



**Volume 1, Issue 2,  
March 6, 2009**

# NWMC Transportation Newsletter

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## Dates to Remember

- March 18**      **North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee Meeting—8:30 a.m.**  
Skokie Village Hall
- March 20**      **Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee Meeting—8:30 a.m.**  
Arlington Heights Village Hall
- March 24**      **NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Meeting—10:00 a.m.**  
NWMC Offices
- March 26**      **NWMC Transportation Committee Meeting—9:00 a.m.**  
NWMC Offices
- April 8**        **RTA begins accepting funding applications for Community and Subregional Planning, JARC/New Freedom and ICE (see article on page 5)**
- April 10**      **Deadline to submit HSIP Applications (see article on page 5)**
- April 30**      **NWMC Transportation Committee Meeting—9:00 a.m. (Please Note Date Change)**  
NWMC Offices

## NWMC Transportation Committee Discusses DRI, ARRA and CREATE

The NWMC Transportation Committee met on February 26 and heard an update on the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning’s (CMAP) revised Developments of Regional Importance (DRI) process. The goal of the DRI process, which was mandated by the state legislature in CMAP’s enabling legislation, is to add value to projects and make sure all regional impacts are taken into consideration when large-scale projects are being planned. The DRI process is advisory - CMAP has no authority to stop or

delay projects, or impose conditions upon them.

Under the new revisions, a project would only qualify as a potential DRI if it met two of the following three thresholds:

- The project is estimated to generate or divert greater than 50,000 auto vehicle trips (or truck equivalent) per day on the region’s highway system.
- The project is estimated to add a

net discharge of greater than 5 million gallons effluent per day.

- The project adds greater than 500 acres of impervious paved surfaces and roof tops.

Potential DRI projects can only be proposed by a municipality or county, CMAP Board member or CMAP Executive Director, majority vote of a CMAP Coordinating Committee or by a public or private project sponsor. Other

*(Continued on page 2)*



## Transportation Committee Continued

(Continued from page 1)

organizations and the general public could initiate a DRI review via any of the above means. If the above thresholds are met, the CMAP Board would decide if a full DRI Advisory Report should be produced by staff. The report, which must be prepared in 30 days, would analyze how the project affects the natural environment, changes prevailing development density, affects regional transportation operations, changes existing land use patterns or affects the function or performance of a planned or existing public investment.

CMAP Executive Director Randy Blankenhorn will present the revised DRI document to the NWMC Board for comment at the March 11 meeting. Final comments are due to CMAP by Monday, April 6.

In other action, the Committee had a lengthy discussion on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (see articles on page 3). The Committee

also agreed to send a letter to U.S. Representatives and Senators representing the NWMC area stressing the need for a comprehensive federal transportation bill to accompany the Recovery Act. The current federal transportation bill known as SAFETEA-LU, expires in October, 2009. In response to a request from the NWMC Executive Board, the committee recommended that the Conference continue its support for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) program, but urged that funds be made available for projects along the EJ&E tracks including grade separations and rail-to-rail flyovers. CREATE is a set of projects designed to alleviate freight, commuter, and passenger rail congestion in the Chicago region. Since the approval of the EJ&E sale, the original plans for CREATE which helped CN are no longer applicable. No projects along the EJ&E, which will see a significant growth in rail traffic due to the sale, have been previously included in CREATE.

### On the March Transportation Agenda

The next Transportation Committee is scheduled for March 26. The Committee will review comments on the draft DRI document and discuss developments on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.



## NWMC Board Approves Transportation Priorities

On February 11, the membership approved the NWMC Transportation Priority List, which will serve to illuminate the need for a comprehensive state capital plan and a multi-year federal transportation bill. The projects identified as the top Conference priorities are as follows: Metra STAR Line; Illinois Route 53 extension; Palatine Road Reconstruction, CTA Yellow Line extension to Old Orchard Road in Skokie and Northwest Highway bike

path. The list will be distributed to the NWMC's state and federal legislators as well as state and regional transportation agencies.

### IDOT Provides Details on Elgin O'Hare—West Bypass

On February 19, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) hosted a meeting to present the latest details on the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass study. IDOT staff and consultants presented the fourteen transit alternatives that passed the second screening. Transit alternatives under consideration include bus and arterial rapid transit options, links to the proposed STAR Line, extension of the CTA Blue Line to the proposed west O'Hare terminal, CTA Blue Line express service and local bus routes. In addition, IDOT staff presented travel performance evaluation results, initial financial estimates, environmental and social impacts of the seven remaining roadway system alternatives. Additionally, IDOT staff presented preliminary connection options with a West Bypass and I-294. IDOT will host a public open house on Wednesday, March 11, at Belvedere Banquets, 1170 W. Devon Avenue in Elk Grove Village from 4:00-8:00 p.m. IDOT is currently accepting comments on the transit and roadway system alternatives through March 25.

Comments can be made at the open house, under the comments section of the IDOT project website, <http://elginohare-westbypass.org/>, or via mail to:

Pete Harmet  
Bureau of Programming  
Attn: Ron Krall, PE  
IDOT  
201 W. Center Court  
Schaumburg, IL 60196



## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Details continue to emerge on funding opportunities for municipalities under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 or ARRA. The State of Illinois has launched a website focused on the Recovery Act: [www.recovery.illinois.gov](http://www.recovery.illinois.gov). This website serves as a portal to state agencies responsible for spending and distributing Recovery Act funding. In addition, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) website, [www.cmap.illinois.gov](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov), has a section devoted to the *Regional Response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*. CMAP is providing regular updates on the Recovery Act, including opportunities for local governments to access funding. Regarding transportation funding in the Recovery Act, \$27.5 billion is available nationwide for highway and bridge funding, with Illinois expected to receive \$936 million. Illinois is also expected to receive \$371 million in transit capital funding and \$96 million in fixed-guideway modernization funding. As part of the highway funding, \$28 million is set aside for enhancement projects, which can include bicycle and pedestrian, street-scaping, and historic preservation projects. IDOT will distribute these funds through the Illinois Transporta-

tion Enhancement Program (ITEP). Enhancement funds will be provided on an 80% federal/20% local match ratio. Initial reports suggest that IDOT will look to the previous programming cycle to fund project applications with Recovery Act funding. In addition, IDOT is expected to receive \$627 million in discretionary funding for federally eligible projects. On February 13, IDOT released a list of potential projects worth \$693 million, which can be let in April. Projects in Northeastern Illinois were included in a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment, which the CMAP Transportation Committee approved on March 6. Finally, \$281 million will be distributed to urbanized areas. Northeastern Illinois will receive roughly \$180 million of the total for urbanized areas. The Northwest and North Shore Council of Mayors will receive a portion of this funding (see NS and NW update articles in the sidebar). Both Councils are currently working to determine how best to utilize the Recovery Act funding. For those NWMC members not served by the Northwest or North Shore Councils of Mayors, please contact the appropriate council planning liaison.



## IDOT Secretary Discusses ARRA

State Senator Susan Garrett and *Lake Forest City Manager Bob Kiely* hosted a meeting on Tuesday, March 3 at the *Northbrook Village Hall* pertaining to Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) transportation projects selected for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. IDOT Director Christine Reed discussed the agency's plans and answered questions pertaining to the Recovery Act. On February 27, Governor Pat Quinn named State Representative Gary Hannig (D-Litchfield) as the new IDOT Secretary. Secretary Hannig attended the meeting and discussed the Recovery Act. Ms. Reed

and the Secretary emphasized the timeline that IDOT had to follow to meet federal requirements. Senator Garrett and attendees noted that they wished IDOT would have communicated better during the process. Secretary Hannig explained that given the deadlines outlined in the Recovery Act, IDOT selected projects with completed designs that could obligate the funding quickly. He recognized that the Recovery Act does not adequately address Illinois's infrastructure problems and repeatedly said that the state needs a comprehensive capital bill.

## News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

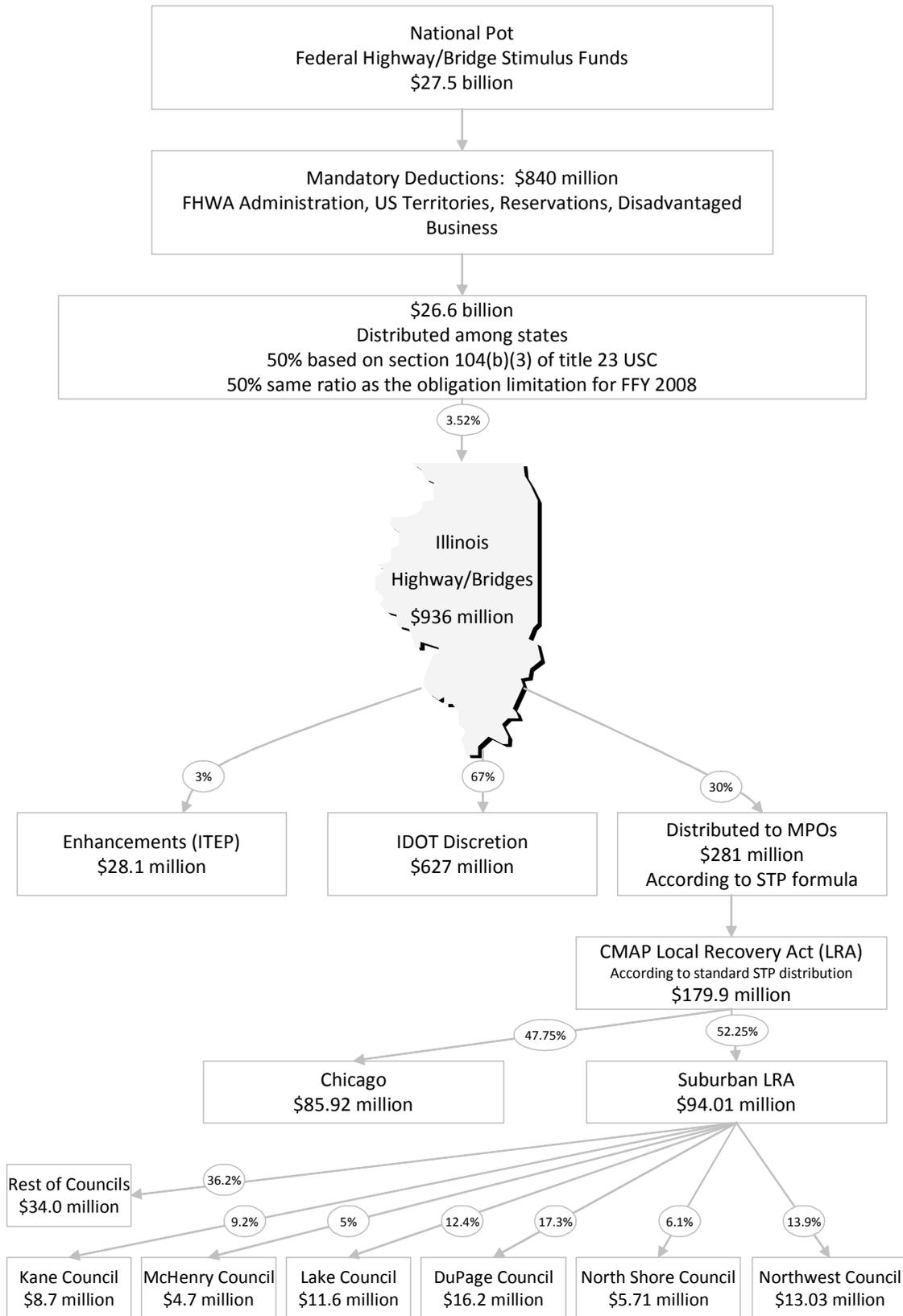
A preliminary marks table from Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) shows the Northwest Council will be receiving approximately \$13 million in ARRA funds. A call for projects was issued for both ARRA funds and STP funds on March 2. The funds must be used for federally eligible projects, just like normal STP projects, and must be obligated by March 2010. ARRA funds are 100% federal, meaning no local match is required.

Applications for ARRA funding are due back by March 12, while STP applications are due April 13. If your project is not chosen for ARRA funds, it will still be considered for STP funding. A meeting with IDOT staff will be mandatory before a project, with either ARRA or STP funds, is programmed and will be scheduled after your application is received. If you have a project currently in the Northwest Council STP Program or MYB list and would like to be considered for ARRA funds, please contact Mike Walczak as soon as possible. The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee will meet on March 20 to choose which projects will receive ARRA funds. A later meeting in April/May will program STP funds.

## News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

Based on the preliminary marks mentioned above, the North Shore Council of Mayors expects to receive \$5,713,277. On February 25, the Council issued a call for projects for the Recovery Act funding, which ends March 11. Unlike the state's transportation funding, the sub-allocated funds are not subject to the initial 120 day obligation deadline. The Act specifies that local funds must be obligated within one year of allotment. The federal funding available through the Act is accessible at up to 100 percent federal funding with no local match required. Projects funded through the Act must meet all federal eligibility requirements including that they be on the federal aid system. The North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee is expected to develop recommendations for use of the Recovery Act funding at its March 18 meeting, with the plan to have the North Shore Council approve projects at the Northwest Municipal Conference Board meeting on April 15.

## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Highway/Bridge Distribution





*NWMC Communities  
Seek Full Circle Grants*

Staff has received Full Circle applications from *Barrington, Carpentersville* and *Evanston* and met with the municipalities to prepare for the final submittal to CMAP. Full Circle funds can be used for data collection which leads to future planning or economic development efforts. CMAP offered Full Circle grants up to \$25,000 per project to suburban communities through Councils of Governments and Mayors. CMAP has utilized the Full Circle program primarily in the City of Chicago, and this application cycle presents an opportunity for suburban municipalities to take advantage of the program.



*RTA Board Approves  
Funding Program*

The Board of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has approved funding programs for which applications may be submitted beginning on April 8, 2009. Project applications will be available later this month. By responding to the Call for Projects, applicants may seek funds for planning, operating, and capital transit projects. Proposals should take innovative approaches to increasing transit usage, improving efficiency and effectiveness of the region's current transit system, providing better mobility for seniors and people with disabilities, or improving job access. See the RTA funding programs webpage at:

<http://programs.rtachicago.com>.



*HSIP Call for  
Projects*

IDOT is requesting candidate projects for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) that will be initiated in FY 2010.

Highway Safety Improvement Program funds are provided to address severe injuries and fatalities on all public roads. Specific site or system-wide improvements that reduce severe crashes are eligible for funding. Funds may be used to address safety issues independently without completely reconstructing entire roadway segments or intersections to all of the latest policies and standards. If enabling legislation is passed and signed, IDOT anticipates funding for the local highway system of approximately \$8 million for the HSIP will be available in July 2009.

Detailed guidelines for the Highway Safety Improvement Program can be found in the Program Planning and Selection of HSIP Candidate Projects section of the IDOT HSIP policy (effective November 1, 2006). This online policy (see below link), along with all applicable appendices, describes the process and requirements for local HSIP candidates.

Proposed projects should be submitted to the IDOT District Bureau of Local Roads and Streets office no later than April 10, 2009. Local agencies will be notified of their selection by the department. Any questions regarding the benefit/cost methodology should be directed to Dave Piper at (217) 785-0720. Other program questions may be directed to Leigh Ann Lareau at (217) 785-5178 or Jim Allen at (217) 558-1793.



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**Web link:**

<http://www.dot.il.gov/illinoisCHSP/hsip.html>