

# Transportation Newsletter

March 2021  
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Northwest Municipal Conference  
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Cover Photo: Village of Fox Lake



Northwest Municipal Conference

## Dates to Remember:

Tuesday, March 16, 10:30 a.m. — *NWMC  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee*

Thursday, March 25, 8:30 a.m. — *NWMC  
Transportation Committee*

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Discusses Local Match Survey, Signage

On February 16, the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee was joined by Active Transportation Alliance Staff Planner, Heather Schady to discuss a recently launched survey to assess the impact of local match requirements for bicycle and pedestrian facilities along state routes (see article on page 2). The committee provided feedback on their experiences with the local match requirements and the possible impacts of proposed policies to change those requirements. Staff also led a discussion revisiting bicycle route signage preferences as part of ongoing efforts to provide consistent wayfinding and signage across the region.

## Active Transportation Alliance Requests Participation in Local Match

The Active Transportation Alliance is seeking feedback from suburban communities to assess whether the Illinois Department of Transportation's local match requirements have an impact on their ability to construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities along state routes. The survey is [available online](#). Responses will be kept anonymous unless participants indicate otherwise. For additional information, please contact Advocacy Manager Maggie Melin Czerwinski, [maggie@activetrans.org](mailto:maggie@activetrans.org).

## Cook County Launches Bike Plan Website

The Cook County Bike Plan Team conducted Open House sessions to introduce the 2021 Bike Plan, recordings of which are [available online](#). In coordination with the Open House sessions, Cook County has also started a year-long community engagement and outreach website, where interested stakeholders can view project information, share bike experiences via an [Interactive Map](#), provide feedback on how the pandemic has impacted biking habits, participate in the [Community Ideas Wall](#) and access [resources for bikers of all ages](#). The website will be updated regularly with new opportunities to participate in the planning process. For more information, please visit the [Cook County Bike Plan website](#) or contact the project team at, [BikePlan@CookCountyIL.gov](mailto:BikePlan@CookCountyIL.gov)

## Illinois Tollway Announces Cashless Tolling Here to Stay

Following a successful shift to cashless tolling due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois Tollway announced Thursday that the shift would be permanent moving forward. To ensure a smooth transition for all customers, the Illinois Tollway is also developing a significant expansion of the Illinois Tollway's I-PASS Assist Program aimed at getting an I-PASS, and the lower toll rate, into the hands of those who need it most. The program, anticipated to launch in May, will look to waive the deposit on transponders while adding an initial \$20 in tolls to eligible applicants whose household income is below 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. For more information, please see the Tollway's [press release](#) and [informational one-pager](#) or contact Community Relations Corridor Manager Kelsey Passi, [kpassi@getipass.com](mailto:kpassi@getipass.com).



Village of Winnetka





Village of Bartlett

## RTA Launches Updated Transportation Data Website

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) recently launched a redesigned website to house ridership statistics, interactive maps, and downloadable data from the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace. The Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics website (RTAMS) was redesigned to be a faster, mobile friendly, and interactive approach to transparency. To see the changes please visit the [updated website](#).

## EPA Opens Diesel Emissions Reductions Act Grant Applications

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) anticipates awarding approximately \$46 million in competitive grant funding under the [Diesel Emissions Reductions Act \(DERA\) National Grants Program](#). The program is soliciting applications nationwide for projects that achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions and exposure, particularly from fleets operating in areas designated by the EPA as having poor air quality.

Application packages must be submitted electronically to EPA through [Grants.gov](#) no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on Tuesday, March 16 to be considered for funding. Please visit the [EPA's website](#) for more information about the program and previously held webinars.

## Invest In Cook Applications Due March 12th

The Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways is accepting funding applications for Invest in Cook projects through Friday, March 12. The Department has established a formal process that local and regional governments and private partners can use to apply for up to \$8.5 million in transportation funds to cover the cost of planning and feasibility studies, engineering and construction associated with improvements consistent with the county's long range transportation plan. For more information, including a complete program description and application form, please go to the [Cook County website](#).

## **USDOT Announces FY 2021 Infrastructure Rebuilding America Grant Program**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced it is seeking applicants for the FY 2021 round of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program to fund transportation projects of national and regional significance. The funding available for this year's grants totals approximately \$889 million. For more information including eligible project costs, information on upcoming webinars and other grant resources, please visit the [INFRA website](#) or send an email to [INFRAgrants@dot.gov](mailto:INFRAgrants@dot.gov).

The Department will also use their website to post and respond to questions related to the expanded INFRA program criteria pertaining to climate change and racial and environmental justice. The application is now open and must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on Friday, March 19.

## **IDOT Accepting Local Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program Grant Applications**

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is now accepting applications for the Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 Local Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program (Section 130 Funds). The purpose of this program is to improve safety at local agency railroad/highway crossings by installing new warning devices, upgrading existing warning devices, offering incentives for voluntary closures and other related rail/highway safety improvements.

For more information please refer to [Circular Letter 2021-07](#). Applications must be submitted to IDOT by Friday, April 2 at 11:59 p.m. For questions or additional information, please contact the Rail Safety Projects Unit, 217-782-3568 or [DOT.LRSRail@illinois.gov](mailto:DOT.LRSRail@illinois.gov).

## **IDOT Releases Updated Index Factor for Annual Equipment Ownership Expense**

The Schedule of Average Annual Equipment Ownership Expense (SOAAEOE) booklet was last published by the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Bureau of Construction on January 1, 2004. To account for the significant increase in equipment costs since the issued date, IDOT Bureau of Local Roads applies an index to the SOAAEOE, based on the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Producer Price Index for Construction Machinery Manufacturing (PPI-CCM).

When dividing the new PPI-CCM for January 2021 by the PPI-CCM for January 2004 (when the booklet was last published), the new index factor of 1.498 was calculated for 2021. Local highway agencies may use rates from the SOAAEOE or [Equipment Watch](#) for force account work on their projects, for equipment rental on motor fuel tax funded day labor work, on federal disaster reimbursements, or on intergovernmental agreements. For more information, please see [IDOT Circular Letter 2021-06](#) or contact [DOT.LocalPolicy@illinois.gov](mailto:DOT.LocalPolicy@illinois.gov).

City of Des Plaines







Village of Glenview

## **IDOT Circular Letter Addresses Bridge Inspection Comments and Documentation**

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has released a circular letter to provide information to Local Public Agencies of an effort to improve the State of Illinois compliance with the National Bridge Inspection Program (NBIP).

To read the policy and updated guidance please refer to [Circular Letter 2021-09](#). If you have any questions, please direct them to Mr. William Beisner, Bridge Management and Inspection Unit Chief, at [DOT.BBS.BridgeMgmt@illinois.gov](mailto:DOT.BBS.BridgeMgmt@illinois.gov).

## **IDOT Feedback Request: Consultation with Non- Metropolitan Local Officials Policy**

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently provided notification of an update to the Consultation with Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Policy – OPP-01, which applies to officials in rural and small urban areas. The current version of the policy became effective April 28, 2016. Since that time, organizational changes, additional funding programs and editorial changes necessitate the policy update. Federal planning regulations (23 CFR 450.210) also state that the policy shall be reviewed at least once every five years. In order to fulfill this federal requirement for Illinois, IDOT will be accepting comments on the policy ([included in PCF 2021-01](#)) for 60 calendar days ending on Monday, April 12. Please direct comments to [DOT.STIP@illinois.gov](mailto:DOT.STIP@illinois.gov).

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