

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

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Northwest Municipal Conference

Transportation Committee

Agenda

September 16, 2021

8:30 a.m.

NWMC Offices and via Zoom Video Conference

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82550255785?pwd=NHl2Z1NiOTUyNS9mc0FrZEZFR284Zz09>

Meeting ID: 825 5025 5785

Passcode: TC091621

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

I. Call to Order/Introductions

II. Approval of May 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Attachment A)

Action Requested: Approval

III. MPC Presentation - Where the Sidewalk Ends (Attachment B)

Jeremy Glover, Transportation Associate with the Metropolitan Planning Council, will provide an overview of their study, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, which covers the state of municipal ADA transition planning for the public right-of-way in the Chicago region.

Action Requested: Informational/Discussion

IV. Agency Reports

- a. CMAP (Attachment C)
- b. Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
- c. IDOT Highways
- d. Illinois Tollway
- e. Metra (Attachment D)
- f. Pace
- g. RTA

V. Other Business

VI. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the NWMC Transportation Committee is scheduled for October 21, 2021 at the NWMC Offices and via Zoom video conference.

VII. Adjourn

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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
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NWMC Transportation Committee

Via Teleconference

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Rod Craig, President, Village of Hanover Park, *Co-Chair*
Tom Dailly, President, Village of Schaumburg, *Co-Chair*
Heather Lis, Village Engineer, Village of Barrington
Darren Monico, Village Engineer, Village of Buffalo Grove
Bob Benton, Trustee, Village of Deerfield
Eric Heiker, Civil Engineer, City of Des Plaines
Phil Kiraly, Village Manager, Village of Glencoe
Jeff Brady, Director of Planning, Village of Glenview
Ramesh Kanapareddy, Director of Public Works, City of Highland Park
Bill McLeod, Mayor, Village of Hoffman Estates
Sean Dorsey, Public Works Director, Village of Mount Prospect
Robert Israel, Trustee, Village of Northbrook
Lou Arrigoni, Civil Engineer, City of Park Ridge
Peter Falcone, Assistant to the City Administrator, City of Prospect Heights
Lara Sanoica, Alderman, City of Rolling Meadows
Karyn Robles, Director of Transportation, Village of Schaumburg

Others Present

Caitlin Goodspeed, Assistant Planner, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Mary Weber, Assistant Analyst Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Benet Haller, Transit Manager, Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
Cecilia Diaz, Transportation Planner, Cook County Dept. of Transportation & Highways
Sam Wright, Transportation Planner, Cook County Dept. of Transportation & Highways
Joe Cwynar, Senior Project Manager, Engineering Enterprises
Kelsey Passi, Community Relations Corridor Manager, Illinois Tollway
Rick Mack, Community Relations Representative, Metra
Katie Renteria, Community Relations Representative, Metra
Steve Andrews, Community Relations Representative, Pace
Dan Jedrzejak, P.E., Chastain & Associates
Thomas Gill, President, Thomas Engineering Group
Larry Bury, Deputy Director, NWMC
Kendra Johnson, Program Associate for Transportation, NWMC
Mark Fowler, Executive Director, NWMC
Matthew Pasquini, Program Associate for Transportation, NWMC

I. Call to Order/Introductions

President Craig called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Approval of April 22, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mayor McLeod moved approval of the April 22, 2021 meeting minutes. Mayor Dailly seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. Cook County Bike Plan Presentation

Benet Haller, Transit Manager at the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, gave a presentation on the development of the Cook County Bike Plan. Mr. Haller elaborated on the need to create a low stress bicycle network of off-street and side paths throughout Cook County to enhance equity and increase the frequency of bike commuting and other purposeful bike trips. Following the presentation NWMC staff was asked about alignment issues between Cook County's plan and the Multimodal Plan. Mr. Fowler noted that the county provided much of the information for the Multimodal Plan and said staff would address gaps in the data over the next few months.

IV. Agency Reports

- A. CMAP – Ms. Weber reported that traffic is rebounding in northeastern Illinois and that the latest analysis shows traffic volumes 6% below pre-Covid levels. She reported on the release of a new report on how fees fines and fares impact low income resident and people of color and includes proposals for to address the problems. She reported that CMAP is publishing updated interpretations of the American Rescue Plan Act and setting new legislative guidance for local governments. Finally, she reported that CMAP is seeking participants for their Future Leaders in Planning summer leadership development program, which is set to take place on Fridays between July 9 and July 30.
- B. CCDOTH – Ms. Diaz reported on a document produced by Cook County of community project funding requests throughout the region. She reported the timeline for 2021 Invest in Cook projects, which is currently under review and scheduled to be finalized by the board in July. Finally, she reported that talks are underway between the County and Metra to plan a safety and trespasser prevention conference in September with more information to be released as it becomes available.
- C. IDOT Highways – No report.
- D. Illinois Tollway – Ms. Passi reported on Work Zone Awareness initiatives to keep road maintenance workers safe. She reported the tollway is moving forward with cashless tolling and that toll plazas will be undergoing changes to improve service for customers and to reduce maintenance costs. She reported that Tolling 2020 has been extended to June 30, 2021 which reduces the cost of missed tolls to \$3 per missed toll. Finally, she reported that the 2021 capital program is underway and the continuation of construction on the I-490 Tollway Project and the I-294 Tollway Project.
- E. Metra – Ms. Renteria noted the report included in the agenda packet. She reported that Metra is resuming Saturday service to pre-pandemic levels. She also reported that Metra reported they recently had the highest ridership levels since the beginning of the pandemic and will continue initiatives to increase their ridership.

F. Pace – Mr. Andrews reported that Pace is evaluating service changes for the fall and coordinating closely with school districts. He reported that masks are still required on Pace buses and social distancing remains in place. Finally, he reported the Pace board awarded a contract for construction of the Pace Pulse Dempster line and that construction will begin this summer.

G. RTA – No report.

V. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2021-2022

Staff noted the attachment in the agenda packet with proposed meeting dates for 2021-2022. Mr. Fowler noted that recent conversations with Oakton indicate in-person meetings are likely to resume in September with the possibility for a hybrid option. *Trustee Israel moved to approve the proposed meeting dates for 2021-2022. Mayor Dailly seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.*

VI. Other Business

Alderman Sanoica asked the committee about their experience with the development of sustainability plans in their communities. Mr. Fowler indicated they will send out a survey to conference membership and share the results with Alderman Sanoica.

VII. Next Meeting

Mayor Craig noted the next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 23, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. via teleconference.

VIII. Adjourn

Trustee Israel moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 a.m. Mayor Dailly seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.



Where the sidewalk ends

The state of municipal ADA transition planning
for the public right-of-way in the Chicago region

MARCH 2021

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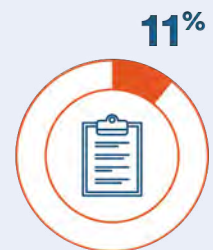
Summary

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed in 1990, yet more than 30 years later accessibility for pedestrians with disabilities remains low in many places. The regulations for implementing Title II of the ADA obligated local public agencies to develop an ADA transition plan within three years of the law's enactment. A transition plan is a planning document that identifies all barriers to access in publicly-owned streets and buildings, and develops a strategy for the removal of those barriers. Although it has been well over three years, local entities are still obligated to remove barriers for pedestrians with disabilities, and an ADA transition plan facilitates a coordinated effort to remove barriers throughout a community. This is why in 2015, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a circular clarifying that state departments of transportation still needed to develop ADA transition plans for their public rights-of-way. Locally, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) sent out a letter in 2014 to agencies that receive federal transportation funding emphasizing the federal requirement to have an updated ADA transition plan.

This report documents a first-of-its-kind assessment in the Chicago region of the status and quality of ADA transition plans for the public right-of-way. The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and the Great Lakes ADA Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) worked with students in UIC's urban studies program to study the presence and quality of ADA transition plans in the Chicago region. The team surveyed the region's 200 municipalities with more than 50 employees to establish whether they had a plan. Using a standardized audit tool, the team analyzed the plans found through the survey.

The study found that only 22 of the region's 200 municipalities with more than 50 employees (11%) had a plan. Among those 22 communities, none of the plans satisfied all of the five required plan elements. Beyond that, the quality of transition plans varied widely. Common weaknesses included a poor public engagement process and few details on how the plans would be implemented. Analysis of community characteristics revealed that a higher percentage of communities with large populations, more public employees, and higher incomes had plans as compared to smaller, low-income communities. Surprisingly, communities with a higher percentage of people with disabilities had plans less often or tended to have lower-quality plans.

In addition to the results of the assessment, this report makes a case for why transition planning is important to residents in the Chicago region. Local governments have a lot to gain by working through this process, and leave themselves exposed to risk if they don't. We explain the purpose of ADA transition plans and describe what is known on the topic and what this study adds. The report concludes by providing a list of resources to help local leaders and advocates begin the process of creating more accessible communities.



Only 11% of the region's 200 municipalities could show evidence of having a recent ADA transition plan.



1 Introduction

Nearly every person will experience disability at some point in their lifetime, either personally or in a caregiving role. In fact, one-third of Americans over the age of 65 experience a mobility-limiting disability. And in the Chicago region, we're getting older. According to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), a large increase in the number of people over 85 will increase the average age of the region's residents from 35.7 in 2010 to 39.4 in 2050.¹ In 2019, there were 828,419 people in the six-county Chicago region who identified as a person with a disability. That's an increase of 11.6% since 2010. During that same period, the region's overall population actually fell by half a percent.²

When sidewalks, crosswalks, and transit stations are universally accessible, people of all abilities and ages can stay mobile and actively participate in their communities. Not only is that important for general health and well-being, but it enables residents to age in place without fear of becoming disconnected or homebound should they experience a disability. Creating inclusive and livable communities for people of all ages and abilities should be a major focus of community planning, because this issue affects everyone.

The lack of sidewalks prevents any kind of meaningful access to this bus stop for people with disabilities.

Image courtesy Metropolitan Planning Council.

¹ CMAP. ON TO 2050. <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2050>

² American Community Survey 1-year estimates for 2010 and 2019. The six-county Chicago region includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties.



In 2020, the U.S. celebrated the 30-year anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the landmark civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life. The ADA was the first of its kind, a model for other nations around the world. Now is an opportune time to reflect on the progress made in three decades, and also to take stock of how much work remains to create a just and equitable society for people with disabilities.

This incomplete sidewalk makes passage difficult or impossible for people with disabilities.

Image courtesy Melissa Phillip / Houston Chronicle via AP.

The unfortunate reality is that many requirements of the ADA, especially at the local level, have not been fully implemented. This is largely due to insufficient education and enforcement by the federal government. Nowhere is this truer than on our streets and sidewalks.

Pedestrian infrastructure matters. Pathways for walking and wheeling are critical for people of all abilities to get to the places they want and need to go, including jobs, school, healthcare, recreation, and social activities. Pathways that are broken, incomplete, or otherwise inaccessible to people with disabilities make that difficult or impossible. The ADA implementing regulations require that all pathways in the public right-of-way, such as sidewalks, be accessible to all people. Due to a lack of coordinated planning, there is often a patchwork of accessible and inaccessible infrastructure that creates discontinuous routes.

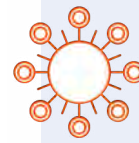
The [United States Access Board](#), a federal agency focusing on accessible design, has [guidelines](#) to help local governments build pedestrian facilities that are compliant with the ADA. Existing sidewalks must be wide, flat, and barrier-free. Ramps must connect

sidewalks to the street at intersections. These qualities of pedestrian infrastructure may escape the attention of an able-bodied person but can prevent access to a person with a disability, and this inequitable access is a critical civil rights issue.

The first step to ensuring equitable access in the public right-of-way is to identify existing barriers. Careful planning is necessary as streetscape infrastructure investments remain in place for many years, and are costly. Title II of the ADA requires any unit of government with more than 50 employees to create an **ADA transition plan** that identifies barriers to access in the public right-of-way, and describes a plan for removing those barriers.³

The ADA regulations for implementing Title II instructed all non-exempt units of government to complete their transition plan shortly after the passage of the act in 1990. While anecdotal evidence suggested a low compliance rate, the actual number of completed transition plans is unknown. Furthermore, revised ADA guidelines finalized in 2010 necessitated plan updates. The intention of this research was to determine how many municipalities in the Chicago region have ADA transition plans and to assess the quality of those plans. While transition plans are also required to address barriers to access in public buildings, this study focuses only on the public right-of-way (i.e. streets and sidewalks). To better understand the status of transition planning in the Chicago region, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) partnered with the Great Lakes ADA Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago to conduct a regional assessment.

This study grew out of MPC's 2019 report titled [*Toward Universal Mobility: Charting a Path to Improve Transportation Accessibility*](#). The report outlined 32 recommendations to improve transportation and mobility for people with disabilities in the greater Chicago region. Many of the recommendations stem directly from the requirements of the ADA, especially as they pertain to physical infrastructure and transit service. One such recommendation is to create a technical assistance program to help local governments develop ADA transition plans. This report provides baseline data that could inform such a program.



Transition planning in the COVID era

The coronavirus pandemic that swept across the globe in 2020 has been devastating. While very little data has been collected on the disability status of COVID-19 victims, we know that a large portion of deaths – possibly as much as 50% – have happened in nursing homes and other congregate living environments where many people with disabilities live.

This public health crisis has profound implications for the disability community, so it's more important than ever that local governments renew their commitment to fulfilling the requirements of the ADA.

With widespread government orders to shelter in place or otherwise reduce travel, our worlds are shrinking. Many people are using pedestrian infrastructure more than ever before for basic transportation and recreation. But when barriers to accessible mobility exist, quarantine can become confinement.

³ The ADA also requires that transition plans address barriers to accessing public facilities. However, this report is only focusing on barriers in the public right-of-way.

What is an ADA transition plan, and why is it important?

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a landmark civil rights law passed in 1990 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all aspects of public life.

It is divided into five titles that require equal access in areas including employment, education, transportation, and public space. The ADA National Network has [detailed information](#) on each of the Act's titles.

Title II of the ADA requires that units of government with 50 or more employees develop a transition plan to identify and remove physical barriers in their built environment, including pedestrian infrastructure, public buildings, and park facilities. Examples of barriers in the pedestrian environment include deteriorated or inaccessible infrastructure, such as broken sidewalks or overly steep curb ramps. At a minimum, plans need to include:

1

A designation of the official(s) responsible for the implementation of the transition plan

2

An inventory of barriers (i.e., identification of physical obstacles to access)

3

A prioritized schedule of when barriers will be eliminated and deficiencies corrected

4

A description of the methods that will be used to make facilities accessible

5

Provision of an opportunity to interested persons, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities, to participate in the development of the transition plan by submitting comments

Requirements vs Best Practices

Transition plans vary widely in detail, quality, and comprehensibility. In addition to the requirements discussed above, experts have identified best practices for transition plans to make them more representative of their communities' needs and more likely to be implemented:⁴

Meaningful public engagement. Local governments are required to provide an opportunity to interested parties to view transition plans and submit comments. This is a low bar for public engagement. Moving beyond the requirement means to authentically involve people with disabilities and other stakeholders to tap their vast knowledge on accessibility barriers in their communities. Meaningful engagement with the disability community will strengthen the quality of a plan, build support for implementation, and potentially mitigate the risk of legal challenges.

Transparent inventory methods and results. One of the first steps in the transition planning process is to conduct a self-assessment to create an inventory of all accessibility barriers in the public right-of-way. Communities use various kinds of inventory methods that include physical audits, GIS mapping, and aerial imagery analysis. A thorough inventory with a well-defined methodology creates trust in the process and ensures that all barriers are documented. Although communities may be afraid to report barriers because of concerns that it opens them up to potential litigation, reporting barriers is a transparent approach to sharing the information gathered so that internal and external stakeholders have a comprehensive understanding of the existing conditions.

Detailed and actionable implementation plans. Identifying barriers to access is a useful exercise by itself, but the real purpose of an ADA transition plan is to *transition* to a state of universal accessibility in the public realm. High-quality transition plans, therefore, provide a detailed schedule for barrier removal and explicitly define the methods that will be used. Since local governments have scarce resources, high-quality plans will also detail how barrier removal will be funded and how the work will be phased and prioritized. All plans are required to specify a responsible public official, but local governments that are serious about implementation will designate a senior official who is accountable to the public.

Planning for the future. Although not required by the ADA, high-quality plans will establish a system to monitor progress and make periodic updates. ADA transition plans should also describe how they align with other local or regional planning processes.



Meaningful engagement with the disability community will strengthen the quality of a plan, build support for implementation, and potentially mitigate the risk of legal challenges.

⁴ Eisenberg, Y., Heider, A., Gould, R. and Jones, R., 2020. Are communities in the United States planning for pedestrians with disabilities? Findings from a systematic evaluation of local government barrier removal plans. *Cities*, 102, p.102720.



Cross-jurisdictional collaboration is especially important for transition planning. Responsibility for accessibility improvements changes depending on who has jurisdiction over a road. This distinction is of little importance to pedestrians, who are likely unaware when crossing arbitrary municipal boundaries, but can have a major impact on access and safety. Prioritizing the removal of barriers to access should be embedded in every transportation planning effort in the region.

The reality of municipal finance means infrastructure improvements are often done in a piecemeal way. But a fragmented network may actually be more dangerous to people with disabilities than none at all.

Image courtesy AP Photo / Detroit News, Daniel Mears.

2.2

Real-world impacts

2.2.1

Profiles

Pedestrian infrastructure is the bedrock of every transportation system. Without accessible sidewalks and safe crossings, trips can become dangerous, expensive, or impossible. This is especially true for people with disabilities. The barriers that exist today have real-world impacts on access to opportunities of all kinds: employment, recreation, family, education, healthcare, and more. These are some of the stories that bring to life the consequences of inaction, and the opportunities that come with universal access.

PROFILE

Michele Lee



Michele Lee enjoys trying new restaurants.

She's savvy, a person whose Instagram photo of a well-executed entrée would inspire copycat reservations from her friends and followers. A downtown employee, a resident of the West Loop—where construction cranes tower above hyped new bars and restaurants—Michele is right at home in her neighborhood. She watches storefronts open from her windows.

But even nearby dining requires planning and logistics. Michele uses a power chair after a college car crash paralyzed her from the chest down, so something as simple as a missing ramp or curb cut can keep her from getting in the door of an “accessible” establishment.

“I kind of have to stick to my neighborhood, and I don't get to explore as much because of transportation and accessibility

“Many people with disabilities are underemployed and one reason is lack of access to transportation.”

constraints,” Michele says. “I'd love to go to Wicker Park more. There are so many bars and restaurants. Big Star, Violet Hour, Mindy's...

“But the Damen Blue Line stop is not wheelchair accessible. There's no elevator, only stairs. Especially in the winter, when some Piece Pizza or Mindy's Hot Chocolate could

really hit the spot, and because of my wheelchair I can't go, it sucks. The winter in Chicago is already depressing enough when it's cold and bleak—cabin fever is real and to not be able to get somewhere because of accessibility, it's a bummer.”

The truth is, Michele can afford to live in a dense, transit-rich hub. Tricky as the West Loop can be, it's a haven. Lee moved from Glenview years ago because getting home to the suburbs from her downtown office took three hours.

“Many people with disabilities are underemployed and one reason is lack of access to transportation, not because they cannot work,” Michele says. “The reason I chose where I live is because it's directly on the bus route that goes to my office. I was very intentional about it. I'm kind of stuck, because of where I work, where I can live.”



*Image courtesy
Lynn Renee
Photography*

PROFILE

Adam Ballard



For Adam Ballard, access to transportation is personal.

He grew up in downstate Illinois, and moved to the Chicago suburbs in order to access the Metra system. Now he lives in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, where he's able to get around independently in his power chair without buying an expensive retrofitted vehicle.

"Transit and transportation infrastructure has been important to me for a long time," Adam says. "Rather than maintaining an accessible vehicle of my own, it makes sense financially to use public transit, paratransit, and taxis—everything I use here."

Much of Adam's mobility hinges on that most basic element of the transportation network: sidewalks. When pedestrian infrastructure is missing or inaccessible due to weather and construction, it has a drastic impact on his ability to participate in his community. "When the weather is nice, I like to just roll everywhere or use transit because

"When I have no other option than paratransit, it really cuts down on what I can do because that service is so inflexible."

those are the most flexible and reliable options," he said.

"When I have no other option than paratransit, it really cuts down on what I can do because that service is so inflexible."

As the Housing and Transportation Policy Analyst at Access Living, he spent his days working to improve mobility outcomes for people with disabilities. "[People with disabilities are] still developing a political identity and a political voice around our disability identity," he said. Founded in 1980, Access Living is a Chicago-based center of advocacy, service, and social change led by and for people with disabilities. For decades,

the organization has been a hub. Cumulatively, its employees and constituents use their hard-earned political voice to advocate, including for better transportation.

Access Living's efforts have made a big difference in the Chicago region, and they're not slowing down. "We'd like to see transportation systems that are fully integrated every step of the way. No matter the mode of transportation, no matter your disability, you're going to be able to access the same level of service that a non-disabled person would."

Adam is now an Associate State Director at AARP Illinois, where he leads work on housing, transportation, and Livable Communities.



*Image courtesy
Lynn Renee
Photography*



2.2.2

Non-compliance is a gamble

More than 30 years after the passage of the ADA, people with disabilities continue to face barriers in the pedestrian environment. While the federal government has mostly taken a hands-off approach to enforcement, non-compliant entities are at risk of being sued by local groups in federal court. In most cases, a settlement agreement will force the local government into compliance, with potentially serious financial consequences. This has already happened on numerous occasions in Illinois.

In 2007, the City of Chicago entered a settlement where it was required to dedicate \$50 million in new funding to curb ramp repair and installation annually for a five-year period. In 2015, Champaign County reached a settlement agreement on a wide range of ADA issues, including the requirement to bring the public right-of-way into full compliance within three years. The town of Pekin, IL in Tazewell County is currently being sued by a group of residents for failure to provide accessible sidewalks and curb ramps.

Noncompliance is not only financially risky, but it can be deadly. Like these other pedestrians, a wheelchair user was forced into the road by insufficient pedestrian infrastructure with fatal results.

*Image courtesy
AP Photo / Jim Cole.*

One municipal ADA coordinator we talked to explains:

“Threats of lawsuits or losing federal funding – that’s a pretty big hammer. And if you want grants for your community, then you better get on it. And unfortunately, that speaks to more people than doing the right thing... because everyone should have equal access to neighborhoods [and] businesses, to be able to live their lives.”⁵

Local governments that don’t act risk losing out on future funding opportunities, or worse: losing control of their own capital improvement plans. Additionally, plans that are decades old likely do not satisfy the requirements of Title II. In [published guidance](#) to local governments, the FHWA calls transition plans “living” documents that must be updated as often as necessary to assure they remain relevant and inclusive of all outstanding accessibility barriers.

2.2.3

Benefits to communities

Going through the ADA transition planning process can increase the capacity of a community to support mobility and participation for people with disabilities. Local governments interested in doing the minimum can simply fill out a template and post it online. But going through the ADA transition planning process with purpose and intention can be a way to **infuse inclusion into a municipal government’s culture**. An ADA coordinator explained,

“It’s not just a block on a checklist, right? That’s not what the intent of the ADA is in my opinion. It’s a complete philosophy change in the way that we look at and treat other people. It’s a sense of awareness that someone who might have a disability still has the same rights and accessibility to everything that we provide as a city.”⁶

If done well, the transition planning process facilitates cultural change. Public engagement facilitates a better relationship with an important constituency that will pay dividends in other ways.

It is standard practice to build new infrastructure following the most recent accessibility design guidelines and to bring streets and sidewalks into compliance with the ADA whenever a major reconstruction happens. One could argue, then, that transition planning is an unnecessary and expensive step that leads to the same eventual outcome.



Transition plans allow local governments to identify and address accessibility issues in a systematic fashion, thereby maximizing the impact of investments.

⁵ Eisenberg, Yochai; Heider, Amy; Stokes, Michele; Deitrick, Stephanie. 2020. Planning for pedestrians with disabilities: Sharing successes and gaps from ADA Transition plans around the U.S. ADA-Audio recording. retrieved from <https://www.accessibilityonline.org/ADA-Audio/archives/110844>

⁶ Ibid.

However, transition plans allow local governments to identify and address accessibility issues in a systemic fashion, thereby maximizing the impact of investments. Transition plans are helpful tools that enable more informed decision-making and more efficient use of scarce public resources.

Additional benefits emerge from this planning process. Because many communities do not have a comprehensive database on the infrastructure in their right-of-way, the self-assessment required to create an inventory of accessibility barriers is an excellent opportunity to collect data that can be used for many planning efforts. Further, data on pedestrian infrastructure could eventually be used to develop navigation apps that provide users with disabilities customized routes that meets their mobility needs.

3

State of transition planning in the Chicago region

3.1

Methodology

The inventory and assessment of transition plans was conducted by a group of student researchers from the University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Urban Planning and Policy Administration. The student group followed a protocol developed by Eisenberg, et al. (2020)⁷ for a similar study at the national level. Using data from the Census Bureau's 2012 Census of Governments, the students identified the 200 municipalities in the seven-county Chicago region⁸ with more than 50 employees. While this study focused only on municipalities, any unit of government with more than 50 employees (states, counties, townships or special districts such as a park district) is required to complete a plan under federal rules.

To collect the plans, the students used a series of standardized protocols. First, they looked for plans on municipal websites using specific search terms. If a plan was not found online, the students attempted direct contact through email and phone, approaching a variety of contacts at each municipality such as an ADA Coordinator,

⁷ Eisenberg, Y., Heider, A., Gould, R. and Jones, R., 2020. Are communities in the United States planning for pedestrians with disabilities? Findings from a systematic evaluation of local government barrier removal plans. *Cities*, 102, p.102720.

⁸ Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties

Director of Public Works, or municipal engineer. After acquiring the plans, the students audited them using an evaluation tool developed by Eisenberg, et al (2020). The tool consists of a list of transition plan elements, including all required elements specified by published guidance from the FHWA. It also includes good and best practices based on expert input. The plan elements included in the tool are organized into six categories:



Public participation opportunities

These elements consider whether the plan is available to the public, and how they were involved in developing the plan.



Inventory

These elements evaluate the process used to catalog and describe the barriers that exist in the public right-of-way.



Method and schedule

These elements assess the plan's description of how the identified barriers will be removed, and on what timeline.



Designated official

These elements check to see if the plan designated a public official responsible for implementation, and whether their contact information is shared with the public.



Monitoring progress

These elements consider whether a plan is in place for monitoring the barrier removal process, and how often the transition plan itself will be updated.



Other

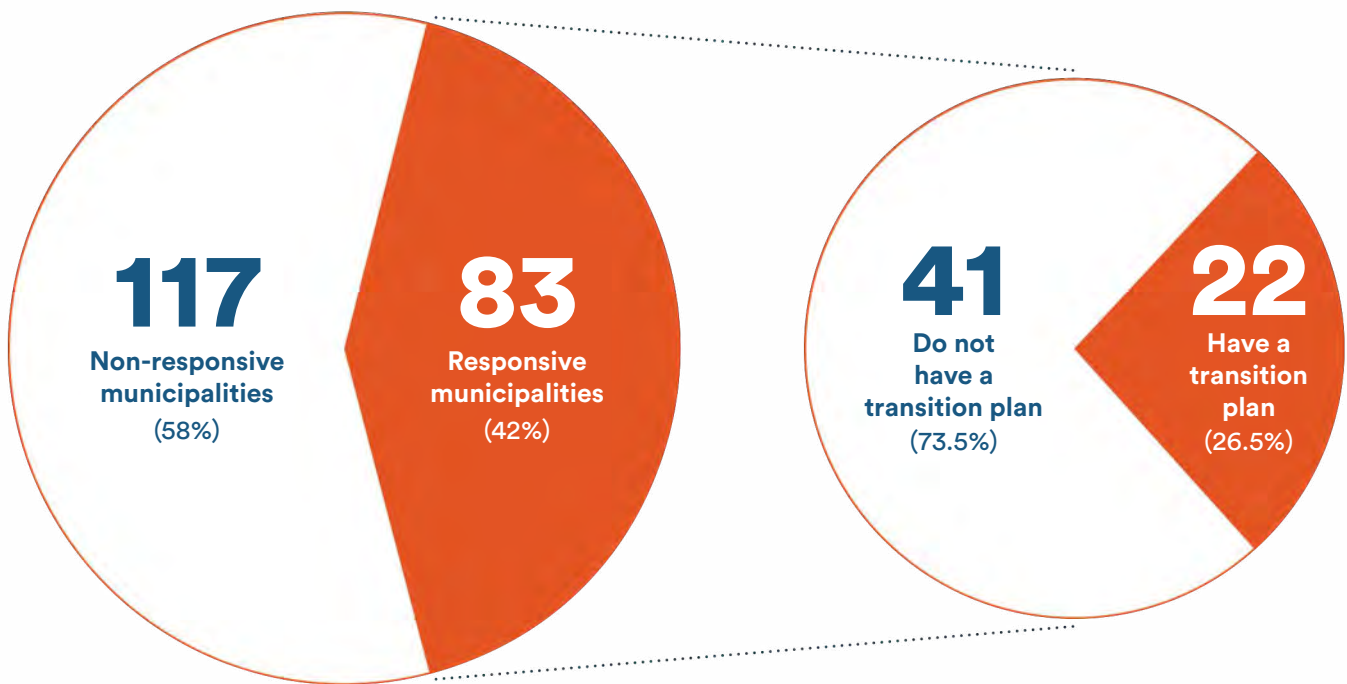
The evaluation tool also includes a few miscellaneous best practices, such as checking to see if the plan was formally adopted and how the plan has been incorporated into other planning efforts.

You can see a full list of the considered plan elements, and the detailed results of the regional assessment, in Table A1 in the [Appendix](#).

Results of the Chicago region assessment

Of the 200 municipalities, **only 42%** were responsive to the students' multiple inquiries. The students received 83 responses, of which 22 provided an ADA transition plan. It's unlikely that the 117 non-responsive municipalities have current plans because they are required to be publicly available.

Figure 1. Survey Response and Transition Plan Status for Non-Exempt Municipalities



As shown on the map in Figure 2, the municipalities that provided an ADA transition plan are fairly dispersed throughout the region and have diverse characteristics. They range from very dense central cities to small rural communities. Certain parts of the region that are known to struggle with municipal capacity issues – such as South Cook County – had low response/plan completion rates. Yet other areas that are quite wealthy, like the North Shore in northern Cook and Lake Counties, had similar patterns. The municipalities with fewer than 50 employees that are not required to have ADA transition plans are mainly located on the fringes of the region. It is worth noting that the unincorporated areas of the seven-county region are not exempt from transition planning, but should be covered by county plans, which are beyond the scope of this report.

Figure 2. Transition Plan Status for Municipalities in the Chicago Region

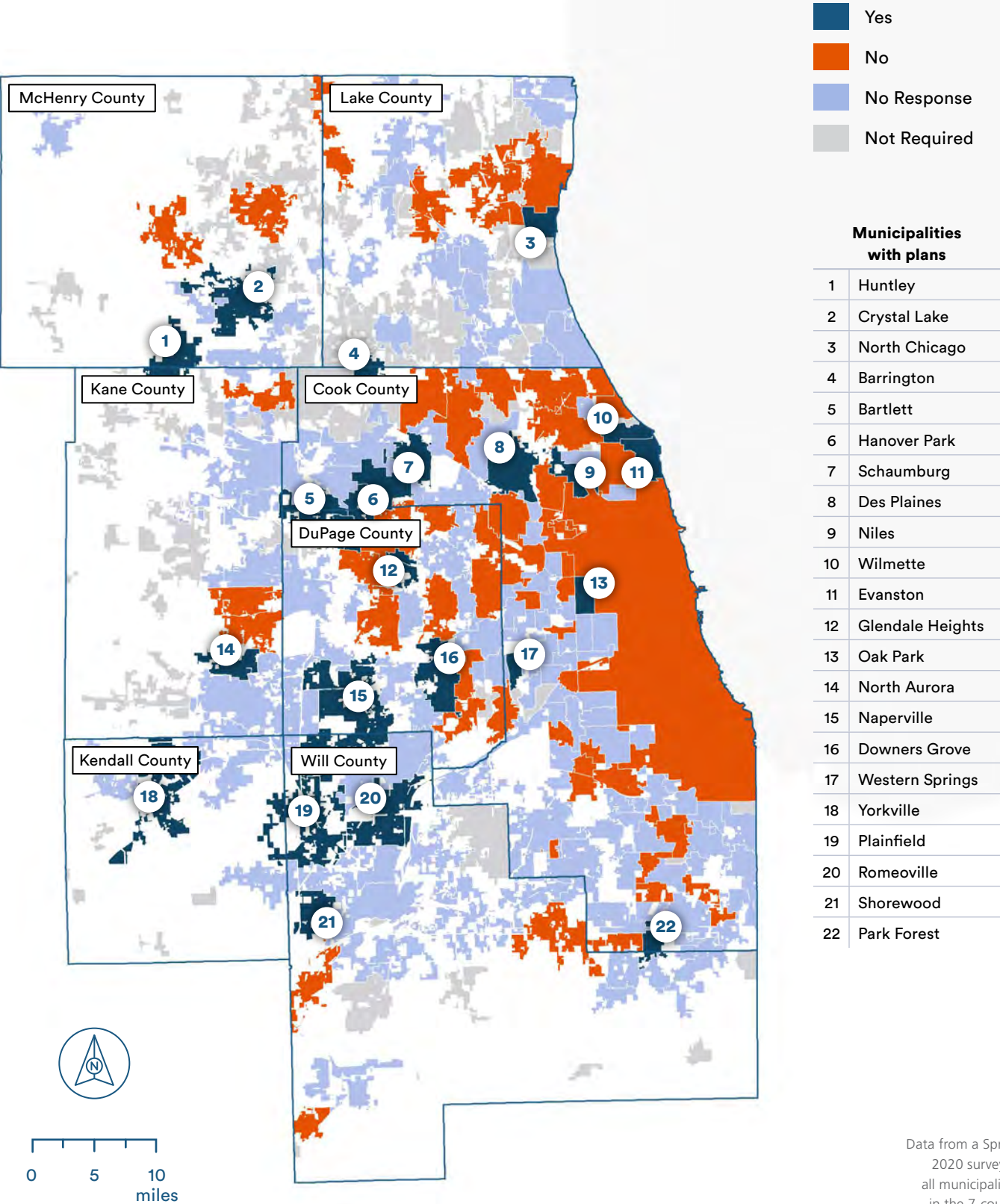


Table 1 shows how well the 22 reviewed plans satisfied the five basic federally required elements of an ADA transition plan. The most essential part of a transition plan, the inventory of barriers, was completed in all but one case. Similarly, most plans that created an inventory also described methods for barrier removal. Most plans, but not all, satisfied the simplest requirement: designating an official who is responsible for plan implementation. Public engagement was generally poor (50% of plans), and half of the plans included no details on when barriers would be removed.

Table 1. Compliance with the ADA's Five Required Elements

Required Element	Count	%
Complete an inventory of barriers in public rights-of-way	21	95%
Identification of a public official responsible for plan implementation	20	91%
Describe the methods that will be used to remove barriers and make facilities accessible	18	82%
Include a prioritized schedule for barrier removal	11	50%
Provide an opportunity for interested persons to participate in the development of the plan	11	50%

Table 2 shows how well the region did collectively at satisfying the most important plan elements evaluated in the assessment methodology, including both required and best practice components. A detailed list of the 35 evaluated elements is located in Table A1 in the [Appendix](#). The score is the average percentage of elements satisfied in each category across the 22 plans.

Across all categories in the evaluated plans, 66% of the 35 elements were satisfied, whether required, critical, or identified as a best or good practice. Critical elements are actions not explicitly required under the ADA, but are necessary steps to satisfying the required elements. Collectively, the plans performed better in some categories than others. The plans were generally strong on developing a thorough inventory of access barriers and designating a high-ranking official to implement the plan. They were much less consistent with regard to public participation, describing their barrier removal methods, or providing a schedule for improvements.

Table 2. Assessment of Plan Quality Across Categories







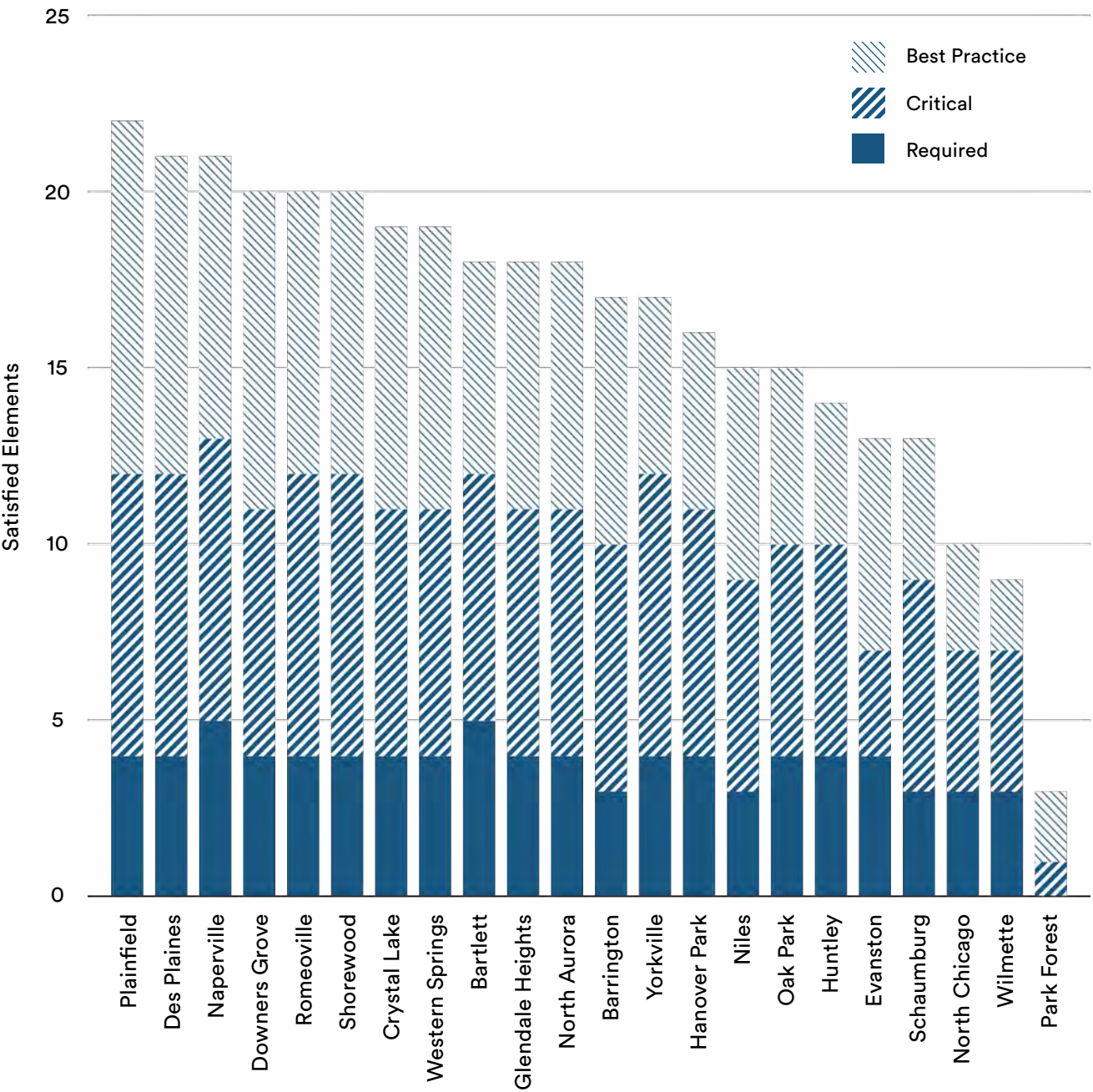
Category	# of elements	Score
 Public Participation Opportunities	5	52%
 Inventory	8	85%
 Method and Schedule	10	51%
 Designated Implementer	5	86%
 Monitoring Progress	3	56%
 Other	4	61%
All Categories	35	66%

Figure 3 shows the distribution of required, critical, and best practice elements from the audit tool for each of the 22 plans the team reviewed. There was a wide range of plan quality, with the least complete plan satisfying only three required, critical, or best practice elements and the most complete plan achieving 22. The average was completion of around 16 elements, with 16 plans satisfying at least 15 elements.

Figure 3. Overall Plan Quality by Municipality





Public Participation Opportunities

All 22 municipalities with plans fulfill the requirement to make them publicly available, either by posting the plan to their website (14 communities) or by providing it upon request (8 communities). However, the ADA also requires local governments to provide an opportunity to interested parties for feedback. **Only half of the surveyed plans had some kind of public participation process during plan development.** Only two plans specified that they used more than one engagement strategy to solicit feedback, and only eight plans had targeted efforts to engage people with disabilities.



Inventory

All but one of the plans completed an inventory of barriers in the public right-of-way. Of the 21 plans that completed an inventory, almost all of them described which facilities were inventoried, as well as their adherence to federal design standards. Curb cuts were the most commonly inventoried facility. More than three-quarters (77%) provided the actual results of the evaluation by specifying, for example, the number of missing curb ramps or non-compliant sidewalks.



Method and Schedule

Most (82%) of plans included a description of the methods that would be used to remove barriers in the public right-of-way. All of those plans also included a description of how barrier removals would be prioritized. **Only half gave a schedule for when barriers would be removed,** and only 27% provided dates for any improvements other than curb cuts. More than three-quarters (77%) identified potential funding sources, but only one plan identified a dedicated set-aside for barrier removal.



Designated Official

All but two of the 22 plans designated a public official responsible for plan implementation. In all cases, it was a person with considerable authority, such as the director of the public works department. However, only 68% of the plans provided the designated official's contact information.



Monitoring Progress

Only 68% of the ADA transition plans outlined procedures for monitoring implementation progress. Even fewer (59%) specified how often the plan would be updated. Only nine of the 22 plans explained how the public can be involved in future planning efforts for removing barriers from the public right-of-way. While none of these elements is federally required, they promote transparency and public confidence.



Other Factors

Interestingly, only 55% of the plans had been clearly adopted by their municipalities, either by ordinance or signature. **Many appeared to be drafts and a finalized version could not be located.** Only 36% of the plans described how barrier removal will be incorporated into other transportation planning efforts.

Community characteristics and transition plans

Relationship to plan status

Creating an ADA transition plan takes time, money, and expertise. These resources are not evenly spread across communities in the Chicago region, and this likely has an impact on a municipality's ability to create a transition plan. To investigate this idea, the team looked for a relationship between municipal transition plan status and a number of community characteristics. For general measures of municipal capacity, we used: total population, median household income, number of municipal employees, and state tax revenue disbursement per capita.⁹ To focus on specific demographic groups, we used: percent of the population with a disability; percent of the population over 65; percent of the population that is white, Black, Asian, or Latinx; and the total percent of the population that are people of color.

To do the analysis, all unresponsive municipalities were grouped with the municipalities who affirmatively answered “no” for whether they had a transition plan. The 200 eligible municipalities were separated into four quartiles of 50 for each of the community characteristics described above. You can see the full results of this analysis in Table A2 in the [Appendix](#). Many of the findings are intuitive, but others were surprising, and perhaps reveal the decision-making processes in the region.

The measures of municipal capacity had the strongest relationship with transition plan status. Unsurprisingly, more of the communities with large populations had a plan than communities with small populations. None of the 50 municipalities in the lowest population quartile had a plan. The percent with a plan grew with each quartile, with 24% of 50 largest municipalities having a plan. This is more than double the regional average of 11%. The relationship between plan development and municipal staff count had a nearly identical distribution. More municipalities with higher median household income had a plan than those with lower median incomes. Only five of the 22 municipalities with plans were in the bottom 50% for median household income. Similarly, only eight of the 22 municipalities with plans were in the bottom 50% for tax revenue.

Given how deeply race is linked with many other socioeconomic factors, we expected to see some relationship between demographic groups and plan status. Communities with a low percentage of white or Asian residents are less likely to have a plan, but no



Many of the findings are intuitive, but others were surprising and perhaps reveal some of the decision-making processes in the region.

⁹ This is a measure of the per capita tax revenue municipalities received from the state in the 2019 fiscal year from the following sources: business district tax, charitable games and pull tabs/jar games, excise taxes, income tax, local use tax, cannabis use tax, and sales taxes.

clear relationship exists between plan status and the percentage of Black or Latinx residents. Aggregating all people of color together by community also did not suggest a relationship.

We also expected to find more ADA transition plans in communities with larger populations of seniors and people with disabilities. Within these communities, we thought there may be more political pressure to create a plan. We found no such evidence. Surprisingly, we found that municipalities with a higher percent of people with disabilities were actually less likely to have a plan. Only seven of the 22 municipalities with plans were in the top two quartiles for percent of population with a disability. Despite the lack of similar findings for race and ethnicity, this may be related to issues of municipal capacity compounded by overlapping socio-economic factors. Poor communities are likely to have more people with disabilities, and are also less likely to have the funds or expertise to complete an ADA transition plan.

3.3.2

Relationship to plan quality

To assess whether any of these community characteristics relate to the quality of the ADA transition plans, a similar analysis was done using only the 22 municipalities with plans. We compared the same set of community characteristics as above to the number of required elements, critical elements and best practices that each plan satisfied. To do this, we recalculated the quartiles for each community characteristic using the 22 municipalities only, then calculated the mean number of required elements and best practices satisfied in each quartile. As before, you can see the full results of this analysis in Table A3 in the [Appendix](#).

Interestingly, some of the strongest predictors of plan completion status have little relationship to the quality of those transition plans. For instance, the municipalities in the bottom quartiles for total population and municipal employees both have a higher average number of satisfied required or critical elements than the top quartiles. However, high plan quality was seen more in communities with higher median household income and per capita tax revenue. As income and revenue increase, so do the average number of required elements and best practices within the plans.

Following the same counterintuitive pattern as plan status, the municipalities with the highest percentage of people with disabilities had on average the fewest required or critical elements satisfied and adhered to the fewest best practices. But while race and ethnicity seemed to have little relationship to the presence or absence of a transition plan, these characteristics do seem more connected to plan quality. The municipalities with the highest percentage of Black residents and people of color had completed significantly fewer required elements and best practices in their plans.



We expected to find more ADA transition plans in communities with larger populations of seniors and people with disabilities. We found no such evidence.

Key Findings

Overall, ADA transition planning in the Chicago region is low. **Only 11% of communities could show evidence of having a recent plan.** The quality of most plans was also low, and many communities did not include some of the critical elements, nor did they meet best practices for plan implementation. Issues of municipal capacity seem to have a strong relationship with whether a municipality has a plan, and the quality of that plan. Municipalities with more residents and more employees — and therefore more capacity — were more likely to have plans. Communities with higher incomes were more likely to have plans, and those plans were likely to be of a higher quality. Because poverty is intersectional with many other marginalized groups, communities with large Black populations and a higher percentage of people with disabilities were less likely to have a plan and much more likely to have a low-quality plan. Future interventions in the region to support transition plan development should prioritize these communities. The lower levels of transition planning in communities with more people with disabilities is disconcerting, and the region should strive to close this gap.

Among the compliant municipalities, it's not clear how seriously officials took the process beyond satisfying the legal requirement to complete the plan. There is limited information about implementation progress or future updates. A well-known adage in urban planning is that the true priorities of government aren't found in planning documents, but in budgets. Very few plans specified sources of dedicated funding that would ensure sustained implementation.

Public participation and engagement is another area in need of improvement. Most plans had a very cursory outreach process, and a surprising number had no obvious means for public comment at all. **Meaningful engagement can help make plans more responsive to community needs, build political support for implementation, and protect municipalities against litigation.** Such efforts can be integrated into other planning efforts, such as complete streets, pedestrian plans, and transportation plans. There is a critical need for planners and engineers to engage people with disabilities in community settings.

11%



Only **11%** of communities could show evidence of having a recent plan.



The lower levels of transition planning in communities with more people with disabilities is disconcerting, and the region should strive to close this gap.

Take action!



If your community does not have an ADA transition plan, now is a great time to get started developing one. If your plan is over 10 years old, it's time for an update. There are likely more residents with a disability in your community than you realize. As the population ages, the number of people with mobility challenges increases. But it's not just people with disabilities that benefit from an accessible pedestrian environment. Faded crosswalks make it dangerous for children to cross the street. Missing curb ramps pose a problem to parents pushing strollers. Crumbling sidewalks discourage activity and blight neighborhoods. An ADA transition plan can be the first step toward changes that improve the community for people of all ages and abilities. Developing and implementing an ADA transition plan is key to making your community livable and ensuring residents can age in place.

It's important to get started, even if progress is incremental. As one municipal ADA coordinator said:

“Eat the elephant one bite at a time, take baby steps... What is the first thing you need to do? For me, it was, let's get this data. Let's try an engineer. But for other communities that don't have [resources], let's partner with our schools or our volunteer groups to make this [data collection] happen.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Eisenberg, Yochai; Heider, Amy; Stokes, Michele; Deitrick, Stephanie. 2020. Planning for pedestrians with disabilities: Sharing successes and gaps from ADA Transition plans around the U.S. ADA-Audio recording. retrieved from <https://www.accessibilityonline.org/ADA-Audio/archives/110844>

Resources

There are many resources available to local governments to help with the ADA transition plan development process. The New England ADA Center has a very comprehensive website to help local governments learn about the requirements of Title II of the ADA:

[Title II Action Guide for State and Local Governments](#)

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has compiled several transition plan templates, examples, and educational resources specific to rights-of-way:

[State Aid for Local Transportation - ADA](#)

The Ohio Department of Transportation similarly has provided templates and examples of ADA transition plans:

[ADA Transition Plan Resources for Local Agencies](#)

The National Cooperative Highway Research Program developed a very detailed guide on best practices for ADA transition planning. The report is written for state departments of transportation, but is relevant for local governments as well:

[NCHRP Project Number 20-7 \(232\) - ADA Transition Plans: A Guide to Best Management Practices](#)

The Great Plains ADA Center has developed a national certification program for people who have been designated as an ADA coordinator by their local government. This is a great way to learn about the role and to learn strategies that will help you complete and implement a good transition plan:

[ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program \(ACTCP\)](#)

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, a membership organization of the Chicago region's municipal leaders, has an ADA Coordinators group and convenes the Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative. Both meet regularly to share best practices and resources:

[Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative](#)

Finally, the Great Lakes ADA Center is available for technical assistance and support on any questions or work related to the Americans with Disabilities Act for communities in the Great Lakes Region:

[Great Lakes ADA Center](#)

Funding

Creating an ADA transition plan does require resources, but it's an investment worth making. Fortunately, there are a number of funding opportunities that local governments can apply for to help ease the financial burden.

Statewide Planning and Research Funds: IDOT sets aside \$20 million annually to support transportation planning and research activities throughout the state. Applicants must demonstrate how their project supports the goals and objectives of the state's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Transition plans have a clear connection to at least two of the LRTP's five performance goals: livability and mobility. SPR Projects must also demonstrate how they benefit disadvantaged communities, which is an easy task for transition plans.

CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program: The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has a program to provide financial and/or technical assistance to local governments for a wide variety of planning efforts. The program has funded many pedestrian and access-oriented plans in the past. Projects should demonstrate how they align with the principles of CMAP's [ON TO 2050](#) regional plan. ADA transition planning has an immediate and natural connection to CMAP's inclusive growth principle.

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Appendix

Table A1. Results from the regional Transition Plan assessment

Category		 Public Participation Opportunities				
Element Type		Critical	Required	Good Practice	Best Practice	Good Practice
Element (see below)		Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Percent Satisfied		100.00%	50.00%	63.64%	9.09%	36.36%
Results by Municipality	Barrington	●	×	●	×	×
	Bartlett	●	●	×	●	×
	Crystal Lake	●	×	●	×	×
	Des Plaines	●	×	●	×	×
	Downers Grove	●	●	●	●	×
	Evanston	●	●	●	×	●
	Glendale Heights	●	×	●	×	×
	Hanover Park	●	●	×	×	●
	Huntley	●	●	●	×	×
	Naperville	●	●	●	×	●
	Niles	●	×	×	×	●
	North Aurora	●	●	×	×	×
	North Chicago	●	×	×	×	×
	Oak Park	●	●	●	×	●
	Park Forest	●	×	●	×	×
	Plainfield	●	×	×	×	●
	Romeoville	●	×	●	×	●
	Schaumburg	●	●	×	×	×
	Shorewood	●	×	●	×	×
	Western Springs	●	●	●	×	●
	Wilmette	●	●	×	×	×
	Yorkville	●	×	●	×	×

1. Is the transition plan available for public inspection?
2. Were people with disabilities and other interested individuals and organizations provided an opportunity to review and comment on the transition plan?
3. Is the transition plan available on the agency's website?
4. Were multiple outreach methods used to engage the public as part of the transition planning process?
5. Were targeted methods used to engage people with disability to become involved in the transition planning process?

Table A1. Results from the regional Transition Plan assessment

Category		<div> Inventory</div>							
Element Type		Required	Good Practice	Good Practice	Critical	Critical	Best Practice	Critical	Critical
Element <i>(see below)</i>		Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8
Percent Satisfied		95.45%	77.27%	81.82%	86.36%	86.36%	77.27%	95.45%	77.27%
Results by Municipality	Barrington	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Bartlett	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Crystal Lake	●	✗	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Des Plaines	●	●	●	●	●	✗	●	●
	Downers Grove	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Evanston	●	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	●	●
	Glendale Heights	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Hanover Park	●	●	✗	●	●	●	●	●
	Huntley	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	✗
	Naperville	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Niles	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	North Aurora	●	●	✗	●	●	●	●	●
	North Chicago	●	✗	●	✗	●	✗	●	✗
	Oak Park	●	✗	●	●	●	✗	●	✗
	Park Forest	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Plainfield	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Romeoville	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Schaumburg	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Shorewood	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Western Springs	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Wilmette	●	●	●	●	✗	●	●	✗
	Yorkville	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

1. Was an inventory of the public right-of-way completed?
2. Was a description of the inventory procedures included?
3. What kind of sampling was used for the inventory? In other words, how much of the community?
4. Did the inventory assess whether pedestrian facilities, such as curb cuts, were present?
5. Did the inventory assess the compliance of existing pedestrian facilities using ADA guidelines for the public right-of-way?
6. How was compliance of pedestrian facilities assessed?
7. Which pedestrian facilities were assessed as part of the inventory and transition plan?
8. Does the transition plan list the physical barriers that limit the accessibility of services to individuals with disabilities?

Table A1. Results from the regional Transition Plan assessment

Category		<div></div> <div>Method and Schedule</div>									
Element Type		Required	Required	Critical	Best Practice	Good Practice	Critical	Best Practice	Best Practice	Good Practice	Best Practice
Element <i>(see below)</i>		Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8	Question 9	Question 10
Percent Satisfied		81.82%	50.00%	31.82%	27.27%	31.82%	72.73%	81.82%	54.55%	77.27%	4.55%
Results by Municipality	Barrington	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	●	●	✕	✕
	Bartlett	●	●	✕	✕	✕	●	●	✕	●	✕
	Crystal Lake	●	●	✕	●	●	●	●	●	●	✕
	Des Plaines	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	✕
	Downers Grove	✕	●	✕	✕	✕	●	●	✕	●	✕
	Evanston	●	✕	✕	✕	●	✕	●	●	●	✕
	Glendale Heights	●	●	✕	✕	✕	●	●	●	●	✕
	Hanover Park	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	●	✕	●	✕
	Huntley	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	●	●	●	✕
	Naperville	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Niles	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	✕	●	✕
	North Aurora	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	●	●	●	✕
	North Chicago	✕	●	●	●	●	✕	✕	✕	●	✕
	Oak Park	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	●	✕	✕	✕
	Park Forest	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	✕	✕	✕
	Plainfield	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	✕
	Romeoville	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	✕
	Schaumburg	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	✕
	Shorewood	●	●	●	✕	✕	●	●	●	✕	✕
	Western Springs	●	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	●	●	●	✕
	Wilmette	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕
	Yorkville	●	●	●	✕	✕	●	✕	✕	●	✕

1. Does the plan include a description of the methods to be used to remove barriers in the right-of-way and make the facility accessible?
2. Does the plan include a schedule of improvements to upgrade accessibility following the plan for each year of the transition period?
3. Does the plan include a schedule for other areas of the public right-of-way beyond curbcuts, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals?
4. Are dates attached to each barrier removal?
5. Until what year is barrier removal planned for?
6. Is a description of the prioritization for barrier removal present?
7. What factors were used for prioritization?
8. Which factors were given the highest weight?
9. Were funding sources identified?
10. Is a separate pool of funds identified and set aside?

Table A1. Results from the regional Transition Plan assessment

Category		 Designated Official				
Element Type		Required	Best Practice	Good Practice	Critical	Good Practice
Element (see below)		Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5
Percent Satisfied		90.91%	95.45%	90.91%	86.36%	68.18%
Results by Municipality	Barrington	●	●	●	●	●
	Bartlett	●	●	●	●	●
	Crystal Lake	●	●	●	●	●
	Des Plaines	●	●	●	●	●
	Downers Grove	●	●	●	●	●
	Evanston	●	●	●	✗	✗
	Glendale Heights	●	●	●	●	●
	Hanover Park	●	●	●	●	●
	Huntley	●	●	●	●	●
	Naperville	●	●	●	●	✗
	Niles	●	●	●	●	●
	North Aurora	●	●	●	●	●
	North Chicago	●	●	●	✗	✗
	Oak Park	●	●	●	●	✗
	Park Forest	✗	●	✗	✗	✗
	Plainfield	●	●	●	●	●
	Romeoville	●	●	●	●	●
	Schaumburg	✗	✗	✗	●	✗
	Shorewood	●	●	●	●	●
	Western Springs	●	●	●	●	●
	Wilmette	●	●	●	●	✗
	Yorkville	●	●	●	●	●


1. Does the transition plan name an official responsible for the plan's implementation?
2. Is the official in a position of authority?
3. What is the responsible official's department and title?
4. Was an ADA coordinator designated?
5. Was the name and contact information of the ADA coordinator listed in the transition plan?

Table A1. Results from the regional Transition Plan assessment

Category		 Monitoring Progress		
Element Type		Best Practice	Good Practice	Good Practice
Element (see below)		Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Percent Satisfied		68.18%	59.09%	40.91%
Results by Municipality	Barrington	●	●	×
	Bartlett	●	●	×
	Crystal Lake	●	●	×
	Des Plaines	●	●	●
	Downers Grove	●	×	●
	Evanston	×	×	●
	Glendale Heights	●	●	×
	Hanover Park	●	●	×
	Huntley	×	●	×
	Naperville	×	●	×
	Niles	●	×	●
	North Aurora	●	●	●
	North Chicago	×	×	●
	Oak Park	×	×	×
	Park Forest	×	×	×
	Plainfield	●	●	●
	Romeoville	●	●	×
	Schaumburg	●	×	×
	Shorewood	●	●	●
	Western Springs	●	●	●
	Wilmette	×	×	×
	Yorkville	●	×	×

1. Does the plan mention how monitoring of progress will take place, such as performance measures/regular reporting measures?
2. Does the plan specify how often the plan will be updated?
3. Does the plan explain how the public can become involved in ongoing public right-of-way access issues for planning, prioritization and policy decisions?

Table A1. Results from the regional Transition Plan assessment

Category		 Other			
Element Type		Good Practice	Best Practice	Best Practice	Best Practice
Element (see below)		Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
Percent Satisfied		81.82%	72.73%	54.55%	36.36%
Results by Municipality	Barrington	●	●	●	×
	Bartlett	×	×	●	×
	Crystal Lake	●	●	●	×
	Des Plaines	●	●	●	●
	Downers Grove	●	●	●	●
	Evanston	●	●	●	×
	Glendale Heights	●	●	×	●
	Hanover Park	●	×	●	×
	Huntley	●	×	×	×
	Naperville	●	●	×	●
	Niles	●	●	×	×
	North Aurora	●	●	×	×
	North Chicago	×	×	×	×
	Oak Park	●	●	●	●
	Park Forest	×	×	×	×
	Plainfield	●	●	●	●
	Romeoville	●	●	×	●
	Schaumburg	●	●	●	×
	Shorewood	●	●	×	●
	Western Springs	●	●	●	×
	Wilmette	×	×	×	×
	Yorkville	●	●	●	×

1. Was a set of accessibility guidelines for pedestrian facilities adopted?
2. Is the guideline updated for the 2010 ADA Accessibility Guidelines or Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines?
3. Is there any evidence the transition plan was put into operation by signature, ordinance or other means of adoption?
4. Does the Transition Plan describe how the efforts and priorities listed will be incorporated into other pedestrian and transportation planning?

Table A2. Transition Plan status by various community characteristics

Community Characteristic	Quartile	Does the municipality have a Transition Plan?	
		Yes	No/No Response
Total population	1	0	50
	2	4	46
	3	6	44
	4	12	38
Median household income	1	2	48
	2	3	47
	3	9	41
	4	8	42
Number of municipal employees	1	1	49
	2	3	47
	3	7	44
	4	11	38
State tax revenue disbursement per capita	1	4	46
	2	4	46
	3	9	41
	4	5	45
% of population with a disability	1	9	41
	2	6	44
	3	3	47
	4	4	46
% of population 65+	1	8	42
	2	3	47
	3	5	45
	4	6	44
% of population white alone	1	3	47
	2	6	44
	3	9	41
	4	4	46
% of population Black alone	1	5	45
	2	5	45
	3	8	42
	4	4	46
% of population Asian alone	1	2	48
	2	2	48
	3	9	41
	4	9	41
% of population Latinx	1	5	45
	2	7	43
	3	6	44
	4	4	46
% of population POC	1	4	46
	2	8	42
	3	6	44
	4	4	46

Table A3. Average number of satisfied elements by various community characteristics

Community Characteristic	Quartile	Average required or critical elements satisfied	Average best practices satisfied
Total population	1	11.2	7
	2	7.5	4
	3	11.5	7.7
	4	10.2	6.4
Median household income	1	8	5.4
	2	10	5.7
	3	11.3	6.8
	4	10.6	7
Number of municipal employees	1	11	6.2
	2	10	5.7
	3	9.2	6.7
	4	10.2	6.4
State tax revenue disbursement per capita	1	8.8	5
	2	9.3	5.2
	3	11.7	8
	4	10.2	6.6
% of population with a disability	1	11.8	6.8
	2	10.2	6.5
	3	10.2	6
	4	8	5.6
% of population 65+	1	10.8	6.2
	2	9.8	6.3
	3	10	6.7
	4	9.6	5.6
% of population white alone	1	8.4	5
	2	9.8	6
	3	11.7	7
	4	10	6.8
% of population Black alone	1	10.2	6.2
	2	10.3	6.5
	3	11.8	7.2
	4	7.4	4.8
% of population Asian alone	1	9.4	6.2
	2	10.7	6.7
	3	9.3	5.8
	4	10.8	6.2
% of population Latinx	1	8.6	5.8
	2	9.2	5.3
	3	11.7	7.3
	4	10.6	6.4
% of population POC	1	10	6.8
	2	11.5	6.7
	3	10	6.3
	4	8.4	5
All municipalities		10	6.2



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CMAP News

As of September 7, 2021, the CMAP office is now open daily at approximately 50% capacity. [Staff](#) are assigned to teams on a rotating schedule for in-office and remote work. [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 an [Assistant Analyst Modeler](#) to support the Transportation Modeling team, an [Assistant Policy Analyst](#) under the Plan Implementation and Legislative Affairs division, and a [Deputy Executive Director](#) for the Communications and Engagement division. Visit CMAP's [Careers page](#) to learn more.

COVID-19 Response and Resources

Traffic is continuing to climb, reaching levels earlier this summer than northeastern Illinois typically experienced before the COVID-19 pandemic. Transit use also is rebounding in 2021 as more offices start welcoming back employees. In June, ridership on the Regional Transportation Authority's system marked the highest total since the pandemic started. CMAP updated [analysis](#) on transportation changes during the pandemic covers the latest data on roads, trips, safety, transit, and freight activity in northeastern Illinois.

Northeastern Illinois grew over the past decade

The U.S. Census Bureau has released [2020 census redistricting data](#). This is the first release of detailed data, aggregated to small geographies, on households and population by race and ethnicity. The region grew by 1.74 percent, or 146,000 people, between 2010 and 2020. All seven counties in the CMAP region experienced population growth. CMAP will continue to analyze 2020 census data as it is released.

Improving regional sidewalk and accessibility data

The University of Illinois at Chicago's [Great Lakes ADA Center](#) was recently awarded a \$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to improve accessibility data using crowdsourcing and artificial intelligence. The proposed data collection and visualization tools — in partnership with CMAP, the Regional Transportation Authority, the Metropolitan Planning Council, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, and disability organizations — have the potential to transform how sidewalk accessibility data is collected and analyzed. This will help cities plan for and enhance sidewalk accessibility, and improve how infrastructure funding is dispersed in cities.

Save the Date: State of the Region

CMAP's virtual State of the Region event will take place on **Thursday, October 7**, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Registration and event details to follow. For immediate questions, email stateoftheregion@cmapp.illinois.gov.

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. Eligibility for these funds are

similar to the STP funds distributed to the councils and CDOT on an annual basis. As such, CMAP has [distributed](#) these funds in a manner that is similar the annual STP-Local distribution process.

CMAP has also developed [guidance](#) for the programming and active program management of these CRRSAA funds to maximize the impact of these funds on the region's recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic. To ensure that funds are obligated prior to sunset, project selection will balance consideration of the amount of funds available, project readiness, and implementing projects that have a meaningful innovation, equity and safety impact on the region's ongoing recovery efforts. The region will seek to advance projects from existing STP programs into the current federal fiscal year and utilize our existing methodologies for determining programming limits – such as the amount of local match that must be provided by project sponsors, maximum funding participation, and the phases of projects eligible for funding. We will also rely on the region's strong active program management policies and procedures – such as establishing obligation deadlines and providing quarterly project status updates – to ensure timely obligation of these limited funds.

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

Surface Transportation Program

The next STP Project Selection Committee (PSC) meeting will be held virtually on September 9, 2021. The committee will review public [comments](#) and consider final approval of the FFY 2022 – 2026 STP Shared Fund [active](#) and [contingency](#) programs. Following committee approval, staff will prepare TIP amendments for Transportation Committee, CMAP Board, and MPO Policy Committee consideration.

A full calendar of 2021 meetings is available on the [committee web page](#). 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 is 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 next CMAQ Project Selection Committee (PSC) meeting will be held on September 9, 2021. The committee will review public [comments](#) about the recommended [CMAQ](#) and [TAP-L](#) programs and consider final approval of the programs at this meeting. Following committee approval, staff will prepare TIP amendments for Transportation Committee, CMAP Board, and MPO Policy Committee consideration.

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

Regional Safety Action Agenda

CMAP is placing increased attention on traffic safety as the number of fatalities and injuries continue to increase, and we've lacked progress towards meeting federally required safety performance targets. As part of our commitment to safety, CMAP has formed a Safety Resource Group to inform a 'Regional Safety Action Agenda' to recommend safety improvements through the lenses of equity, engineering, education, enforcement and emergency services and public health. The Resource Group includes members from across these fields to prioritize actions, build consensus and develop safety tools, resources and policy for our regional partners. An [update](#) on the group's work was presented at the July 16, 2021 CMAP Transportation Committee.

Staff Contact: [Victoria Jacobsen](#)

CMAP Products and Data

Planning for an aging population in northeastern Illinois

The region's senior population is growing, particularly in northern Cook, western McHenry, and southern Will counties, according to a new CMAP analysis. Aging introduces new considerations for the region, from the services that municipalities offer to the transportation system required to meet the needs of an older population.

To support communities as they prepare for a changing population, a [new policy brief](#) examines where the region is aging, common characteristics of the senior population, and the walkability of areas with large or growing senior populations.

Journey home: Searching for an accessible way to visit family

CMAP is telling stories throughout the year from residents with disabilities about their experiences with transportation. CMAP is highlighting these stories as we support our partners with [implementing ADA transition plans](#) and creating a more inclusive region. In [this piece](#), Christine Wilk, a resident of Mount Prospect, shares how she uses paratransit to travel around the region and explains why it's difficult to visit family in nearby suburbs.

New Community Data Snapshots

CMAP recently 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 new 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](#).

Funding Opportunities

Truck Access Route Program (TARP)

On September 3, 2021, IDOT released [Circular Letter](#) 2021-22 announcing the availability of \$7 million for the FY 2023 TARP. Funding is available for roadway sections eligible for upgrading to a designated truck route. Eligible routes must terminate at a designated truck route or municipality and begin at a truck generator, another designated truck route or municipality. Roadway sections previously upgraded with TRAP funds are not eligible. The TARP is not intended for pavement preservation or maintenance projects and may be used for construction only. The program will provide up to \$45,000 per lane mile and \$22,000 per eligible intersection, with total project funding up to one-half of the project cost, subject to a maximum of \$900,000 per project. Applications must be submitted to the District Local Roads and Streets office by **5:00 pm on October 15, 2021**.

Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)

On August 26, 2021, IDOT released [Circular Letter 21-20](#) announcing the opening of the SRTS Funding Cycle 2021 through **Thursday, September 30, 2021**. The SRTS program supports projects and programs that enable and encourage walking and bicycling to and from schools serving grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. For the 2021 cycle, only infrastructure projects sponsored by local governments will

be funded. Projects will be federally funded at 80%, requiring a 20% local match. Preliminary engineering and right-of-way costs are not eligible.

Questions should be directed to the District Local Roads and Streets Engineer or the state Safe Routes to School Coordinator, John Paris at 217-524-6756 or john.paris@illinois.gov.

The Active Transportation Alliance is hosting two webinars to assist local governments with SRTS applications:

Webinar 1: Safe Routes to School Grant Guidelines & Application Walk-Through ([Recording](#) | [Slides](#))

Webinar 2: Safe Routes to School Grant Q&A on Wednesday, September 8, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm ([Register](#) or check the [Active Trans web page](#) for a recording after the webinar).

Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant program for nearly \$362 million. The program will fund a variety of projects including those that deploy railroad safety technology, capital projects that address rail service congestion challenges, reduce congestion and facilitate ridership growth along heavily traveled rail corridors, and/or improve short-line or regional railroad infrastructure, highway-rail grade crossing improvement projects, and rail line relocation and improvement projects. States, local governments, intercity rail passenger carriers, Class II and Class III railroads, and others are eligible to apply through www.grants.gov by **5:00 pm ET on November 29, 2021**. Match rates may vary based on the source of awarded funding. An [informational webinar](#) will be held on Tuesday, September 21. Additional details can be found in the [NOFO](#).

Hometown grants

T-Mobile has partnered with Smart Growth America and Main Street America to invest in small towns and rural communities through the [Hometown Grants program](#). Communities with 50,000 or fewer residents can apply for up to \$50,000.

ARPA Funding for small local governments

Small local governments in Illinois that have not already received aid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) can apply for their share of the more than \$742 million in federal funds via the no-entitlement units of local government (NEUs) portal established by the State of Illinois. The funding can be used to cover expenses from responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. A link to the portal and a [full list of eligible municipalities and allotments](#) is available on this [DCEO web page](#).

Public Input

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. Stay informed and connected by checking out the site. We look forward to hearing from you!

Opportunities

Free technical assistance for housing planning

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and CMAP have opened applications for free technical assistance in housing planning through Homes for a Changing Region. The program helps municipalities identify key

housing issues impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and develop solutions to these challenges. This fast and highly targeted assistance will provide an analysis of housing needs, a community survey of residents, expert panel brainstorming solutions, and a policy memo identifying recommendations and existing grant funds for implementation.

Assistance is free. Please fill out the [application](#) by **Friday, September 17**, or email [Kyle Smith](#) to be considered.

Cook County small business advising program

The Cook County COVID-19 Recovery: Small Business Assistance Program offers advising for small businesses throughout Cook County. The program provides one-on-one business advising to help business owners address their unique needs, including acquiring new capital and customers; understanding financial, change, and risk management; adjusting business models; and operating under new safety regulations. Learn more about the [advising program and other resources](#).

National Highway Institute (NHI) Web-based Training

The NHI has no-cost trainings available that are recommended for engineers and construction workers. These includes topics such as such as Introduction to Safety Inspection of In-Service Bridges, Chip Seal Best Practices, Pipe Installation, Inspection, and Quality, Introduction to a Transportation Asset Management Plan and Hot In-Place Recycling. To browse courses and register visit <http://bit.ly/nhitraining> and enter your government email.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metra to hold virtual meeting on \$262.3M project to replace UP North bridges in Chicago

Next phase calls for 11 new bridges between Fullerton and Addison

CHICAGO (Aug. 24, 2021) – Metra will hold a virtual public meeting on Sept. 9 to introduce the next phase of its project to replace 120-year-old bridges along the Union Pacific North Line on the North Side of Chicago. This phase includes the replacement of 11 bridges and retaining walls as required between Fullerton and Addison.

The Metra UP North Rebuild: Fullerton to Addison Project is currently in the design and planning stage with construction expected to begin in 2023 and completion expected in 2027.

“These bridges have surpassed their functional lifespan and can no longer be economically repaired and maintained,” said Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski. “The Metra UP North Rebuild Project will modernize the existing infrastructure, reduce maintenance needs and operating costs, and improve the customer experience with increased reliability and resiliency. This is a major project that will benefit *My Metra* riders for decades.”

To introduce the project to adjacent communities, Metra will be holding a virtual public meeting on Thursday, Sept. 9 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Meeting attendees will hear about Metra plans to modernize the bridges and track structures and learn additional details about the project’s timeline and benefits. To register for the virtual public meeting visit https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xCr3UKP5QnO6ATigkFUuNA or to learn more about Metra UP North Rebuild: Fullerton to Addison, visit metra.com/UPNrebuild.

The project will reduce Metra’s carbon footprint by improving energy efficiency, reducing oil and diesel fuel dependence and improving air quality, because it will result in fewer service delays and a greater ability to maintain consistent locomotive speeds.

Additional project elements include shifting the tracks west within the existing railroad right-of-way to align with the tracks north and south of the project area; reconstructing underpasses with increased lighting and ADA accessible travel paths; lowering of Roscoe and Cornelia Streets to maintain current clearance under the UP North Line and the CTA Brown Line; refurbishing and painting of the existing Lincoln/Addison bridge; and some utility work along the project corridor.

The project is anticipated to be constructed in two phases to maintain all rail operations and reduce impacts to pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile traffic. There will be some street and sidewalk closures throughout the project and the community will be notified beforehand. Additionally, property owners with backyards, gardens, or other property adjacent to the railroad may be impacted by the construction. Metra will be conducting outreach and coordination with these property owners.

The total estimated cost of the project is \$262.3 million and has been included in Metra's Capital Program for the past three years. Funds totaling \$161.2 million are currently allocated, including \$6 million from federal sources and \$156.1 million from Rebuild Illinois bond funds. Metra continues to pursue additional project funding.

In the first phase of the project, bridges over 11 streets from Grace to Balmoral were replaced. The reconstruction of the Ravenswood Station, which should be complete next year, was also part of that phase which cost \$166 million.

###

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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