



Volume 2, Issue 1,
January 8, 2010

Table of Contents:

Dates to Remember	1	Bicycle Planning Seminar Upcoming	4
Transportation Committee Looks to 2040	1-2	Illinois Programs ITEP Funding	5
North Shore Council News	2	RTA Performance Measurement Workshop	6
Northwest Council News	2	2010 Construction and Operations Meeting	6
2009 Transportation Year in Review	3-4	IDOT Funding for Rail Crossing Safety	6
SAFETEA-LU Extension	4	Contact Information	7

 *Dates to Remember*

- January 19** **NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee—10:00 a.m.**
NWMC Offices

- January 21** **2010 Construction and Operations Coordination Meeting—9:00 a.m.**
CMAP Offices, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL (see page 6)

- January 22** **RTA Subregional Performance Measurement Workshop—8:30 a.m.**
CMAP Offices, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL (see page 6)

- January 28** **NWMC Transportation Committee Meeting—9:00 a.m.**
NWMC Offices

- February 11** **Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee Meeting—8:30 a.m.**
Arlington Heights Village Hall, 33 S. Arlington Heights Road

- February 16** **“Introduction to Bicycle Planning” Presented by the League of Illinois Bicyclists—9:30 a.m.**
Oakton Community College (see page 4)

 *Transportation Committee Ends 2009 with Look into 2040*

On December 17, the Transportation Committee met and heard an update on the *Go To 2040* Regional Comprehensive Plan, which the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) will release later this year. CMAP is progressing toward completion of the plan, which it is calling the region’s first truly comprehensive plan. In addition to land use and transportation, *Go To 2040* will look at other issues important to the region’s success, such as the natural environment, education, workforce development and the policy environment. Last fall, CMAP published the draft preferred regional scenario, which begins to link

the regional vision to specific recommendations, and has three focus areas: local infrastructure, regional infrastructure and the policy environment. For local infrastructure, the plan’s overall intent is to support the efforts of local governments to improve their communities and to encourage a future pattern of more compact, mixed-use development that focuses growth where infrastructure already exists. CMAP staff emphasized that it is important for local control of land use to continue. The plan will support intergovernmental coordination and cooperation, while recognizing that land use decision-

making authority rests with individual local governments. For regional infrastructure, the plan’s overall approach is to prioritize infrastructure investments to gain the most long-term benefit. For the policy environment, *Go To 2040* will address broad issues of governance and policy, such as human capital, innovation, tax policy and distribution of economic benefits.

To support the preferred regional scenario, *Go To 2040* will incorporate a transportation plan. Guided by federal requirements, CMAP must present a

(Continued on page 2)



Transportation Committee Continued

(Continued from page 1)

fiscally constrained plan. While work on the financial plan is incomplete, current revenues do not appear to be sufficient to maintain the system in a state of good repair over the planning horizon. CMAP is currently working on reasonably expected revenues, such as a motor fuel tax increase and congestion pricing. Even with these additional revenues, CMAP anticipates challenges in finding revenues to enhance the transportation

system and build major capital projects. The *Go To 2040* plan must include a list of major capital projects. Due to fiscal constraints, CMAP plans to include two lists of projects in the plan: A prioritized list of projects that meet fiscal constraint and a secondary list of strong projects that will need additional funding. The draft *Go To 2040* plan will be completed in June; however, CMAP will release segments of the draft plan as staff completes them.



News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

On December 16, the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met and discussed its Surface Transportation Program (STP) and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program. For the North Shore STP, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) recently awarded the Golf Road at Skokie Boulevard intersection improvement project in the *Village of Skokie*. The council has another large construction project scheduled for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010 for the *Village of Glenview's* Greenwood Road at Glenview Road intersection improvement. The North Shore Council sought and received advanced funding for this project and Phase II Engineering funding for the *City of Evanston's* Sheridan Road signal interconnect. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Council of Mayors Executive Committee approved this advanced funding request for these projects to proceed.

With regard to the ARRA program, ten North Shore Council projects have been let. The *Village of Northbrook's* Pfingsten Road project is on schedule for the January 15 letting. Construction bids for the ARRA projects have consistently come in below estimates. At the meeting, the Technical Committee discussed strategies for spending this "leftover"

ARRA funding and directed staff that the leftover funding should go to ARRA B-List projects. The Technical Committee will likely hold a special meeting in late January or early February to formally recommend a strategy to the full North Shore Council of Mayors.

In addition, staff presented a spreadsheet of current Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program projects in the North Shore Council area. The CMAQ program has a large unobligated balance and CMAP is making a concerted effort to spend down the balance and accomplish projects. The Oakton Street Yellow Line Station in *Skokie* and the Dempster Street improvements in *Morton Grove* are two large projects scheduled to proceed to construction in FFY 2010. Finally, staff presented the Technical Committee with the FFY 2009 Annual Report, which outlines the accomplishments of the North Shore Council of Mayors and looks to the future. The committee accepted the report, which will now be presented to the North Shore Council of Mayors for final approval.

News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

Two projects from the Northwest Council with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, Algonquin Road sidewalks in Des Plaines and Wright Boulevard reconstruction in Schaumburg will be on IDOT's letting next week. The Wright Boulevard project also has Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds. Additionally, the ARRA funds for the Palatine Road and Plum Grove Avenue, which will be on the March letting, have been obligated by IDOT's Central Office. This means that after the January letting, all of the Council's ARRA funds will have been obligated. As a result of low bids on many of the ARRA projects, the Council will be able to reprogram those funds to other projects. The exact amount will not be determined until the existing projects begin to be closed out, and the earliest the funds can be programmed for another project is March 1.

The Northwest Council's Technical Committee is scheduled to meet on February 11 at 8:30 a.m. at the Arlington Heights Village Hall. The main topics of discussion will be spending down the Council's reprogrammed ARRA funds and the existing STP balance. If you have any project cost or fiscal year changes or other items for the agenda, please send them to Mike Walczak before January 29.



2009 Transportation Year in Review

2009 was an eventful year in transportation in Illinois, highlighted by the passage of the first state capital bill since 1999 and the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) at the federal level. Here is a look at some of the top transportation stories from 2009.

On February 17, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 into law. The ARRA contained hundreds of billions of dollars in spending and tax cuts aimed at helping the economy recover. The Recovery Act included \$27.5 billion in funding for highway and bridge projects. Illinois received approximately \$936 million of this funding. Illinois received roughly \$371 million in transit capital funding and \$96 million in fixed-guideway modernization funding. As part of the highway funding, \$28 million was set aside for enhancement projects, which include bicycle and pedestrian, streetscaping and historic preservation projects. IDOT will distribute these funds through the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP). In addition, IDOT received \$627 million in discretionary funding for federally eligible projects. Approximately \$46 million of that funding was spent in Northwest Municipal Conference communities. Finally, the ARRA distributed \$281 million to urbanized areas in Illinois. Northeastern Illinois received roughly \$180 million of the total for urbanized areas. The Northwest and North Shore Council of Mayors received nearly \$18.5 million in ARRA funding. The Councils programmed nineteen projects, with fifteen of those projects let in 2009, and the remaining lettings scheduled for January and March of 2010.

In July Governor Pat Quinn signed Illinois' first capital bill since Illinois First passed ten years prior. The capital bill included roughly \$3 billion in new transportation spending for streets and highways, \$1.8 billion in transit funding for the Regional Transportation Authority

(RTA) system, \$500 million for local governments, \$500 million for line-item project specific appropriations and \$400 million in high speed rail funding. To pay for this new spending, the state legalized video gambling in bars, made changes to the lottery (online lottery and private management), broadened the sales tax to include candy and certain un-carbonated beverages, raised alcohol taxes and increased vehicle and license fees. The state is still working to implement a number of these new revenue sources to support the capital spending.

As reported last month, IDOT continues to make progress on the planning for the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass project. At the IDOT Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass Task Force meeting in Itasca on December 9, IDOT staff officially recommended a Preferred Alternative, known as Alternative 203D, to move forward in the federal process toward preliminary engineering. The roadway improvements in this alternative include the completion of the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway from I-290 to the proposed Western Terminal at O'Hare and the construction of a north-south connector O'Hare bypass on the western edge of airport property between I-90 and I-294. The connection to I-90 would occur at the Des Plaines Oasis, while the connection to I-294 would be just west of the Canadian Pacific rail yard in Franklin Park. Improvements to the highway network would be complemented by a series of transit upgrades, including public transit (either bus rapid transit or rail) along the Elgin-O'Hare from Gary Avenue in Schaumburg, or County Line Road in Hanover Park to the Western Terminal and a network of north-south bus rapid transit corridors and bus feeder routes. A transit hub would be located at the Western Terminal serving Metra and CTA rail and Pace bus. The bicycle network in the area would also be extended, with a focus on connections to local and regional trails. IDOT expects the final transportation and environmental evaluation on this alternative to be com-

pleted by May 2010 for submittal to USDOT. Work would then begin on detailed phase I engineering, a financial plan, project management plan and a final environmental impact study. While the construction of the proposed roadways is still likely years away, 2009 saw a big step forward in community acceptance.

While the federal government was giving out billions of dollars in the Recovery Act, Congress could not prevent taking back \$8.7 billion. When Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005, the legislation included a large rescission, or take-back, of unspent surface transportation funding at the end of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009. October 1 marked the beginning of FFY 2010 and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) carried out the \$8.7 billion nationwide rescission. The State of Illinois lost just over \$290 million in federal transportation funding. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program was supposed to lose approximately \$23 million as part of the rescission; however, due to an unobligated balance of over \$200 million, over \$83 million was taken from CMAQ funds throughout Illinois. The CMAQ program lost more funding than any other program in the state of Illinois. In addition, Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding for urbanized areas over 200,000 lost over \$20 million. In the Chicago region, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that determines funding procedures for CMAQ and STP funds. The CMAP Policy Committee will meet next week to make a decision on how to address the rescission on the regional level. At the state level, the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), which funds local government transportation enhancement projects, lost over \$25 mil-

(Continued on page 4)



Transportation Year in Review Continued

(Continued from page 3)

lion in funding.

On December 18, the Illinois Toll Highway Authority (Tollway) announced that the rebuild and widen project on the Central and North Tri-State was substantially complete. Four lanes in each direction from Balmoral Avenue to the Wisconsin state line opened on December 19. Many NWMC communities and residents have been anxiously awaiting the completion of this four year project, which was part of the Tollway's \$6.3 billion Congestion Relief Program. Minor punch-list items remain, but the road construction is complete and lanes are open. The southern portion of the Tri-State will soon be completed as well to provide four lanes of traffic in each direction from Wisconsin to Indiana.

As 2010 begins, the NWMC, Illinois and the country face another significant year in transportation. Locally, communities will look to construct ARRA projects and

leverage other federal and state funds. The RTA, Metra, CTA and Pace face budget struggles and service cuts due to the economic downturn. Metra has completed the Alternatives Analysis for the STAR Line and anticipates submitting the preferred commuter rail option to the Federal Transit Administration in the first or second quarter of 2010. Illinois will work to implement the various components of the capital bills. Congress has yet to pass a multi-year surface transportation authorization to replace SAFETEA-LU, which expired three months ago. Meanwhile, the Senate will be debating a \$154 billion jobs bill that could duplicate the transportation spending for the Recovery Act. In addition, decisions on High Speed Rail and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) funding are expected early this year.



SAFETEA-LU Extended Through February

On December 19, 2009, President Obama signed a Defense appropriations bill that included an extension of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the federal surface transportation legislation that expired on October 1, 2009. Congress had twice previously extended SAFETEA-LU through continuing resolutions.

In related news, the United States House of Representatives passed a \$154 billion spending bill, which includes infrastructure funding and has been called a "jobs bill" ([Wall Street Journal, Dec. 17, 2009](#)). The bill (HR 2847) includes \$27.5 million in transportation spending, which is nearly identical to the spending that was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. In addition to this infrastructure spending, the bill includes language extending

SAFETEA-LU for federal fiscal year 2010 and transferring general funds to the Highway Trust Fund. The Senate did not take up the bill before the holiday recess, and the prospects of this bill passing in its current form are unclear. NWMC staff will continue to follow developments on this legislation.

Introduction to Bicycle Planning Seminar

In January and February, the League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB) is conducting ten "Introduction to Bicycle Planning" continuing education seminars to introduce the technical aspects and strategic issues of local bike planning. The Northwest Municipal Conference is hosting one such seminar on Tuesday, February 16 from 9:30 until noon at Oakton Community College, Conference Room A/B, 1600 E. Golf Road, Des Plaines.

Attendees will be familiarized with proper car/bike interactions, relevant national standards and best practices, planning tools, related "political" issues and policy techniques, tips on available funding sources, and implementation strategies. The seminar is certified for 2.5 CM hours for AICP planners, and certificates will be available for engineers self-reporting PDH hours. Besides planners and engineers, target audiences include other local officials and bicycle advisory commission members. Registration is free for LIB members and \$25 for non-LIB members. Details and registration can be found by visiting: www.bikelib.org.



Illinois Programs \$22 Million for Enhancement Projects

On December 18, Governor Pat Quinn announced the programming of \$10 million in enhancement funds for landscaping and beautification projects in the Chicago Region and \$22 million statewide. The funding is part of the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), a federally funded program designated for alternative transportation (bike and walking), streetscape, beautification and preserving transportation resources. The latest round of awards includes 68 projects

totaling \$22 million.

ITEP provides federal funds to develop alternative transportation and preserve visual and cultural resources. The funds are awarded competitively and any local or state government with taxing authority is eligible to apply. Local matching funds are required and work must begin on the projects within three years.

Illinois awarded \$3,690,290 in ITEP funding to NWMC communities. The full list of NWMC communities that received

funding is can be found in the table below.

In September, Governor Quinn announced that \$20 million dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) would fund 27 alternative transportation projects across the state. The grants were also a part of the ITEP.

ITEP Funding Awarded to NWMC Members		
Municipality	Project Title	ITEP Funding
Niles	Milwaukee Avenue Corridor Improvements	\$ 520,000
Des Plaines	Rand Road ITEP Tree Enhancement (GS)	\$ 115,200
Park Ridge	Uptown Streetscape, Touhy Avenue (Route 72) & Northwest Highway	\$ 320,800
Vernon Hills	IL 21 Median Island Landscape/ Scenic Beautification	\$ 81,170
Lincolnshire	Corridor Enhancement Project along IL 22, CRW24 and Old Half Day Road	\$ 684,500
Evanston	Tree Replacement Project (GS)	\$ 36,000
Evanston	Chicago Avenue Streetscape - Improvements	\$ 800,460
Buffalo Grove	Dundee Road Sidewalk	\$ 412,940
Carpentersville	Maple Avenue Bike path and Roadway Lighting Project	\$ 374,770
Bartlett	Depot Museum: Operation Station Restoration	\$ 344,450
Total		\$ 3,690,290

For more information about the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), please visit:

<http://www.dot.state.il.us/opp/itep.html>

RTA Invites Input on Measuring the Performance of Transit System

For those who were unable to attend the December 3, 2009 workshop on sub-regional performance measures, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is offering the same workshop again on **January 22**. The RTA has established a series of regional performance measures, which it is tracking over time and in comparison with nine of the largest peer metropolitan areas.

Legislators, mayors, government officials and other civic leaders told the RTA at the Performance Standards workshop in August 2009 that they would like to see more detailed information on transit use at the sub-regional level. To that end, the RTA will host an interactive workshop to allow decision makers to provide input about what performance measurements should be implemented at the sub-regional level. These indicators will measure performance of the Service Boards, modes/lines, and major geographic sub-regions.

Input received will help guide the RTA in establishing overall performance measure guidelines that will shape the future of public transit for the region.

Time and Location:

Friday, January 22
8:30 a.m. – Noon
CMAP (Willis Tower)
Cook County Conference Room
233 South Wacker Drive
Suite 800

(Please note you will need valid identification to go through the security check)

A continental breakfast will be provided.

Please RSVP no later than January 15 to John Allen (Research Analyst) at:

allenj@rtachicago.org or 312-913-3233.

2010 Construction and Operations Meeting

CMAP is hosting its second annual construction and coordination meeting. This meeting provides transportation officials with an opportunity to hear about construction projects in the region.

Transportation agencies will share construction schedules and expected impacts. If your community will be undertaking a major transportation project, you are encouraged to present at this meeting.

Time and Location

Thursday January 21
9:00am -12:00pm
CMAP (Willis Tower)
Cook County Room
233 S. Wacker Drive
Suite 800
Chicago

RSVP by email to Claire Bozic, Cbozic@cmapp.illinois.gov so that your name can be added to the Willis tower visitor list for faster access to the CMAP offices. Please also include the presenter's name with your RSVP. If you have materials that can be posted to the CMAP webpage, please provide them before or after the meeting. See last year's construction webpage for examples:

www.cmap.illinois.gov/construction/

Questions: Call or email Claire Bozic
312-386-8744 or
cbozic@cmapp.illinois.gov.

Rail Crossing Safety Funds Available

The Illinois Department of Transportation is now accepting applications for the FY 2011 Local Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program. IDOT has indicated that signal and circuitry related projects will be emphasized, especially those on passenger lines or at locations with a high crash history, rather than crossing surface or abandoned crossing type projects. Applications, which can be found at [here](#), file number CL 2009-16 are due by January 15, 2010.



Contacts

Mike Walczak
NWMC Program Manager for Transportation and Environment
Northwest Council Planning Liaison
1616 E. Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016
847-296-9200, ext. 34
mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org

Chris Staron
NWMC Program Associate for Transportation
North Shore Council Planning Liaison
1616 E. Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016
847-296-9200, ext. 31
cstaron@nwmc-cog.org

Member Spotlight

If your municipality is undertaking a transportation plan or project of note, please contact NWMC staff to be featured in an upcoming edition of the NWMC Transportation Newsletter.