

Transportation Newsletter

September 2024
Volume 16 Issue 9

Northwest Municipal Conference
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Cover Photo: Village of Mount Prospect



Northwest Municipal Conference

Dates to Remember:

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

Senate Transportation Committee Hearing:
Wednesday, September 18, 10:00 a.m. —
North and Northwest Suburbs, Location TBD

NWMC Transportation Committee:
Thursday, September 26, 8:30 a.m. — NWMC
offices and virtually

Congratulations to our Invest in Cook Grant Recipients!

The [2024 recipients of the Invest in Cook grant program have been announced](#) and NWMC member communities made up many of the recipients this cycle. A big congratulations to *Elk Grove Village, Evanston, Glencoe, Morton Grove, Northbrook, Northfield, Prospect Heights, and Streamwood* for their winning transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and road projects. Member communities received over \$1,400,000 of the nearly \$8 million dollars awarded by Cook County. Many thanks as well to the Maine Township Highway Department for their work on the Church Street Sidewalk and Bike Project, a key component in the [NWMC Multimodal Plan's Priority Bike Corridors](#).

Skokie Receives MWRD Green Alleys Grant

Congratulations to the *Village of Skokie*, recent recipient of a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) grant that supports the construction of new green alleys. The village will receive \$347,000 to build three new green alleys, featuring permeable pavers and other improvements designed to filter stormwater runoff and reduce the burden on the sewer system. To read more about the project and the installation locations, please visit the [Village's news page](#).

Closing Soon: Apply Today for a Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has announced over \$1.1 billion in funding to address railroad crossing safety and efficiency through its Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant Program. These funds can be used to build a grade separation or close off an at-grade crossing in addition to other safety enhancements. Applications are due Monday, September 30. To learn more about the RCE Program, please [visit the NOFO](#).

CMAP Rolls Out STP Program Summaries

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has developed [STP Local Program summaries for each of the region's Council of Mayors](#), including [North Shore](#) and [Northwest](#). These short summaries show how the STP compares across the differing Councils of Mayors, highlight important aspects of the STP and its application within each Council.

NWMC Staff

Senate Committee Holds Fourth Hearing on the State of Public Transit

The Senate Transportation Committee held the fourth of six subject matter hearings on possible legislative actions to reform public transit on August 28 in Elgin. The subject of the hearing was how transit affects public health. Representatives of the Metro West Council of Governments and McHenry County Council of Governments along with leaders from Kane and McHenry counties provided testimony that highlighted the value of transit to their communities as well as the importance of maintaining local representation in governance. Hearings will continue through the fall, with the remaining schedule and topics as follows (locations to be determined):

Subject: Transit mitigates climate impact
Wednesday, September 18, 10:00 a.m. -
Northwest Suburbs of Cook County and Lake County

Subject: Funding transit is a statewide priority
Wednesday, October 16, 10:00 a.m. -
Springfield

It is anticipated that, with the transit service boards facing a \$730 million shortfall beginning in 2025, legislation will be considered during either the General Assembly's fall veto session or the spring session.



Rebuild Those Old Bridges With an IDOT Bridge Grant!

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has announced a special funding opportunity for the Illinois Special Bridge Program (ISBP), covering FY2030 local and state major highway bridges. Projects must have a minimum cost of \$1,000,000, with Construction and Construction Engineering phases eligible for grant funding. State bridges will be eligible if local communities accept a jurisdictional transfer. For more details on the program and how to apply, please see [the NOFO](#). Applications are due Wednesday, October 9.

Enhance Your Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program Application at the USDOT Clinic

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has announced the third round of funding for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Projects will reconnect communities by addressing transportation facilities that currently create barriers to community connectivity.

Interested applicants can learn more about how to submit strong proposals for the RCP Program with upcoming Reconnecting Communities Institute (RCI) virtual grant writing clinics. The next clinic will be held Friday, September 13 (11:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.; [register here](#)), with RCI office hours on Monday, September 16 (10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; [register here](#)). Technical assistance with the grant application is also available through the [Reconnecting Communities Institute website](#). Applications are due by Monday, September 30. Please visit the [USDOT NOFO](#) for more details on the RCP Program.

Closing Soon: Apply Today for ITEP Funding

If your community is looking to construct new pedestrian/bicycle facilities, sidewalk connections or convert abandoned railroad corridors to trails, the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) is your go-to for funding. ITEP is now open for applications through Monday, September 30. ITEP awards a maximum of \$3 million, with awards announced in Spring 2025. To learn more, please visit the [Illinois Department of Transportation \(IDOT\) NOFO](#).

In July, the Active Transportation Alliance and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) kicked off a webinar series to help prepare potential applicants for the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), which opened in August. These grants will provide \$140 million in state and federal funding for walking, biking and trail projects throughout the state. Webinars include:

Webinar 1: ITEP basics, eligibility criteria, what's new, and best practices

Held on July 10: [Recording](#) : [Slides](#)

Webinar 2: Scoring, application walk through, Q&A with IDOT staff

Held on August 21: [Recording](#) : [Slides](#)

Webinar 3: Q&A with IDOT staff

Wednesday, September 11, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

[Registration Link](#)

Additional information and all materials can be accessed by visiting the Active [Transportation Alliance website](#) or the [IDOT NOFO](#).

Join the 2024 IDOT Fall Planning Conference

From CMAP:

Join the Illinois Department of Transportation for the 2024 Fall Planning Conference, taking place from October 2-4, 2024, at the Four Points by Sheraton St. Louis-Fairview Heights. This three-day event is a key gathering for transportation professionals across the state. It's a unique opportunity to engage with program administrators, transportation professionals and planning experts.

Registration is **now open** via [this form](#). To book your group rate for the IDOT Fall Planning Conference, call the Radisson Fairview Heights-St. Louis (Formerly Four Points Sheraton) at 618-622-9500 or email Peter Cwalino, Director of Sales at pcwalino@radissonstl.com and reference the IDOT Fall Planning Group Rate!

Congratulations to Morton Grove for its Selection as an RTA 2024 Community Planning Recipient

The *Village of Morton Grove* is one of the recipients of the RTA 2024 Community Planning program, intended to enable transit-supportive land uses and infrastructure. *Morton Grove* will partner with the RTA for its Dempster Street Corridor Study, capitalizing on the new Pace Pulse Dempster Line, to “provide a cohesive vision for Dempster Street that connects transit, expands retail and employment-generating development, and identifies opportunities for new housing.” To read more about the other recipients and how to prepare for the next Call for Projects, visit the [RTA Connections Blog post](#).

Tap Into the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law with These Webinars

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) has provided over \$454 billion in funding since its passage in 2021, with projects and awards all across the country. To ensure the continued success of the program, the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) is offering a series of three panels highlighting how to bring projects to life. Dates/Topics are:

September 18, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

[Project Delivery Lessons Learned from Emergency Response Following an Infrastructure Catastrophe](#)

October 8, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

[Best Practices to Get Big Infrastructure Projects off the Ground](#)

October 22, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

[Project Acceleration for the Public Good](#)

To learn more about the webinar series and to register, visit the [US DOT Volpe Center](#)

National Walk & Roll to School Day Now Open for Registration

Is your community participating in National Walk & Roll to School Day on October 9? Event registration is now open. Visit the [Walk Bike & Roll to School website to sign up](#), see current participants, and download organizing and promotional resources. Member communities with already registered schools include *Arlington Heights, Bartlett, Des Plaines, Evanston, Hanover Park, Kenilworth, and Streamwood*.

FHWA Toolkit Simplifies Bike Lane Planning

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has issued a [Separated Bike Lanes on Higher Speed Roadways toolkit and guide](#) to assist in the planning, design and maintenance of these new facilities. The toolkit provides information on the current state of practice and challenges to implementation, as well as how to address driver behavior, bicyclist safety and varying comfort levels of cyclists.



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NHTSA Releases Bike and Ped Crash Safety Facts

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released its [2022 Traffic Safety Facts report on Bicyclists and Other Cyclists](#) and [Pedestrian report](#). The reports show that from 2021 to 2022, there was a 13 percent increase in bicyclist fatalities in traffic crashes and an 11 percent increase in injuries. Additionally, 29 percent of crashes involving bicyclists occurred at intersections. There was also a 0.7 percent increase in pedestrian fatalities, the highest number since 1984, with pedestrian deaths now accounting for 18 percent of all traffic fatalities. Children 14 and younger track this national average, with children walking accounting for 17 percent of the age group's traffic fatalities. Additional details, including day of week, time of day, type of vehicle, location of initial point of impact on vehicle, alcohol usage, and state, as well as safety reminders, are included in the reports.

Safe Routes to Schools Partnership Releases State Report Card; Illinois is Making Strides!

The Safe Routes to Schools Partnership has just released its [2024 state report card](#), providing a snapshot of how each state supports walking, bicycling, and physical activity for children and adults. Illinois was rated Making Strides, the second-best ranking, due to the state's excelling at federal and state active transportation funding, use of Safe Routes to Schools funding, and Safe Routes to School supportive practices. Illinois is only Lacing Up, however, the lowest ranking, in adoption of active transportation goals and school siting and design standards. Read more about the report card and how to make use of it at the [Safe Routes to Schools website](#).

Complete the “My Daily Travel Survey” This Fall

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is launching a major survey called [My Daily Travel](#) this fall to better understand the travel needs of residents in northeastern Illinois. As travel behaviors change and technologies evolve over the next few years, transportation planners will use this survey data to guide future transportation investments and prioritize improvements.

Through Spring 2025, at least 4,000 households in northeastern Illinois are expected to participate in the survey either online, over the phone, or through a smartphone app (rMove™). Households will receive an invitation by U.S. mail and are strongly encouraged to complete the survey and help plan a transportation system that meets their needs. Participants who complete the survey will receive a gift card for their time.

Upcoming Transportation-Related Webinars

Vision Zero Network: [Prioritizing Safe Speeds: It's Possible!](#)—September 10, 10-11AM

The League of American Bicyclists: [How to Create Complete Streets, From Policy to Practice](#)—September 17, 2-3PM

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals: [2024 U.S. Federal Policy Webinar - 3rd Quarter](#)—September 25, 2-3PM

Did You Miss It? News Items in Brief

Patch: [Gross Point Road Gets New Bike Lanes As Part Of \\$8 Million In Upgrades](#)

Chicago Sun-Times: [Traffic may 'grind to a halt' after transit COVID-19 grants run out, RTA warns](#)

Bloomberg: [In DNC, Chicago's Embattled Transit System Faces a High-Profile Test](#)

Daily Herald: [After dark: Night rides are drawing crowds in the suburbs](#)

Streetsblog USA: [How to Build A Pop-Up Lane to Your City's Next Street Festival](#)

Planetizen: [Pedestrian-Friendly Cities: The Impact of Walkability Grants](#)

Planning Magazine: [Complete Streets Drive Housing, Jobs, and Retail Gains](#)

Route Fifty: [Older adults want to age in place. Current policies don't make it easy](#)

Route Fifty: [Congress could ease rules for small cities seeking transportation money, experts say](#)

Politico: [The dark side of the EV revolution: Road taxes](#)

Governing: [Funding Local Roads in an Era of EVs and Shrinking Fuel Taxes](#)

Mansfield Energy: [Refinery Disruptions Lead to Surge in Midwest Gasoline Prices](#)

Route Fifty: [As bike and scooter ridership soars, safety challenges grow](#)

Governing: [Hundreds of Mayors Agree to Set the Pace for Electric Vehicle Adoption](#)

State Smart Transportation Initiative: [Reducing lanes for cars doesn't slow 911 response](#)

Wall Street Journal: [Fewer Teens Want to Drive. It's Changing How They Spend.](#)

IIHS-HLDI: [Lighted crosswalks make drivers more apt to yield to pedestrians](#)

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