

The Conversation: [Cycling can make seniors healthier and more independent – here's how to design bikes and networks that meet their needs](#)

Forbes: [The Government Push To Change Road Construction Materials To Impact Climate Change](#)

Governing: [Trains, Buses and Sidewalks: Competing Priorities in Public Transit](#)

America Walks: [Equipping Local Leaders to Battle Divisive Infrastructure](#)

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