



**Volume 1, Issue 4,
May 5, 2009**

Table of Contents:

Dates to Remember	1	CTA Yellow Line Extension	4
NWMC Transportation Committee Report	1	Developments of Regional Importance	4
News from the Northwest Council of Mayors	2	CMAP Seeking Workshop Locations	5
News from the North Shore Council of Mayors	2	RTA Funding Programs	5
Elgin O’Hare—West Bypass	3	Funding Available for LED Traffic Signal Upgrades	5

 *Dates to Remember*

-
- May 8** **Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee Meeting—8:30 a.m.**
Arlington Heights Village Hall

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

 - May 28** **NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee—10:30 a.m.**
NWMC Offices

 - June 12** **Deadline to submit applications to RTA for Community and Subregional Planning and JARC/New Freedom**
(see article on page 5)

 *Transportation Committee Follows Capital Developments and ARRA*

On April 30, the NWMC Transportation met and discussed a host of transportation topics. First, the committee turned its attention to a potential Illinois capital bill. Having returned from municipal legislative days last week in Springfield, numerous committee members shared their impressions. Members expressed optimism that the mood in Springfield is now more favorable towards a capital bill than in recent history, while concerns remain about funding sources for the capital program. In addition, the committee discussed HB 2359 – the Transportation Investment Accountabil-

ity Act (Ryg) and preserving the role of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) in programming transportation funds. NWMC staff will continue to monitor the development of the legislation and analyze the impact of potential changes.

Second, the committee heard an update on the Elgin O’Hare West Bypass Study (see article on page 3).

Next, the committee heard a brief update and discussed the status of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) transportation funding in

Illinois. Both the North Shore and Northwest Council of Mayors ARRA programs were approved by their respective councils on April 15 and the CMAP Transportation Committee on April 24. IDOT let a majority of its ARRA projects on two April lettings. IDOT reported that bids for these lettings have come in low, which will likely allow for the inclusion of more ARRA funded projects. IDOT has yet to select Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) projects for ARRA funding. ITEP projects will have to meet the same March obli-

(Continued on page 2)



NWMC Transportation Committee Continued

(Continued from page 1)

gation deadline as local projects. Metra reported that it has selected its ARRA projects. Of interest to NWMC municipalities, Metra will upgrade on a number of bridges along the Union Pacific North Line (UP-N), which will improve service along the line. In addition, Metra will use ARRA funds to reconstruct the Winnetka station. The committee also discussed Pace's use of ARRA funding. Highland Park Mayor Michael D. Belsky has requested that Pace consider using ARRA funding to purchase at least two hybrid buses. President Larson, who serves on the Pace Board of Directors, said that he would raise the

issue at a future Board meeting and suggested that NWMC invite a Pace representative to the NWMC Transportation Committee to report on the use of ARRA funds.

Furthermore, the committee reviewed the latest CMAP draft DRI document (see article on page 4).

Finally, the committee received an encouraging update on the Metra STAR Line. Metra announced that it is nearing the end of the Alternatives Analysis process and plans to hold a Technical Advisory Committee meeting and public meetings this summer. Metra plans to submit the Alternatives Analysis to the Federal Transit Administration in September.

"Metra announced that it is nearing the end of the Alternatives Analysis process and plans to hold a Technical Advisory Committee meeting and public meetings this summer. Metra plans to submit the Alternatives Analysis to the Federal Transit Administration in September."

On the May Transportation Agenda

The next NWMC Transportation Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 28. CMAP will provide an update on the *Go To 2040* planning process. CTA will present the Yellow Line Locally Preferred Alternative. Additional agenda items may include the Elgin O'Hare—West Bypass Study and Pace's use of ARRA funding.



News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

The Northwest Council of Mayors approved the recommended program of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects on April 15. These projects were officially entered into the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on April 24 by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Transportation Committee. The municipal sponsors of all nine projects have already held kickoff meetings with IDOT and are working through the federal process.

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee will meet on May 8 at Arlington Heights Village Hall at 8:30 a.m. The committee will review applications received during the

call for new Surface Transportation Program (STP) projects, review proposed changes to existing STP projects, and hold a discussion on making Phase Two Engineering eligible for STP funds in the Northwest Council. Currently, the Council only allows STP funds to be used for Right-of-Way acquisition and Construction.

News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

On April 15, the North Shore Council of Mayors unanimously approved projects for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. On April 24, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) approved inclusion of these projects into the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which was the last level of approval. The eleven approved ARRA projects are moving forward through the state and federal process toward lettings this summer and fall.

In Surface Transportation Program (STP) news, Evanston's Lake Street LAPP project was let on April 24. This project is another example of the North Shore Council of Mayors utilizing advanced funding to accomplish prioritized projects.

Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Study Narrows Roadway Alternatives

On April 23, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) hosted a stakeholder workshop to discuss the status of the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass study. At the beginning of the project, there were fifteen initial roadway strategies. IDOT, with the input of stakeholders, had previously reduced the number of roadway alternatives to seven. On April 23, IDOT reported that two roadway finalists, Alternatives 203 (figure 1) and 402 (figure 2), will be carried forward as the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) build alternatives. Both alternatives include the extension of the Elgin O'Hare Expressway to the west side of O'Hare Airport. In addition, both include the southern leg of the west bypass, which will connect to I-294. The difference between the two alternatives appears in the northern connection of the proposed Elgin O'Hare Expressway extension to I-90 (Jane Addams Tollway). Alternative 203 includes the northern leg of the west bypass running adjacent to O'Hare Airport. Alternative 402 includes the widening of York Road to I-90. A number of transit alternatives in the study area remain. The build alternatives in the draft EIS will reflect the conceptual transit layout, estimated footprint requirements and estimated costs. Detailed studies and potential implementation of transit projects will not be carried out as part of IDOT's work.

Moving forward, IDOT will be refining and evaluating draft EIS build alternatives. In the fall, IDOT anticipates distributing the draft EIS and holding public meetings.

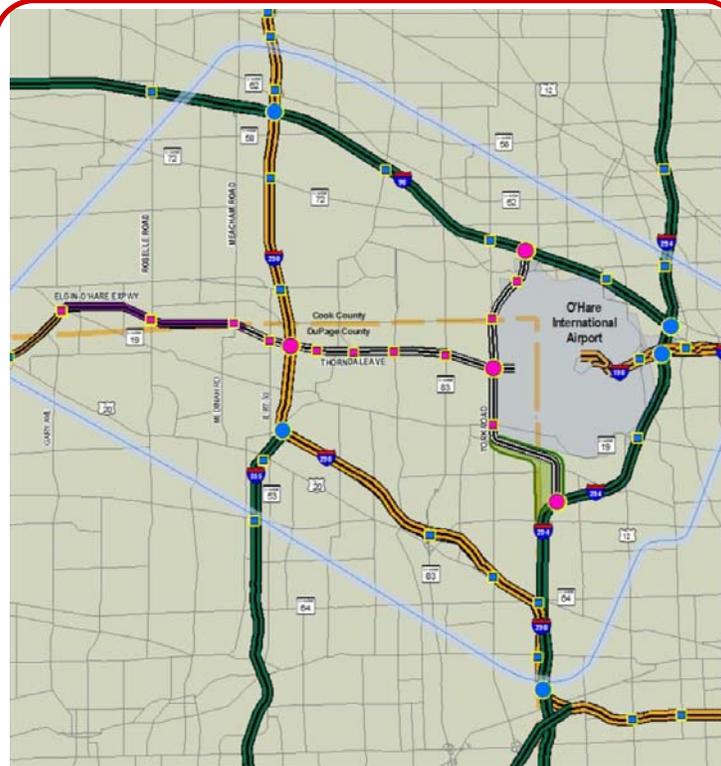


Figure 1: Alternative 203

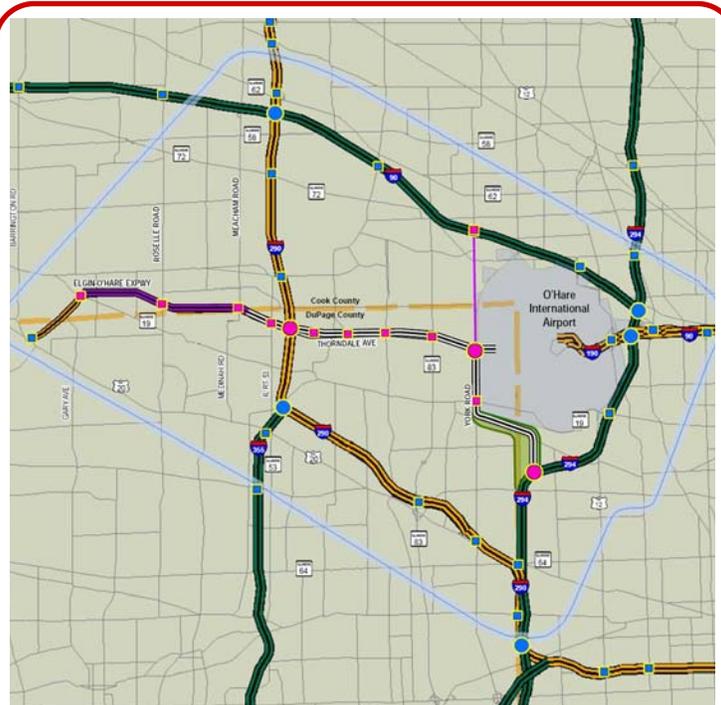


Figure 2: Alternative 402

CTA Releases Draft Yellow Line Locally Preferred Alternative

On April 30, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) officially unveiled the draft locally preferred alternative for the extension of the Yellow Line, also known as the Skokie Swift. CTA's draft locally preferred alternative is the extension of a single elevated track north of Dempster to Old Orchard Road. CTA identified an elevated single track line as the preferred alternative in order to minimize right-of-way costs and utility relocation. The proposed extension would run north on abandoned Union Pacific right-of-way and then continue along the east side of the Edens Expressway (I-94) with a station at Old Orchard Road (see figure 1). The publication of the draft locally preferred alternative begins a two week public comment period that ends on May 14.

After the locally preferred alternative is approved, CTA will move into preliminary engineering and the NEPA process. CTA anticipates preliminary engineering and the NEPA process lasting roughly two years. Following completion of preliminary engineering, final design work will likely last for another two years. Given the requirements of the federal New Starts process and the current state and transit capital funding constraints, it is realistic to expect another six to ten years before the Yellow Line Extension comes online.

"CTA identified an elevated single track line as the preferred alternative in order to minimize right-of-way costs and utility relocation. The proposed extension would run north on abandoned Union Pacific right-of-way and then continue along the east side of the Edens Expressway (I-94) with a station at Old Orchard Road."

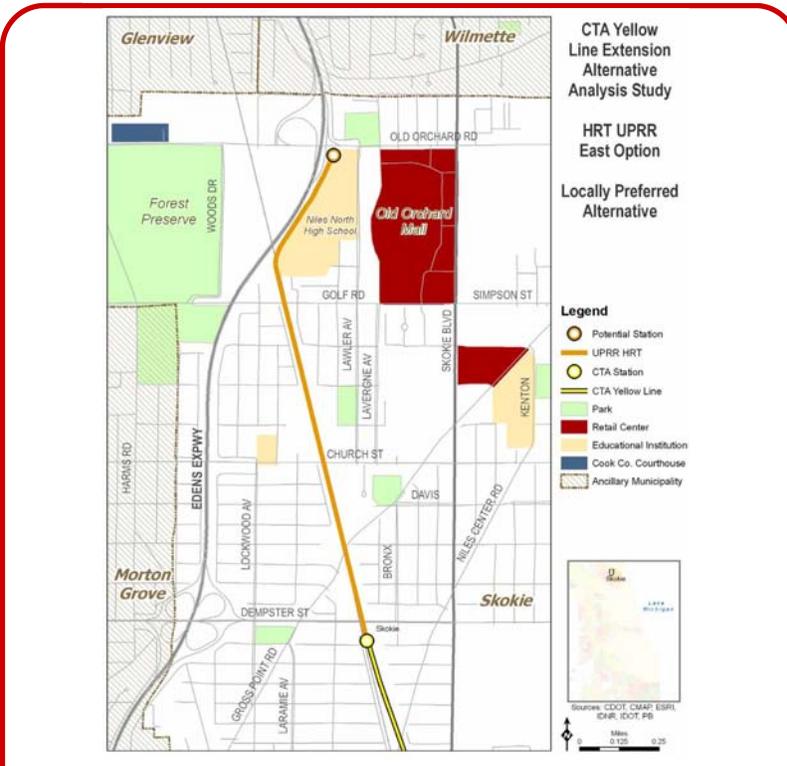


Figure 1: Proposed Yellow Line Extension Alignment

More information can be found at:
http://www.transitchicago.com/news_initiatives/planning/yellowextend.aspx

Draft DRI Process Forwarded to CMAP Board

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Programming Coordinating Committee met on April 8 and approved an amended version of the second draft Developments of Regional Importance (DRI) Process. The Committee discussed comments received from interested parties and CMAP Working Committees and adopted the resulting staff recommended changes. The changes to the DRI process allow a project which only meets one of the three thresholds to proceed with a DRI review, instead of two of the three as pro-

posed in the second draft. The committee believed that meeting two out of three thresholds would result in few if any projects being considered as a DRI.

The thresholds are: a 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; or the project adds greater than 500 acres of impervious paved

surfaces and rooftops. However, the second change cuts the quantitative criteria of the thresholds by fifty percent if the proposed project is within 100 yards of a critical stream or natural area. Meeting these thresholds only starts the DRI process and does not qualify a project for a full DRI review. The Committee also agreed to conduct the DRI process under these guidelines for a two year trial period, starting August 1, 2009. The amended process now moves up to the CMAP Board for consideration at their May 13 meeting.



IDOT Funds LED Traffic Signal Upgrades

The Illinois Department of Transportation is offering a Light Emitting Diode (LED) Upgrade Program, which will allow municipalities to replace incandescent traffic signals with LED versions, including a battery backup for the traffic signal, on approaches to an intersection that are on State routes within municipal boundaries. IDOT is working through existing intergovernmental agreements with municipalities to conduct the proposed upgrades. Upgrades made on state routes are reimbursed at 100% of the cost, while intersections with multiple jurisdictions are proportionally split. IDOT has previously sent letters to municipalities informing them of this program, which is expected to expire in June 2010. The benefits of the upgrade include energy conservation, brighter signals, longer lasting modules and the protection of an emergency power supply. Please contact Bob Nanna IDOT, Bureau of Traffic Operations at 847-705-4423 for more information.



RTA Seeks Funding Applications

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is now accepting funding applications for its community planning, subregional planning and JARC/New Freedom programs. 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. The application deadline is June 12.

For more information, visit RTA's funding programs website at:

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



CMAP Seeking Workshop Locations

As part of the development of the region's first comprehensive plan, known as *Go To 2040*, CMAP is planning to hold 50 workshops at 25 locations around the region in June, July and August and is looking for meeting space to hold the workshops. These scenario workshops, entitled *Invent 2040*, will solicit input on the plan from community groups and the general public. The potential meeting space has to be handicap accessible, accommodate 50 or more people, and must be available free of charge. In the NWMC area, a workshop has been tentatively scheduled in Crystal Lake. CMAP is also seeking summer festivals where they can set up a table to promote the kiosk version of the *Invent 2040* tool. If you are willing to host a workshop or have CMAP attend a summer festival, please contact Janet Bright at CMAP, jbright@cmapp.illinois.gov or 312-386-8748.



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