



Transportation Newsletter

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Dates to Remember

- November 16** **Illinois Tollway Public Hearing on 2010 Tentative Budget—4:00 p.m.**
Tollway Headquarters, 2700 Ogden Ave., Downers Grove

- November 17** **NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Meeting—2:00 p.m.**
NWMC Offices

- November 17** **Illinois Tollway Public Open House on 2010 Tentative Budget— 3:00-6:00 p.m.**
Belvidere Oasis, Belvidere

- November 18** **Mandatory CMAQ Project Initiation Meeting (Morning and Afternoon)**
IDOT District 1, 201 Center Ct., Schaumburg

- December 17** **NWMC Transportation Committee Meeting—9:00 a.m.**
NWMC Offices

Transportation Committee Hears Service Board Budget Reports

On October 29, the NWMC Transportation Committee received budget reports from Metra, Pace and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Metra has amended its 2009 budget twice this year due to a \$64 million decline in revenue, primarily from shrinking regional sales taxes. The 2010 budget expects only minimal growth in sales tax revenue based on the low 2009 figures. Due to the recession, ridership was also down in 2009. In order to balance its 2010 budget, Metra is proposing an approximately six percent increase in one-way fares. Across all fare zones, the increase averages \$.30 a trip. In addition, weekend fares

will increase from \$5 to \$7. Furthermore, the on-board ticket purchase penalty will increase from \$2 to \$5. There is no proposed increase in the ten-ride or monthly passes. Also of note, in March 2010, Metra will expand the ability to purchase tickets via credit card at its stations (currently online only).

Not surprisingly, Pace is facing similar budget struggles. In 2009, declining sales tax revenue caused a \$23 million decline in funding, leaving an estimated \$6.5 million gap in Pace's 2010 budget. To plug the hole, Pace is proposing a \$2.7 million cut in non-service administrative operations and \$3.8 million in

service reductions and route eliminations. Fifty-two Pace routes will have reduced service or will be eliminated, with sixteen of these routes impacting NWMC members. Pace has identified these routes as having the highest rate subsidy and lowest overall performance. Pace is working with municipalities, community colleges and others to implement van pools and other Pace service arrangements as a substitute for traditional bus service. Pace is not considering fare increases for its traditional service in 2010. On the other hand, Pace is proposing fare increases for its paratran-

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Transportation Committee Continued

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sit service, which is facing a \$28.9 million budget shortfall. Under the proposed budget, paratransit fares would increase to \$4.50 in Chicago and \$3.50 in the suburbs.

Following a familiar theme, CTA is also facing daunting budget challenges in 2010, with an estimated budget shortfall of \$300 million. CTA is proposing to meet these shortfalls through staff reductions, furlough days, transferring capital funds to cover operations, service reductions and fare increases. With regard to

service reductions, CTA is proposing to eliminate nine express bus routes; however, over 100 routes will be affected by less frequent service and shorter service spans. Furthermore, CTA is proposing to increase bus fares to \$2.50 for all riders and increase rail and express bus fares to \$3.00. In addition, single and multi-day passes face fare increases. The CTA Board will consider its budget at its November meeting.

The next NWMC Transportation Committee meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 17.

CMAP Regional Scenario Update

On November 4th, CMAP Executive Director Randy Blankenhorn addressed the NWMC Executive Board to provide an update on the Go To 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan development process. Currently, CMAP staff and committees are developing the draft Preferred Regional Scenario. This Scenario, based on local input received at CMAP outreach meetings and events, will provide the framework around which the Regional Comprehensive Plan will be developed. The CMAP Board hopes to adopt the preferred scenario in January and the draft Plan in June.

Regional themes identified in the draft Preferred Regional Scenario by Mr. Blankenhorn include: more and better transit in the region as part of an overall improved transportation system; regional solutions to job creation and economic development, including more effective investment in education and job training; examining the tax structure and how it drives development; increased development density, based on local community preferences, to take advantage of existing infrastructure; an increased

number of parks and open space and improved access to existing facilities; and conservation of the area's existing natural resources.

Mr. Blankenhorn emphasized that CMAP fully supports local control of land use decisions and is available to provide a wide range of technical assistance to communities on local and regional planning issues. He also explained that the preferred scenario emphasizes breaking down the traditional silos of federal and state funding in order to solve problems, rather than looking for problems which fit existing funding sources. Outcomes from the Plan will be tracked by CMAP's Indicators Project.

Next, CMAP staff will address the development and analysis of a list of major capital projects to be considered for inclusion in the Regional Comprehensive Plan at the December NWMC Transportation Committee meeting.

The draft Preferred Regional Scenario is available to view at CMAP's website: www.cmap.illinois.gov.

STAR Line Alternative Recommended

On October 19, the STAR Line Municipal Task Force met to discuss the progress on the STAR Line Alternatives Analysis. Federal funding guidelines require Metra to evaluate multiple alternatives for meeting the transit needs in the I-90 corridor and the CN/EJ&E corridor. Metra has examined a number of alternatives such as express bus service, bus rapid transit (BRT), commuter rail, and a combination of rail and bus. Compared to alternatives in the final screening, the full commuter rail alternative tied for the highest ridership and had the highest transportation system user benefits. Metra's evaluation estimates that average weekday ridership will be 21,700.

In addition to the ridership figures, Metra provided an updated estimate of the project's capital costs. With the inclusion of two new flyovers, tollway related improvements, increased utility relocations, increased FTA-required contingencies and a number of other items, the estimated capital cost for constructing the STAR Line is \$2.76 billion. Despite the higher cost estimate, the STAR Line commuter rail alternative ranked the best among the final alternatives in terms of cost effectiveness. Consequently, Metra plans to proceed with the commuter rail alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Metra staff plans to present the LPA to the Technical Advisory Committee, the public, the Metra Board and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning before submitting it to the FTA in the first quarter of 2010.



News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

The Northwest Council of Mayors has one American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) project on the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) letting today, Oak Avenue and West Bartlett Road resurfacing in Bartlett, with \$1,435,000 in ARRA funds programmed.

Due to an error by CMAP, the amount of funds available to program by the Northwest Council, originally estimated at \$13.1 million was actually set at \$12.5 million. This reduction has resulted in three projects on the January letting having their ARRA funds reduced proportionally. To make up for this shortfall, the projects have been supplemented with Northwest Council Surface

Transportation Program (STP) funds.

The ARRA projects which have already gone to letting have received favorable bids. As a result, the Council will likely have additional ARRA funds to program in the spring of 2010. The exact amount of these funds will not be known until after the projects are closed out by IDOT, which will occur in April at the earliest. These reprogrammed funds will then need to be spent by September 2010.

The next Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee meeting is on call.



News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

The North Shore Council of Mayors has four American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects on the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) letting today. The four projects total over \$1.9 million. Once IDOT awards these projects, the North Shore Council will have awarded just over \$5 million of the \$5.9 million allocated to the Council. The North Shore Council has two remaining ARRA projects, which will be let in December and January.

In addition, the North Shore Council has a major Surface Transportation Program (STP) project on today's letting. The *Village of Skokie's* Golf Road and Skokie Boulevard intersection improvement

project will be progressing into the construction phase. For the last five years, this intersection had the highest number of accidents in Skokie. In order to reduce accidents and improve traffic flow, the project includes pavement rehabilitation, intersection widening and channelization, installation of northbound and southbound dual left turn lanes, enclosed drainage system improvements, new curb and gutter, and traffic signal modernization.

The next North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on December 16 at the *Skokie Village Hall*.

North Shore Council ARRA Projects – November 6 Letting

Sponsor	Project Location	Scope	ARRA Funding
Glencoe	Green Bay Rd.	LAPP	\$636,937
Northfield	Old Willow Rd. Bridge	Bridge Repair	\$100,000
Skokie	Main St.	Resurfacing	\$788,937
Wilmette	10th St.	LAPP	\$388,937

2010-2011 CMAQ Program Approved

The CMAP Policy Committee approved the proposed Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2010-2011 program on October 8.

The approved program contained ten projects from NWMC members totaling almost \$7 million (see table). Another seven projects from other sponsors within the NWMC area totaling just under \$6 million were included in the approved program (see table on page 4). The full program can be found at http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmaq/fy2010_cmaq.aspx.

Please see the article on page 5 to read about how the CMAQ Project Selection Committee proposes to handle the federal rescission.



NWMC Projects in 2010-2011 Approved CMAQ Program

Project Sponsor	Project	Project Total	Proposed CMAQ Funding
Arlington Heights	McDonald Creek Bike Path Improvements	\$320,000	\$242,000
Lincolnwood	ComEd ROW / Skokie Valley Bike/Multiuse Trail	\$1,020,000	\$816,000
Grayslake	Washington St. Bike Path	\$950,600	\$760,480
Lincolnwood	UP Line / Weber Spur Bike Trail	\$135,000	\$4,908,000
Arlington Heights	Green Bike Facility	\$151,500	\$112,000
Hoffman Estates	Diesel Fleet Emissions Reduction Project	\$277,000	\$221,600
Glenview	Patriot Blvd. at Independence Intersection Improvement	\$389,000	\$256,000
Hoffman Estates	IL 59 at Shoe Factory Rd. Intersection Improvement	\$1,280,000	\$1,024,000
Glenview	S. Greenwood Rd. sidewalks – Linneman to Glenview	\$142,600	\$107,680
Evanston	Sheridan Rd. from Central to Chicago Signal Interconnect	\$898,000	\$674,000
Lake County	Prairie Crossing Bike Path / Midlothian Rd.	\$2,629,788	\$2,044,800
McHenry Co. Con. Dist.	Oak St. to Veterans Acres Park Bike path	\$1,409,000	\$440,960
CTA	Suburban Station Bike Parking	\$24,000	\$19,200
Lake County	Diesel Retrofit Project	\$36,000	\$23,400
Lake County	Highland Park Signal Interconnect	\$3,608,750	\$2,723,000
CTA	CTA Yellow Line – Weekend Service Year 3	\$398,000	\$223,374
CTA	Purple Line Weekend Express Service	\$722,000	\$361,708
Total		\$20,391,238	\$14,958,202



CMAP Begins to Tackle Federal Rescission

On October 8, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Policy Committee briefly discussed the implications of the rescission written into the end of SAFETEA-LU, the federal surface transportation legislation that expired on September 30. On October 1, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rescinded \$8.7 billion of transportation contract authority nationwide. The State of Illinois lost just over \$290 million in federal transportation funding. Federal legislation dictated that each state and specific federal transportation program would share the rescission proportionally based on the amount of funding the state and program received under SAFETEA-LU. In reality, not all programs had a large enough unobligated balance to meet the rescission amounts. Consequently, the rescission disproportionately impacted programs with large unobligated balances.

Of particular importance to the Chicago region, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program lost over \$83 million statewide. In addition, Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding for urbanized areas with populations over 200,000 lost over \$20 million. Without a specific breakdown for the Chicago

region or much time to contemplate a thoughtful strategy, the CMAP Policy Committee tasked the SAFETEA-LU Subcommittee and the CMAQ Project Selection Committee with preparing recommendations for the STP and CMAQ rescissions respectively. The CMAP Policy Committee will act on these recommendations at its January 2010 meeting.

On October 30, the CMAQ Project Selection Committee began to assemble a strategy for addressing the rescission. The committee discussed a handful of options, from rescinding older projects to canceling the FFY 2010-2011 program. In order to preserve projects, the committee agreed to explore moving all unobligated projects to a multi-year list. CMAP would move projects into the current year's program when projects are "ready" to obligate funding. This strategy is fairly technical and focuses on addressing the federal requirement for fiscal constraint when the program has roughly \$80 million more in projects than funding. CMAP staff will flesh out the details of this strategy for the CMAQ Project Selection Committee's next meeting on November 17. The SAFETEA-LU Subcommittee has not met to discuss the STP rescission.

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.



SAFETEA-LU Extended Through Continuing Resolution, Again

As mentioned in the rescissions article, SAFETEA-LU, the federal surface transportation legislation since 2005, formally ended on September 30. A one month extension of SAFETEA-LU was included in appropriations continuing resolution to extend SAFETEA-LU through October 31. There was no formal action on a longer extension in the House or Senate.

With no alternative, Congress again turned towards passing a temporary extension of SAFETEA-LU through the appropriations continuing resolution. As part of the passed continuing resolution, federal surface transportation funding will be extended until December 18. With transportation on the back burner, the likelihood of a full authorization passing Congress by December 18 is remote. The Obama Administration continues to favor an eighteen month extension, while the House favors a much shorter extension.

The federal surface transportation legislation funds many local programs affecting municipalities such as the Surface Transportation Program (STP), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program, Safe Routes to School, and the Transportation Enhancement Program.



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