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 *Executive Board Formalizes Bike/Ped Committee*

At their June meeting, the NWMC Executive Board approved the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee as a permanent committee under the Conference committee structure. The board further approved the formal appointment of a representative of the Bike/Ped Committee to the NWMC Transportation Committee. This committee relationship will ensure that the Transportation Committee continues to

integrate bicycle and pedestrian considerations with broader transportation issues.

The Bike/Ped Committee operated on an ad hoc basis during the formulation of the 2007 NWMC Bicycle Plan. The committee continued to meet after the NWMC released the plan to discuss implementation strategies. With the permanency of the committee established,

the Bike/Ped committee will continue to work on implementation and update of the 2007 NWMC Bicycle Plan. Additionally, the committee will establish new goals and a mission for the committee's future work. NWMC staff is currently assembling committee assignments based on the response from the membership. The formal NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee assignments will be announced in the coming weeks.

 *News from the Northwest Council of Mayors*

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on June 26 at Arlington Heights Village Hall. Barrington President Karen Darch was recommended to fill a vacant mayoral position on the Technical Committee. The committee's recommendation will now be voted on by the full Council. Requests for STP funds were approved for right-of-way acquisition on Schaumburg's Wright Boulevard reconstruction project and Phase II Engineering for Schaumburg's Walnut Lane reconstruction. As a result of the recent call for projects, the Committee recommended that staff prepare a list of high ranking projects and determine where funding will be available.

IDOT staff briefed the Committee on the current and upcoming local construction

projects, and noted the large increase in work done in the Northwest suburbs compared with the last three years, thanks to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the state's mini-capital bill. Staff reported that all Northwest Council projects which have received ARRA funds are still on track to be awarded by the March 2010 deadline. The region's Councils of Mayors are also working on a system to ensure that none of the ARRA funds allotted to the Councils goes unspent.

Staff reported that projects submitted by Northwest Council communities for the 2010 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program scored well overall in the initial project rankings, especially in the bicycle facility category. It was also noted that a large

number of projects located in the Northwest Council submitted by other agencies including IDOT and the transit providers also scored well. However, only \$21 million will be programmed for FY 2010, while requests for funding topped \$470 million.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 21 at 8:30 a.m. at the Arlington Heights Village Hall.



News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

On June 17, the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met and discussed progress on its Surface Transportation Program (STP) and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) programs. The North Shore Council has obligated nearly \$2 million in federal STP funding in federal fiscal year 2009.

Additionally, the Technical Committee reviewed the progress on the ARRA

program. In early March, the North Shore Council received roughly \$5.7 million in ARRA funding and has programmed 100 percent of funds on eleven projects. All eleven Recovery Act projects have received design approval. Three projects have submitted final plans and are anticipating a July letting. In addition, three projects are on schedule for the September letting, and five projects are moving forward for the

November letting. The North Shore Council anticipates having forty percent of its ARRA funding obligated by the July letting and roughly fifty-five percent by the September letting.

The committee will meet in September to discuss the federal fiscal year 2010 STP and continued progress on the ARRA program.



Dates to Remember

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| July 21 | NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee – 10:00 a.m.
NWMC Offices |
| July 21 | CMAP “Invent the Future” Workshop—6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Gail Borden Public Library, 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin |
| Mid-July | CMAQ Project Selection Committee Meets to Select Proposed FY 2010 Program |
| July 28 | CMAP “Invent the Future” Workshop—6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Rogers Park Library, 6907 N. Clark St., Chicago |
| July 30 | CMAP “Invent the Future” Workshop—6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Bartlett Village Hall, 228 S. Main St., Bartlett |
| July 31 | CMAP Transportation Committee Releases Proposed FY 2010 Program for Public Comment |
| August 6 | CMAP “Invent the Future” Workshop—6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Prairie Center for the Arts, 201 Schaumburg Ct, Schaumburg |
| August 13 | CMAP “Invent the Future” Workshop—6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Barrington Area Library, 505 N. Northwest Hwy., Barrington |
| August 18 | CMAP “Invent the Future” Workshop—6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Arlington Heights Village Hall, 33 S. Arlington Heights Rd., Arlington Heights |
| August 21 | Northwest Council Technical Committee—8:30 a.m.
Arlington Heights Village Hall |



News from Lake, McHenry and DuPage Council of Mayors

Lake County Council of Mayors

The Lake Council of Mayors met on July 1 to review and approve the Local Agency Pavement Preservation (LAPP) projects recommended for ARRA funding. There is approximately \$2.96 million remaining of the \$11.6 million of ARRA funds allocated to the Lake Council. Fifty-seven LAPP projects were submitted for consideration to the Lake Council. The Lake County Division of Transportation retained the services of Infrastructure Management Services to evaluate the pavement conditions of each submitted project and establish a rational basis for ranking them. Based on the IMS report, the available ARRA funds were distributed among eleven projects submitted by the Villages of Bannockburn, Deer Park, Lindenhurst, North Barrington, Riverwoods, Round Lake Beach, Wauconda; and the Cities of Highland Park, Highwood, Waukegan and Zion. An additional list of seven projects eligible for any redistributed ARRA funds was also approved. The Council also authorized the Council Liai-

son to issue a call for STP projects.

McHenry County Council of Mayors

In September 2008, the McHenry County Council of Mayors issued a call for FFY 2009 Projects. Twenty-eight projects were submitted and approved. The City of Crystal Lake submitted four LAPP projects that were let on April 24, 2009. The Village of Cary submitted one project that was let on April 24, 2009 and the Village of Fox River Grove submitted one project that was on the June 12, 2009 letting. In March 2009, the Council met to distribute ARRA funds. The funds were split evenly for each of the eighteen projects submitted so that each project received \$262,105 in ARRA funding. The City of Crystal Lake submitted a project for Virginia Street, the Village of Cary for East Main Street and the Village of Fox River Grove for Algonquin Road. The next meeting of the McHenry County Council of Mayors will be on Thursday, July 16, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. at the Lake in the Hills Village Hall.

DuPage County Council of Mayors

The DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference (DMMC) announced a call for FY 2010 - 2015 Surface Transportation Program (STP) projects on June 29. Applications sponsored or co-sponsored by a DuPage municipality will be accepted until Friday, August 14. Project requests for up to 70% federal construction funding for highway projects and up to 75% federal construction funding for Transportation Control Measure (TCM) projects will be accepted. Further details including application forms, the DMMC STP Manual and other information can be found on the DMMC website (<http://www.dmmc-cog.org>) or by contacting Kama Dobbs.

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Pace Seeks Grants for Hybrid Buses

Reprinted from Pace's "Moving Forward" Newsletter with permission

Several forms of "green" technology are available to help transit agencies like Pace in their mission to improve air quality and reduce the use of fuel, and hybrid buses are just one of these. Hybrids are tuned to use either diesel or electric power based on which is more efficient or necessary based on driving conditions. Others include filters for the exhaust system to trap particles that otherwise could be released into the air, and engines powered with compressed natural gas. Better known as CNG, vehicles using this type of fuel have cleaner emissions. Pace has been researching these and other technologies in order to understand which one- or which combination- will be the best investment of taxpayer dollars. We applied for federal TIGGER grants to purchase ten hybrid

paratransit vehicles and ten 30-foot hybrid transit buses as a pilot project in order to determine the long-term reliability and cost effectiveness of these buses.

Pace avoided service cuts and fare increases over the past five years in response to budget deficits by using capital funds to cover the shortfall. Some of this capital funding would have normally been used to buy new buses. Therefore, Pace needs to replace as many older buses as possible using federal stimulus funding and newly approved state capital dollars. That means buying as many buses as we can, and a hybrid bus costs close to \$200,000 more than a comparable diesel. In fact, the 30-foot diesel buses we're buying get better fuel mileage than a 40-foot hybrid bus. Because the buses will be purchased under an existing contract, Pace's share of stimu-

lus funding won't be in jeopardy of not being spent within the required 180-day deadline required by law.

Finally, in terms of air quality, Pace will be making a greater net improvement by replacing a higher number of old buses with new diesel buses than it would by spending more money per bus to replace fewer old buses with hybrids. The technology of emissions control systems found in diesel buses have improved in recent years to the extent that this is possible.

Pace remains committed to implementing "green" technology, yet it's important to test those various options to determine what is going to be the best investment.



Federal Surface Transportation Authorization Debate Intensifies

The Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is set to expire on September 30, 2009, and debate over the next federal surface transportation authorization has begun to intensify. On June 18, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure released its blueprint for the new six-year surface transportation authorization. On June 22, the 775-page bill was introduced to the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. The bill does not contain specific distribution formulas or earmarks. The blueprint and bill contain \$450 billion in highway and transit spending and \$50 billion in high-speed rail spending over the next six federal fiscal years. The bill aims to consolidate or terminate 75 programs in order to streamline federal transportation spending. Highway funding will be simplified to four major programs: 1) Critical Asset Investment, 2) Highway Safety Improvement, 3) Surface Transportation and 4) Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ). New or expanded programs include Metropolitan Mobility and Access and Projects of National Significance. In addition to the program restructuring, the bill aims to create a National Transportation Strategic Plan to better define the federal role in identifying and funding transportation projects and provide a long-range vision and strategy for reaching the nation's transportation future. In addition to the strategic planning, the bill looks to increase attention on accountability and performance measurement.

Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee support moving forward on a surface transportation authorization this year, so legislation can be in place when SAFETEA-LU expires; however, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has expressed the Obama administration's desire for an immediate short-term reauthorization of eighteen months. The administration wants various reforms in the eighteen month extension, including \$300 million for improving state and MPO planning

capacity, \$10 million for improving project assessment tools, increasing transparency, and regional access and livability initiatives. Both Democrats and Republicans on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee have criticized the position of the administration. With the Highway Trust Fund reaching the point of insolvency (see sidebar article), it is likely that Congress will have to act in some manner before the end of September.

Additionally, the surface transportation authorization bill introduced calls for a significant increase in federal spending; however, the bill contains no revenue enhancements. The House Ways and Means Committee will be responsible for providing revenue to support the legislation that ultimately emerges.

While it is uncertain when and what will emerge from the surface transportation authorization process, NWMC staff will continue to follow the issue. The Surface Transportation Program (STP), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program and the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) are some examples of federally funded programs that will be affected by the structure of the final legislation.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's blueprint and bill can be found at:

<http://transportation.house.gov/>

Federal Highway Trust Fund in Jeopardy Again

When President Bush signed the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in August 2005, one of the goals was to spend down the accumulated balance in the Highway Trust Fund. Do to falling motor fuel tax receipts during the current economic recession, the Highway Trust Fund balance has declined quicker than expected. Congress already acted once in 2008 to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent with an \$8 billion infusion from the General Fund. Now, officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are warning that the Highway Trust Fund is once again nearing insolvency. USDOT expects the Highway Trust Fund to have a shortfall in August 2009 while SAFETEA-LU is not set to expire until September 30, 2009. USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood testified to Congress that the Obama administration wants an immediate eighteen month surface transportation reauthorization in order to replenish the Highway Trust Fund with \$20 billion. The Secretary did not identify an immediate revenue source for the \$20 billion, and the Obama administration continues to oppose a gas tax increase during the recession. In the absence of a transfer from the general fund, USDOT has proposed altering reimbursement schedules to state departments of transportation.



Preliminary CMAQ Scores Released

The preliminary rankings for the 2010 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program have been released by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) staff and will be presented to the CMAQ Project Selection Committee next week. Projects are ranked by a variety of measures, including cost per kilogram of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) eliminated, cost per kilogram of Nitrogen Oxides eliminated, cost per 1000 trips eliminated, and cost per 1000 vehicle miles traveled eliminated.

Overall, there were 197 projects submitted, requesting \$473,636,338 in federal funds. Northwest Municipal Conference

members submitted 32 projects, requesting \$31,539,660 in federal funds. Additionally, numerous projects submitted by IDOT, Metra, Pace, CTA, and the counties will also benefit NWMC communities. This year's program mark for CMAQ is still pending, but estimated at \$20,000,000.

The CMAQ Project Selection Committee will meet in July to establish the recommended FY 2010 program, which will be followed by a public comment period and selection of the final program. Final approval by the CMAP Policy Committee is scheduled for October.

More information can be found at:

www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmaq/fy2010_cmaq.aspx.



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