

NORTHWEST MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

1600 East Golf Road, Suite 0700
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016
(847) 296-9200 • Fax (847) 296-9207
www.nwmc-cog.org



*A Regional Association of Illinois
Municipalities and Townships
Representing a Population of Over One Million*

**Northwest Municipal Conference
Transportation Committee**

Agenda

Thursday, April 28, 2022

8:30 a.m.

NWMC Offices and Video Conference

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83135889698?pwd=cG43VE1HaGlvbW1tZ25ham1FdmdRdz09>

Meeting ID: 831 3588 9698

Passcode: TC042822

Dial by your location: (312) 626-6799 US (Chicago)

MEMBERS
Antioch
Arlington Heights
Bannockburn
Barrington
Bartlett
Buffalo Grove
Deer Park
Deerfield
Des Plaines
Elk Grove Village
Evanston
Fox Lake
Glencoe
Glenview
Grayslake
Hanover Park
Highland Park
Hoffman Estates
Kenilworth
Lake Bluff
Lake Forest
Lake Zurich
Libertyville
Lincolnshire
Lincolnwood
Morton Grove
Mount Prospect
Niles
Northbrook
Northfield
Northfield Township
Palatine
Park Ridge
Prospect Heights
Rolling Meadows
Schaumburg
Skokie
Streamwood
Vernon Hills
West Dundee
Wheeling
Wilmette
Winnetka

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Nancy Rotering
Highland Park

Vice-President
Dan Shapiro
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Secretary
Tom Dailly
Schaumburg

Treasurer
Anne Marie Gaura
Lincolnwood

Executive Director
Mark L. Fowler

- I. Call to Order/Introductions**
- II. Approval of March 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes (Attachment A)**
Action Requested: Approval
- III. Agency Reports**
 - a. **CMAP (Attachment B)**
 - b. **Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways**
 - c. **IDOT Highways (available upon request)**
 - d. **Illinois Tollway (Attachment C)**
 - e. **Metra (Attachment D)**
 - f. **Pace**
 - g. **RTA (Attachment E)**
- IV. Union Pacific/Kansas City Southern Merger Update**
Hanover Park Mayor Rod Craig will provide an update on the merger between the Union Pacific and the Kansas City Southern railroads from the perspective of the Coalition to Stop CPCK. Metra Community Relations Representative Rick Mack will provide an update from Metra’s perspective.
Action Requested: Informational/Discussion
- V. Flood Resilience Legislation (H.R. 481)**
Village of Barrington Development Services Director Marie Hansen will discuss flood resilience legislation introduced in the House requiring federal agencies to take extra measures to evaluate and mitigate the risk of floods to federally funded projects. Ms. Hansen will review concerns with the proposed bill language and requests feedback from the Committee.
Action Requested: Discussion
- VI. Joint Letter to IDOT – Agreement Processing (Attachment F)**
Staff will present the final version of a letter sent to the Illinois Department of Transportation regarding concerns with current agreement processing time and administrative hurdles.
Action Requested: Informational

VII. Other Business

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NWMC Transportation Committee is scheduled for Thursday, May 26 at 8:30 a.m. at the NWMC Offices and via Zoom.

IX. Adjourn

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**NWMC Transportation Committee
NWMC Offices and via Zoom Video Conference
Thursday, March 24, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

MEMBERS

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Members Present

Donna Johnson, Mayor, Village of Libertyville, Co-Chair
Bob Benton, Trustee, Village of Deerfield,
Lou Arrigoni, Senior Civil Engineer, City of Park Ridge
Heather Lis, Village Engineer, Village of Barrington
Darren Monico, Village Engineer, Village of Buffalo Grove
Jeff Brady, Director of Community Development, Village of Glenview
Ramesh Kanapareddy, Director of Public Works, City of Highland Park
Sean Dorsey, Public Works Director, Village of Mount Prospect
Bob Israel, Trustee, Village of Northbrook
Peter Falcone, Assistant Administrator, City of Prospect Heights
Lara Sanoica, Alderman, Rolling Meadows
Dan Kaup, Director of Public Works, Village of Wheeling
Marie Hansen, Director of Development Services, Village of Barrington

Others Present

Jack Bielak, Assistant Village Engineer, Village of Northbrook
Steven Andrews, Community Relations Representative, Pace Bus
Rick Mack, Community Affairs Administrator, Metra
Katie Renteria, Community Relations Representative, Metra
Marie Hansen, Director of Development Services, Village of Barrington
Cecilia Diaz, Transportation Planner, CCDOTH
Sam Wright, Transportation Planner, CCDOTH
Andrew Binder, Planning and Zoning Coordinator, Village of Barrington
Edith Makra, Director of Environmental Initiatives, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
Maggie Czerwinski, Advocacy Manager, Active Transportation Alliance
Audrey Wennink, Staff Member, Metropolitan Planning Council
Kelsey Passi, Community Relations Corridor Manager, Illinois Tollway
Thomas Gill, President, Thomas Engineering Group
Kendra Johnson, Program Manager for Transportation, NWMC
Eric Czarnota, Program Associate for Transportation, NWMC

I. Call to Order/Introductions

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

II. Approval of February 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Trustee Israel moved approval of the February 24, 2022 meeting minutes. Trustee Benton seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. Agency Reports

A. CMAP – Written report available

B. CCDOTH – Ms. Diaz reported that the 2022 Invest in Cook applications are now closed. She announced a pilot survey for Cook County seeking feedback from residents across the county on the transit plan. The survey and plan will be available on the Cook County website in the Department of Transportation and Highways section.

C. IDOT Highways – No Report

D. Illinois Tollway – No Report

E. Metra – Ms. Renteria reported that Metra is extending their one ride and 10 ride tickets that will remain valid until June 1, 2022. She mentioned that trips in February had doubled since February of 2021. With the increase, Metra is looking into making service enhancements including improving the BSNF starting March 28.

F. Pace – Mr. Andrews requested that anyone with a construction project along a Pace route notify him so that Pace can evaluate if any detours may be needed.

G. RTA – Written report available

IV. Developing and Funding Bike Plans

Metropolitan Planning Council Director of Transportation Ms. Wennink, along with Ms. Makra and Ms. Czerwinski discussed the efforts by MPC, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and the active Transportation Alliance to gather feedback from communities on the barriers to the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and planning work. Committee members emphasized the need for regional collaboration and communication in order to take advantage of new funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects amidst strained resources due to the pandemic.

V. Joint Letter to IDOT – Agreement Processing

Ms. Johnson presented a draft letter to the Illinois Department of Transportation regarding concerns with current agreement processing time and administrative hurdles. She noted a revised copy of the letter incorporating revisions and recommendations from this meeting will be sent out to committee members in the upcoming weeks.

Mayor Johnson suggested that if individual municipalities wanted to send their own letter to IDOT they should reference this original letter as well. Trustee Israel suggested that individual municipalities sending their own letter to IDOT may be too much and that option should be kept in the committees back pocket if they receive no response. He also suggested putting a deadline for IDOT to respond by in the letter so that the committee could see if progress is being made. He also made another suggestion to perhaps create dialogue between the NWMC and other regional COG's regarding this issue.

VI. Other Business

None

VII. Next Meeting

Mayor Johnson announced the next meeting of the NWMC Transportation Committee is scheduled for Thursday, April 28 at 8:30 a.m. at the NWMC offices and via Zoom Video conference.

VIII. Adjourn

Trustee Benton moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 a.m. Trustee Israel seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

CMAP Updates – April 18, 2022**CMAP News**

The CMAP office is now open daily and [staff](#) have established hybrid work schedules. [CMAP committee meetings](#) may be held in-person or virtually, depending on the unique situations and requirements of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) that apply to each committee.

For general questions, you can send an email through our [contact form](#) and remember to stay up to date by subscribing to CMAP's Weekly Update emails or [viewing online](#).

Job Opportunities

CMAP is hiring for several positions: a [Principal, Public Private Partnerships](#) and [Senior Analyst](#) in the Research, Analysis, and Programming division; an [Administrative Assistant](#) for the Executive Team; a [Senior HR Generalist](#) and a [Senior Accountant](#) in the Finance Division; and a [Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, Policy Principal, Senior Policy Analyst, Senior, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Associate Policy Analyst](#) in the Plan Implementation and Legislative Affairs Division. Visit CMAP's [Careers page](#) to discover more job and internship opportunities.

The Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors is seeking a [Regional Planning Liaison/Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator](#). Full details on how to apply can be found on the Kane County [Employment](#) web page.

CMAP Meeting Information: New Location!

CMAP has moved to a new system for sharing meeting information. You can now find meeting materials, webinar links, minutes, and recordings on [CMAP's Legistar page](#). Visit the page now to sign-up to receive notification of future CMAP meetings.

How northeastern Illinois can create greener spaces

Across northeastern Illinois, many communities have started transforming streets to create attractive and welcoming community spaces. Farther away, cities like Barcelona, Spain, have used these designs in a much grander way to create greener spaces that put pedestrians first.

As part of CMAP's [mobility recovery](#) project, CMAP is examining how the pandemic has changed public spaces in the region and learning from Barcelona and others on how innovation can help make spaces safer and easier for pedestrians. Learn more [here](#).

Program Status Updates**CRRSAA Program**

On December 27, 2020, Title IV of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) was enacted. This Act included a local government component that resulted in the allocation of \$42,647,247 to be programmed and managed by CMAP. In the fall of 2021, the STP Project Selection Committee and local councils of mayors selected [33 individual project phases](#) to be fully or partially funded with CRRSAA funding. The [Regional CRRSAA Program Status Report](#) and [Regional CRRSAA Accounting Summary](#) were updated in February 2022.

Staff Contact: [Kama Dobbs](#) (312-386-8710)

Surface Transportation Program

The April 14, 2022 meeting of the [STP Project Selection Committee](#) meeting was cancelled. The committee's next meeting will be held on **June 23, 2022**. [Meeting Materials](#) will be posted on CMAP's Legistar page one week in advance. An additional meeting will be scheduled in July or August to replace the cancelled meeting. Program status reports for the STP Shared Fund, based on quarterly updates

submitted by project sponsors and an accounting of available, programmed, and obligated funds for the region are available on CMAP's [STP web page](#).

Staff Contact: [Kama Dobbs](#) (312-386-8710)

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Alternatives (TAP-L)

The latest CMAQ Project Selection Committee (PSC) meeting was held on April 14, 2022, and the committee's next meeting is scheduled for **June 23, 2022**. [Meeting materials](#) are posted on CMAP's Legistar page one week in advance of the meetings. Information for submitting change requests for CMAQ or TAP-L funded projects can be found on CMAP's [CMAQ web page](#).

Staff Contact: [Doug Ferguson](#) (312-386-8824)

Regional Safety Action Agenda

CMAP is continuing its work to improve traffic safety and address the growing number of fatalities and injuries. Staff is wrapping up a policy paper on speed management and continuing work on a bicycle and pedestrian safety policy paper. Our Safety Resource Group met for the third time in October to discuss the initial recommendations for speed management and will convene again this spring to discuss implementation steps and initial bicycle and pedestrian safety recommendations. Three LTA safety projects are in progress in Calumet City, Bellwood and Riverdale to address multimodal traffic safety at intersections and along corridors. The Regional Speed Data project will begin this spring, which will analyze speed probe data to understand patterns of speeding and target countermeasures. An update on the group's work was presented at the January 25, 2022 Council of Mayors [meeting](#).

Staff Contact: [Victoria Barrett](#) (312-386-8641)

CMAP Products and Data

Fair Housing Month

During Fair Housing Month, CMAP is recognizing the role housing plays in supporting an inclusive and thriving region. ON TO 2050, the region's long-range plan, recommends creating housing that [meets current and future demographics](#).

The number of seniors in northeastern Illinois [is growing](#). But historically, buildings and communities have not been designed to address the needs of seniors. Today, municipalities across the region are working on initiatives to allow people to remain in their communities as they age. Learn more [here](#).

Communities share ideas on improving local incentives

Last week, Economic Development directors throughout northeastern Illinois gathered for one of three meetings of the Collaborative on Local Incentives, a group of peer communities participating in conversations around the use of incentives, economic development, and business retention. The collaborative builds on [Improving local development incentives](#), a CMAP guide published in 2020 that provides local governments with clear strategies for more effective incentive use.

Staff Contact: [Dustin Calliari](#) (312-386-8612)

Community Data Snapshots

In August 2021, CMAP updated its [Community Data Snapshots](#) with [new data from the 2020 Census](#).

These data-rich snapshots — one for each of the region's 284 municipalities, 77 Chicago neighborhoods, and seven counties — summarize demographics, housing, employment, transportation habits, and other key details. They help local leaders and the public track progress and make informed decisions in their communities.

The 2021 census data has been incorporated into the General Population Characteristics table, which includes information on total population, total households, average household size, and percent population change since 2010 and 2000. Raw data, including more detail, is available on the [Data Hub](#).

From Our Partners

RTA Launches Online Portal for Reduced, Free Ride Permits

The RTA launched Fare Programs Online, a web-based portal for reduced fare and ride free permits for seniors and customers with disabilities. The portal aims to increase access to these programs. Apply, replace, and renew at [Fares.RTAChicago.org](https://fares.rta-chicago.org).

Funding Opportunities

Transit 5311 Consolidated Vehicle Procurement

IDOT is now accepting [applications](#) for grants to provide public transportation providers with paratransit vehicles. Municipalities and local governments, as well as nonprofit agencies providing specialized transportation to seniors or individuals with disabilities, are encouraged to apply. The deadline to apply is **May 2, 2022**.

Research in Illinois to Spur Economic Recovery (RISE) Local and Regional Planning Grant

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is awarding funds to create or update local and regional plans to accelerate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible entities include counties, municipalities, other local units of government, and economic development organizations. Award amounts range from \$10,000-\$75,000 for coverage areas with populations of up to 75,000 residents, and from \$10,000 - \$150,000 for coverage areas with populations of more than 75,000 residents. Applications are due on **May 9, 2022**. More information is available in the [NOFO](#).

RTA Access to Transit

RTA announced a Call for Projects for their Access to Transit program, which funds small-scale capital projects that improve access to the regional transit system for pedestrians and bicyclists. Depending on the project type and funding request, selected projects will be bundled together into a single application for CMAQ funding in January 2023. [Application materials](#), a [program guide](#), [FAQ](#), and [recorded webinar](#) can be found on the RTA website. Applications are due by **Friday, May 20**. Contact [Michael Horsting](#), Manager of Local Planning, with any questions about the program.

\$2.9 billion in IIJA funding available for major projects

The U.S. Department of Transportation [announced](#) that \$2.9 billion in grant funding is available for major infrastructure projects of regional or national significance under the IIJA. State, regional, and local governments will be able to use a single application to pursue grant funding through three separate programs either established or reauthorized by the infrastructure law. Each of the funding opportunities has slightly different statutory rules that are described in detail in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#). Applications are due by **Monday, May 23**.

Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) call for applications

IDOT is now accepting funding applications for FY 2024 infrastructure safety projects aimed at reducing fatalities and serious injuries on roads within the local highway system. IDOT will continue to prioritize the selection of projects that address the 2017 Illinois Strategic Highway Safety Plan emphasis areas such as roadway departures, hazardous intersections, and pedestrian conflicts. IDOT will also prioritize projects that protect Vulnerable Road Users such as pedestrians and bicyclists. IDOT intends to commit \$30.6 million for the FY 2024 cycle. The federal funding level per project remains at a maximum 90 percent of the total eligible improvement cost. Eligible phases include preliminary engineering, design, construction, and construction engineering. Applications are due by **Friday, June 17, 2022 at 5:00 PM**. More information can be found on [IDOT's HSIP web page](#).

Public Input

Engage with CMAP: Share your Thoughts on Planning Projects

Plans that reflect the values and priorities of their communities require meaningful public participation from residents and stakeholders. The [Engage with CMAP](#) website allows residents to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns on current planning projects in the region, including these recently launched projects: [Butterfield Road Corridor Plan](#) in Lombard, Downers Grove, Oak Brook and DuPage County and [Phoenix Planning Priorities](#) in the Village of Phoenix. Stay informed and connected by checking out the site. We look forward to hearing from you!

Illinois Tollway Update – April 2022

Tollway Leadership

Following the retirement of Tollway Board Chairman Will Evans in February, Governor JB Pritzker appointed Dorothy Abreu as the new Illinois Tollway Board Chairwoman brings over 20 years of experience in financial services, significant public sector experience and an active track record of service to the community. Abreu is currently a senior vice president for PNC's Corporate and Institutional Banking group, where she leads the delivery of financial solutions and banking advisory services to public institutions and non-profit organizations in the state. In particular, she has worked with clients to manage pandemic-related disruptions and operational funding needs. She has also led financing for high-impact projects focused on driving economic development and affordable housing in Illinois' low- to moderate-income communities.

In addition, Lanyea Griffin, Deputy Chief of Program Implementation and 22-year engineering veteran, was named Interim Executive Director effective April 1, following the resignation of Executive Director José Alvarez. Griffin joined the agency in 2013 and has been an integral part of the engineering team. Since 2018, Griffin has been serving as a Deputy Chief of Program Implementation overseeing the Tollway's \$4 billion Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project. During her eight-year tenure at the Illinois Tollway, Griffin also managed design for the eastern end of the \$2.5 billion Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90) rebuilding and widening completed in 2017, including delivery of the region's first SmartRoad with automated traffic management. In addition, she managed construction to deliver Phase One of the \$719 million I-294/I-57 Interchange, creating the first connection between the two interstates in south suburban Chicago.

2022 Capital Program

The Tollway's 2022 Capital Program calls for investing \$1.49 billion with \$296.8 million budgeted for systemwide roadway and bridge repairs to keep the existing Tollway system in good repair, along with funding for key projects including:

- \$439.9 million to continue planning and construction for the new I-490 Tollway and new interchanges connecting to the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90), Tri-State Tollway (I-294), the Illinois Route 390 Tollway, as well as providing direct access in and out of O'Hare International Airport as part of the Elgin O'Hare Western Access Project.
- \$690.1 million to continue design and reconstruction work for the Central Tri-State Tollway (I-294) Project.
- \$46.2 million to complete construction of the I-294/I-57 Interchange.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelsey Passi at kpassi@getipass.com.



Metra Media Relations 312-322-6776

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metra to significantly expand UP Northwest service *Minor UP North changes also start April 25*

CHICAGO (April 7, 2022) – As riders return to the weekday commute and construction activity ramps up, Metra will be significantly expanding the weekday schedule on its UP Northwest (UP-NW) Line and making some minor modifications to its UP North Line (UP-N) schedule. The new schedules will take effect Monday, April 25.

“We have said since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that Metra is committed to adjusting its schedules to meet growing ridership and our riders’ changing needs,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “We are greatly encouraged by the growth in ridership so far this year and we are happy to be welcoming returning riders and new ones to *My Metra*.”

The new UP-NW schedule will increase weekday service by 21 trains, to 66 trains from 45. As with Metra’s other recent schedule revisions, the new UP-NW schedule offers more consistent service patterns and departure times, making the schedule easier for customers to understand and memorize. Most midday trains will now arrive in Chicago on the 10s, allowing better connections with other UP lines.

The new schedule also divides rush-period service into a three-zone pattern that will better balance passenger loads and allow Metra to improve express service to stations farthest from Chicago. The schedule has also been adjusted to better accommodate customers with early shifts and reverse commutes, with the first train arriving downtown Chicago at 5:32 a.m. and the first train departing Chicago at 5:05 a.m. Reverse commuters will now have six outbound trains departing before 9 a.m.

On the UP North, the schedule is being adjusted to add one more morning departure from and one more evening train to Kenosha. Train 310 will now depart Kenosha at 6:38 a.m. In the evening, Train 351, the 4:32 p.m. departure from Chicago, will provide service to Kenosha arriving at 6:02 p.m.

Construction projects that are expected to be ongoing for several years, including the new station at Peterson/Ridge in Chicago, necessitate a slight reduction of UP-N service during middays to lengthen work windows and reduce delays through single-track areas. In the midday, inner-zone trains that departed from Winnetka at 10:09 a.m. and 2:09 p.m. and two outbound trains that departed Chicago for Winnetka at 9:02 a.m. and 1:02 p.m. will be removed from the schedule. This will result in hourly service on the line during those periods.

The new UP-NW and UP-N schedules can be viewed at metra.com/alternate-schedules. All customers are encouraged to review the new schedules to determine if their current trains are affected or if new trains better meet their needs. Metra will monitor customer feedback and operations and make future schedule adjustments as necessary.

###

About Metra

Metra is an essential resource that safely and reliably connects individuals to the things that matter most in their lives — their work, their homes and their families.

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April Update

The RTA, CTA, Metra, and Pace launch joint transit advocacy campaign 'Forward for All'

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) announced the launch of the "Forward for All" campaign to show that transit is essential to the recovery and ongoing vibrancy of the Chicago region, contributing to our economy and environment and enabling opportunity in ways and at a scale nothing else can. In the face of COVID-19's impact on transit ridership, this initial phase of "Forward for All" aims to strengthen trust and pride in the region's transit system by building awareness of the economic, environmental, and quality of life benefits of public transportation.

The campaign began Sunday, April 3, with full page ads in the Chicago Sun-Times, the Daily Southtown, the Daily Herald, and throughout the following week in Crain's Chicago Business and more than a dozen independent and minority-owned publications throughout the six-county region. The ads feature a letter signed by the leaders of the RTA, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace, demonstrating a joint commitment to boldly leading the region's transit system into the uncertain future. Ads focused on the economic, environmental, and equity benefits of transit will also appear on 15 CTA bus shelters, 19 Metra stations along the Union Pacific North and Metra Electric lines, and 25 Pace bus shelters across the six-county region, as well as six billboards along highways leading into the city from the west and south. The campaign also features static digital advertising, a promotional video, and a [dedicated webpage](#).

Access to Transit

The RTA has opened a Call for Projects for the [Access to Transit Program](#) through May 20, 2022. The program supports small-scale capital projects that improve pedestrians' and bicyclists' access to public transportation.

CTF Illinois' transportation services empower people with disabilities

This year, the RTA launched a blog series called [Moving You](#), highlighting programs managed by the RTA that expand transportation options and access to transit for all. A different project or program will be highlighted each month this year, and the latest story explores CTF Illinois' point-to-point transportation services and travel training. The nonprofit's point-to-point services operate throughout southern Cook and northern Will counties, providing about 45,000 trips a year, including 11,000 specifically related to employment.

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April 14, 2022

Secretary Omer Osman
Illinois Department of Transportation
Hanley Building
2300 S. Dirksen Parkway
Springfield, IL 62764

Dear Secretary Osman:

On behalf of the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC) and our 43 members, thank you for your leadership in implementing Governor Pritzker's Rebuild Illinois capital program. This funding places Illinois in an ideal position to take full advantage of much needed federal support through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

As communities around the state begin to implement projects, we continue to have significant concerns about the ability of IDOT to handle the increased number of agreements and other required submittals for federally funded projects that will inevitably accompany this increased investment. We understand that many industries have been understaffed throughout the pandemic, and IDOT is no exception. However, issues with IDOT's current system for moving projects through the federal process to letting and authorization have existed well before the pandemic, so far without any tangible changes or relief for local public agencies. Specifically, our members have noticed consistent issues with the following:

1. Excessive review times for federal agreements, with no way for local agencies to track progress.
2. Inconsistency with corrections and multiple rounds of corrections on agreements, resulting in further delays.
3. Costly and impactful review comments are frequently offered very late in the review process.
4. Excessive delays for real estate issues reviewed by the Office of Chief Counsel.
5. Excessive delays in issuance of permits within IDOT right-of-way, with no way to track permit submittals.

These issues have led to real consequences for communities attempting to address essential safety and quality of life improvements for their residents. Recently, the Village of Barrington was at risk of losing over \$35 million in committed federal funding for a regionally important grade separation project in their downtown due to delays in IDOT staff coordinating the programming of right-of-way funding. Only after insisting on several coordination meetings between Central Office and District staff as well as extensive communication and guidance from Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning staff were the issues resolved and funding no longer jeopardized. This additional coordination alone took well over six months.

The Village of Mount Prospect also experienced similar delays attempting to construct improvements to a regional multi-legged arterial roadway intersection historically plagued by poor levels of service. Most legs of this intersection are under IDOT jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the Village has paid for Phase 1 engineering, Phase 2 engineering, and secured millions in federal funding. Anticipating the IDOT 18-month Phase 2 process, the Village experienced months of additional delays wholly attributable to lengthy IDOT reviews. For example,

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approval of plats and legal descriptions were delayed over a month and appraisal approvals were delayed between 1-2 months. Most disturbingly, the Village was advised that Chief Legal Counsel reviews of permanent ROW acquisitions would take yet an additional 2 months to approve resulting in a third missed bid letting and postponement of the project until the 2023 construction season. As of this writing, the project had been added to the April bid letting, and subsequently pulled days later with little to no explanation from IDOT staff.

In addition, the Village of Skokie is currently experiencing delays with a major project adjacent to NorthShore Skokie Hospital. The project had completed all required submittals in order to be ready for the March 2022 letting. In January, the Village was notified that due to an unknown issue with IDOT staff and the Office of Chief Counsel, the Village would have to target the next letting, only to be told once again one month later to target the June letting. The Village is now forced to either construct the project over two construction seasons or delay bidding and absorb the potential cost impacts. This confusion regarding the ultimate construction window has led to deepening concerns about the project from the hospital and area businesses. As this example shows, these unpredictable timelines combined with the developers' contract purchasing obligations often leave developers hesitant to pursue new developments that require improvements within IDOT's right-of-way.

As demonstrated, communities are feeling real and significant effects that arise from the systemic delays and inefficiencies currently present in IDOT's federal agreement process. Costly and impactful review comments are frequently offered very late in the review process. We believe that immediate action must be taken to mitigate these issues and ready the Department for the significant influx of federal projects funded by the IJA. We offer the following suggestions and our assistance to reduce the burden on both Department staff and local communities in moving projects to completion:

1. Provide more authority to District staff and/or local agencies in approving agreements below a certain cost threshold.
2. Significantly augment IDOT staff with consultants to process agreements and right-of-way permit submittals in a timely manner.
3. Provide a clear, transparent way for local agencies and consultants to track and inquire about the progress of their agreements, permits and other required submittals.
4. Create a preliminary review process that allows developers to receive initial feedback on site plans before moving to advanced stages of design.
5. Require IDOT staff attendance at regularly scheduled NWMC Transportation Committee meetings to maintain a consistent dialogue.

We believe these changes will allow communities to work more effectively with IDOT staff so that projects can be completed in a timely and responsible manner. We stand ready to work with IDOT to implement projects in furtherance of the goals of Rebuild Illinois and the IJA so that communities in our region can feel the many benefits that come from investing in Illinois' transportation system.

As time is of the essence, please provide a response to NWMC Executive Director Mark Fowler by Friday, May 13. He may be reached at 847-296-9200, ext. 125 or mfowler@nwmc-cog.org. Our members would also welcome a meeting with you and other IDOT officials to further explore these issues and develop mutually beneficial solutions.

Sincerely,



Nancy Rotering
President, Northwest Municipal Conference and
Mayor, City of Highland Park

cc: Governor JB Pritzker
NWMC State Representatives
NWMC State Senators