

# Transportation Newsletter

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Northwest Municipal Conference  
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Cover Photo: City of Prospect Heights

## Call for Projects Opens for STP-L 2024-2028 Program

On October 30, the Surface Transportation Program - Local (STP-L) Call for Projects (CFP) opened to member communities in the North Shore and Northwest Council of Mayors. The CFP will run until **December 15** for the Northwest Council of Mayors and until **December 29** for the North Shore Council of Mayors. The CFP opened earlier this year to ensure the entire process falls within a single federal fiscal year (FFY). Projects submitted during this CFP will be eligible for funding during the FFY2024-2028 period.

On October 31, NWMC staff members *Eric Czarnota* and *Brian Larson* hosted a workshop on the CFP process and how to submit an application. Nearly 60 municipal staff and consultants attended the hybrid in-person and virtual program. [A recording of the session is available online](#). The workshop also covered changes in, and unique aspects of,

the Councils' methodologies, managing STP-L projects, and the different funds that may be used. To obtain a copy of the slides, please contact either Eric or Brian.



Northwest Municipal Conference

## Dates to Remember:

NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee:  
Tuesday, November 14, 10:30 a.m. NWMC  
Offices and Virtually

NWMC Transportation Committee:  
Thursday, November 30, 8:30 a.m. NWMC  
Offices and Virtually

Northwest Council of Mayors STP-L Call for  
Projects Closes December 15, 5:00 p.m.

North Shore Council of Mayors STP-L Call for  
Projects Closes December 29, 5:00 p.m.



## IDOT Announces Area Rebuild Illinois Projects

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently announced several projects in northern Cook County which are currently planned or underway as part of the \$33.2 billion Rebuild Illinois capital program. \$40 million will be spent on the following eight projects, scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025:

- Three different sections of the Edens Expressway in *Highland Park, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Northbrook, Northfield, Skokie and Wilmette*
- Milwaukee Avenue in *Glenview*
- Golf Road in *Hoffman Estates*
- Higgins Road in *Des Plaines*
- Rand Road in *Des Plaines*

For additional information, please see the [full IDOT press release here](#).

## Metra Hosts Bi-Annual “Breaking the Silence” Symposium

On Wednesday, October 18, Metra conducted a symposium entitled “Breaking the Silence – Restoring Hope, Saving Lives.” First held in 2017, the bi-annual symposium seeks to discuss challenges, strategies and best practices for suicide prevention and mental health in the rail industry. According to the program flyer, “a lot has changed since going through the COVID Pandemic. Attempted suicides, suicides and mental illness among all demographics have risen over 30%. This also affects the rail and transit industry. Metra is committed to bringing industry stakeholders, peer regulatory agencies and the mental health community together to focus on suicide prevention, promoting mental health resources, mitigation initiatives and strategies.” Speakers included: Metra; The Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Safety, and The Office of Development; National Operation Lifesaver; The Volpe Center; and, the DuPage County Coroner.

[Read a report on the event in the Chicago Tribune here](#), and you can watch recordings of the [morning](#) and [afternoon](#) sessions online.

## Cook County Releases Transit Plan

Cook County recently announced completion of its first-ever [Transit Plan](#), which “identifies strategies to make transit more convenient, efficient and attractive.” By identifying a set of 35 projects, programs and policies, the county intends to increase overall transit ridership while focusing on the needs of transit reliant communities and increasing the seamlessness of transit services.



## Reminder to Apply for USDOT Programs Supporting Transportation Infrastructure

As a reminder, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has announced that applications are open for the following separate and unique grant programs supporting transportation infrastructure:

- Thriving Communities Program (TCP) offers two separate response opportunities for potential applicants: a Letter of Interest and a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The Letter of Interest provides technical assistance, planning and capacity building support to teams of community partners that may lack the staffing or technical expertise to scope, fund, and develop infrastructure projects that advance broader community goals. There is no cost to receive this support, but applicants are required to partner with at least two other organizations. Interested applicants must identify community partners and together submit a Letter of Interest by 3:59 p.m. on **Wednesday, November 15**, to be considered for selection. The NOFO funds organizations ("Capacity Builders") to provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to disadvantaged and under-resourced communities, enabling them to advance transportation projects that support community-driven economic development, health, environment, mobility and access goals. There are two Capacity Builder opportunities. The first is for applicants who want to provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to communities across the country. The second is for state, tribal or regional organizations that want to provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to communities

within their state, tribe or region. To learn more about the TCP opportunities, please visit the [USDOT Thriving Communities website](#). Applications for both opportunities are due by 3:59 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 28**.

- Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator. This program will provide up to \$100 million in Federal funding to repair and replace existing but non-operational, electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. Eligible applicants include only State DOTs and Local Public Agencies; however, the chargers may be publicly or privately owned provided they are available to the public without restriction. For additional information and application instructions, please visit the [Federal Highway Administration NEVI website](#). Applications are due by 10:59 p.m. on **Monday, November 13**.

To request letters of support from IDOT for any of these programs, please contact Bureau Chief of Federal Affairs Tim McMahon, [Timothy.McMahon@illinois.gov](mailto:Timothy.McMahon@illinois.gov), at least two weeks prior to each program's deadlines.



Village of Schaumburg



## Mount Prospect Receives Grant Funding for Bike Path Project

[Governor J.B. Pritzker recently announced \\$2.1 million in grants](#) to help 13 communities develop and improve bicycle facilities through the Illinois Bicycle Path Grant Program. The Mount Prospect Park District will receive \$137,500 to improve the Commonwealth Edison Trail, including accessible entry points, seating areas and signage. Beginning at Algonquin Road, these proposed improvements span a three-quarter-mile portion of the trail extending to Linneman Road.



Village of Lincolnwood

## Download the Illinois Tollway App - Transponders to Stickers?

The Illinois Tollway recently introduced its official app which lets drivers "safely and securely pay unpaid tolls or enroll and manage your I-PASS account or Pay By Plate service directly from your smartphone." Users can also add rental or borrowed vehicles, pay invoices, convert Pay by Plate to an I-PASS account or call for roadside assistance for emergencies. In addition, it was reported that the Tollway is investigating converting from the hard case I-PASS transponders to windshield stickers next year. See the *News Items in Brief* on the last page for the Chicago Sun-Times' story on the possible conversion to stickers.

## Arlington Heights to Host Upcoming CMAP ADA Trainings

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) continues its training series on American with Disabilities Act (ADA) this fall with programs on ADA self-evaluation (Wednesday, November 8) and ADA transition plans (Thursday, November 9), both held at the *Arlington Heights Senior Center*.

It is important to note that ADA Transition Plan status will be required in future funding program scoring methodologies. These training sessions will give communities a head start on ensuring mobility for all residents! For more info and to register for the training sessions, please visit [CMAP's ADA webpage](#).

## Full Service Begins on Pace's Pulse Dempster Line

After getting a sneak peek beginning August 13, Pace riders were rewarded on October 29 when full daily service began for the [Pulse Dempster Line](#). Running seven days a week, the Pulse Dempster Line offers 15-minute frequency from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 20-minute frequency at all other times. With increased reliability using Transit Signal Priority, enhanced stations with modern passenger amenities like heated shelters, real-time signage and level boarding for faster service, the Pulse Dempster Line will speed riders from O'Hare to downtown *Des Plaines* to downtown *Evanston*.

## NWMC Gets a Behind-the-Scenes Look at O'Hare

In October, NWMC staffer Brian Larson, as part of an American Planning Association Chicago Metro Section event, got a behind the scenes look at the planning efforts behind how O'Hare moves over 68.3 million passengers and 2 million metric tonnes of cargo each year. Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) staff shared O'Hare's community engagement strategies, including resources for residential and school buildings to address airport noise, as well as a model building code ordinance available for communities with buildings in an airport flight path. CDA staff also shared plans for O'Hare's planned terminal redevelopment and Tollway access projects.



Photo courtesy NWMC Staff

## U.S. Access Board Releases PROWAG Training Videos

To assist communities with the recently published [final rule on public right-of-way accessibility guidelines \(PROWAG\)](#), the U.S. Access Board has developed [five new videos](#), going chapter by chapter reviewing accessibility requirements to make sidewalks, crosswalks, shared use paths, on-street parking and other pedestrian facilities accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who are already familiar with PROWAG can skip directly to video five, "What's New in the Final Rule Text," which goes over the final rule changes. The U.S. Access Board also offers free technical assistance on the guidelines through [row@access-board.gov](mailto:row@access-board.gov), and has accessibility training by request through [training@access-board.gov](mailto:training@access-board.gov).

## Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL) Dashboard Matches Projects with Correct Grants

The Build America Center's [BIL Launchpad](#) provides customized information on available funding, interactive technical support, data on successful awards, and essential resources to help communities take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities in BIL for local governments and communities to secure competitive federal grants and modernize America's infrastructure. The BIL Launchpad helps localities accelerate grant application processes and access the necessary tools to enhance local transportation infrastructure.



## CMAP Board/MPO Policy Committee Advance PART Report

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Board of Directors and the Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee held a joint meeting on October 11 and voted to advance CMAP's [Plan of Action for Regional Transit \(PART\) report](#) to the General Assembly. The report presents two funding options: the \$1.5 billion Transformational Investment package and the \$1 billion Meaningful Change package. Both options allocate \$730 million to address the fiscal cliff transit agencies are facing and varying amounts depending on the package for increased service (including regional rail), fare integration and affordability, and additional funding for any other associated costs.

The report also outlines two governance options: Option 1 proposes a single regional integrated transit agency that would merge the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace. Option 2 suggests empowering a regional coordinating agency, which would provide the RTA or another entity determined by the legislature with increased oversight over the three operating agencies. The report is scheduled to be delivered to the Illinois General Assembly on January 1, 2024.

## FHWA Large Bridge Project Grant open through November 27

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is accepting applications for up to \$9.62 billion through the FYs 2023 - 2026 Large Bridge Project Grant under the Bridge Investment Program. Large Bridge Project Grants under the Bridge Investment Program are available for bridges with total eligible project costs over \$100 million, with minimum grant awards of \$50 million, and maximum grant awards of 50 percent of the total eligible project costs. Applications for FY 2023 and 2024 funding are due November 27, 2023 via grants.gov. Visit the [Bridge Investment Program website](#) to find more information, including the [NOFO](#), a Benefit-Cost Analysis Tool, a fact sheet, Q&A, and information about 2022 recipients.

## Transportation Committee Discusses RTA Access to Transit and ADA

In October, the NWMC Transportation Committee convened for a presentation from the Regional Transportation Agency (RTA) on their [Access to Transit program](#) that helps communities improve the infrastructure around their transit stations and stops. NWMC staff then led a discussion focused on the recent Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) rulemaking and its impact on municipal right of way compliance. As well as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans and different ADA vulnerabilities that municipalities may face in the near future. Regional agencies, including CMAP, Metra, Pace, RTA and the Illinois Tollway provided updates.



Village of Glenview

## Did You Miss It? News Items in Brief

*Daily Herald:* [Illinois tollway launches new strategic and capital plan process, seeks input](#)

*Route 50:* [City puts accessibility at the forefront of disability data](#)

*Minnesota DOT:* [Gender roles and identities influence transportation needs and experiences, new equity-focused research finds.](#)

*Inside Indiana Business:* [Illinois, Indiana, Michigan coalition, centered at Whiting, Indiana, selected by the Biden Administration for a \\$7 billion program to establish clean hydrogen hubs across the U.S.](#)

*Chicago Tribune:* [Declining corporate travel and industry changes have left O'Hare airport slow to recover from the pandemic](#)

*AASHTO:* [Environmental Technical Assistance Program \(ETAP\) podcast explores how transportation professionals may build an equitable transportation system.](#)

*CNN Business:* [Feds probing safety of GM's robotaxis around pedestrians](#)

*Daily Herald:* [Land swap could prompt development near Libertyville's downtown Metra station](#)

*Chicago Tribune:* [EVBox launches fast-charger production in Libertyville, as part of national push for widespread EV adoption](#)

*Daily Herald:* [Train horns return in some Lake County towns, for now](#)

*USDOT:* [Unemployment in transportation remains above pre-pandemic levels; women experiencing higher rates than men](#)

*League of American Bicyclists:* [Local community groups urge NHTSA to consider bicyclists and motorcycle riders in car safety standards](#)

*Chicago Sun Times:* [Metra to buy zero-emission, self-propelled rail cars with \\$169.3M federal grant](#)

*Daily Herald:* [First part of pedestrian path in Morton Grove, Niles, Skokie is complete; officials celebrate](#)

*Chicago Sun-Times:* [Illinois tollway might shift from transponders to window stickers](#)

*Route 50:* [Why cities should consider roundabouts](#)

*Governing:* [Microtransit has broad appeal, despite clear drawbacks](#)

## Recent and Upcoming Webinars

**November 9:** *Streetlight Data* - [U.S. Walking + Mode Share Trends: The Good and Bad News on Active Transportation](#)

**November 15:** *University of Toronto* - [Knowledge Café: Tradeoffs Between Optimal and Equitable Bike Infrastructure](#)

**November 15:** *FHWA* - [Equity in Roadway Safety Workshop: Elevating Equity and Safety in Project Prioritization](#)

**Recorded:** *FHWA* - [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\) and Federal Requirements - Guidance for Local & Tribal Agencies](#)

**[See the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center's full list of upcoming and archived webinars](#)**

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