



# NWMC Transportation Newsletter

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## Dates to Remember

<b>December 13</b>	<b>Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee—8:30 a.m.</b> <i>Barrington Village Hall, 200 S. Hough Street</i>
<b>December 17</b>	<b>NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee—10:30 a.m.</b> NWMC Offices
<b>December 18</b>	<b>North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee—8:30 a.m.</b> <i>Skokie Village Hall, 5127 Oakton Street</i>
<b>December 19</b>	<b>NWMC Transportation Committee—8:30 a.m.</b> NWMC Offices
<b>January 31</b>	<b>Deadline for Safe Routes to School Applications (see article on page 4)</b>

## Transportation Committee Continues Focus on Transit Funding

On November 21, the NWMC Transportation Committee met and continued its focus on proposed financial and structural reform options for the region's transit providers. Staff informed the committee that the transit governance positions that were approved at the committee's October meeting will be included in the 2014 NWMC Legislative Program. These positions include the expansion and enhancement of suburban mobility options as well as the preservation of local government decision making in successful transit governance.

Andy Plummer gave an overview of the funding structure of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and its service boards, with specific focus on where transit funding in the region originates and how it is distributed to Chicago

Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace. He also summarized the current reform proposals which have been prepared for the RTA by an outside consultant. These reforms are currently being considered by the RTA Board and have also been discussed by the Governor's Transit Task Force.

Rick Mack from Metra and Steve Andrews from Pace presented the highlights of their agencies' proposed budgets for 2014. Neither agency will be raising fares or cutting service in the coming year.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 19, 8:30 a.m. at the NWMC offices.

## Illinois Supreme Rules on Sales Tax Avoidance Arrangements

On November 21, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled against an agreement that shift sales tax revenues from the Chicago region to an area with a lower sales tax rate. Hartney Fuel Oil Company v. Hamer (Illinois Department of Revenue) had become a test case for similar arrangements that move the point of sale for purchases in order to avoid higher tax rates. While the Court ruled that the company followed Department of Revenue rules, it asserted that the Department did not follow applicable state law. Ultimately, it appears that similar tax avoidance mechanisms cannot be used in the future. The RTA, which has been at the forefront of this issue, heralded the ruling as "a tremendous victory for transit riders and taxpayers in Northeastern Illinois." Please visit the [Illinois Supreme Court website](#) to view the full ruling and the [RTA website](#) for more information.



## CMAQ Grants Announced

In November, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) announced the latest round of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program awards. The total program, which covers federal fiscal years 2014-2018, is \$286 million. Municipally-sponsored projects in the NWMC area which have been awarded funding are: Robert McClory Bike Path in *Highland Park*; Dodge Avenue protected bike lanes in *Evanston*; and, Church Street bike lanes, Main Street bike path and Gross Point Road bike path, all in *Skokie*.

Other agencies also secured funding for projects in NWMC municipalities, including: Touhy Avenue underpass at Union Pacific Railroad in *Des Plaines* and Elmhurst Road at Touhy Avenue intersection improvement in *Elk Grove Village* (sponsored by Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways); Cum-

berland Circle improvements in *Des Plaines* (sponsored by IDOT); Illinois 83 signal interconnect in *Antioch*, Illinois 120/Belvidere Road signal interconnect in *Grayslake* and Lake/Cook Braeside Shuttle Bug Service in *Highland Park* (sponsored by Lake County Division of Transportation); Golf Road transit access improvements in *Rolling Meadows* (sponsored by RTA); Pace Route 572 pedestrian infrastructure improvements in *Grayslake*, *Vernon Hills* and *Libertyville* and Milwaukee Avenue Arterial Rapid Transit (sponsored by Pace); and, Elgin-O'Hare/Thorndale Ave and I-290 interchange (sponsored by DuPage County Division of Transportation).

The total CMAQ funds for projects in the NWMC area is over \$87 million. The full program can be viewed by visiting <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmaq>.



## News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

The North Shore Council of Mayors has two Surface Transportation Program (STP) funded projects scheduled for the January letting. The *Village of Skokie* has over \$800,000 in federal STP funds programmed for the Crawford Ave. and Church St. intersection improvement. The project will enhance the safety and operation of this intersection by providing additional capacity and protections. The *Village of Northbrook* has approximately \$260,000 in STP funds programmed for Happ Rd. between Sunset Ridge Rd. and the village limits for a Local Agency Functional Overlay (LAFO),

which is a basic resurfacing project without any geometric changes to the roadway. The North Shore Council has another \$2.6 million programmed for the February letting.

The next meeting of the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee is scheduled for December 18 at the *Skokie Village Hall*. The committee will review the FFY 2013 annual report and look at new projects programmed through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program.



## News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee will meet on December 13 at 8:30 a.m. at *Barrington Village Hall*. The agenda includes project updates and cost increase requests, recommendations of the functional classification working group and proposed updates to the Council's methodology. The meeting will also be the first for new Committee members *President Tom Hayes of Arlington Heights* and *Prospect Heights City Administrator*

*Anne Marrin.*

With recent projects in the Council being completed under budget, STP funding has become available in the next few years of the program. If you currently have a project later in the current program or on the MYB that is advancing through preliminary engineering, please contact staff to discuss when funding may be available.

## Route 53/120 Finance Committee Update

The Illinois Route 53/120 Finance Committee met on December 3 in *Libertyville*. Illinois Tollway staff and consultants presented the committee with a refined project cost estimate and funding options. The refined cost estimate for the project is \$2.56-\$2.87 billion (in 2020 dollars), which includes engineering, right-of-way acquisition, environmental mitigation and construction costs. With projected tolls from the road only forecast to result in a bonding capacity of \$300-\$400 million, Tollway staff also presented a menu of options for closing the remaining \$2.16-\$2.57 billion funding gap. These options, which were also included in the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee report in 2012, include: implementing congestion pricing; indexing tolls to inflation; imposing tolls on the existing Illinois Route 53 north of I-90; increased tolls in Lake County at the existing Waukegan Toll Plaza and the currently untolled Route 132 exit; implementing value capture in the corridor; an increase in the Lake County sales tax; and an increase in the Lake County motor fuel tax. Committee members also recommended that regional toll revenues from the Illinois Tollway system be considered as part of the funding package and also encouraged pursuing federal grants for eligible portions of the project.

In order to impose tolls on the existing portion of Route 53, a full reconstruction of that expressway would be required. The Committee agreed to include formal representation from Cook County municipalities along the existing Route 53. Invitations from the Committee's co-chairs will go out soon.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 28. The agenda for that meeting is expected to include more detailed analysis on how bonding and value capture would help finance the project.

## Elk Grove Village Completes Busse Woods Trail Overpass

*Reprinted with the permission of Elk Grove Village*

The Busse Woods trail system has long been recognized by the Village as a key asset to our residential and business community for recreational and commuter travel. In 2009, with the assistance of Congressman Peter Roskam, Elk Grove Village was able to secure federal funding to initiate design engineering work to construct a third overpass along the Busse Woods trail system. After years of diligent work and with the cooperation of numerous agencies, the construction of the Busse Woods Trail Overpass at Higgins Road (IL Route 72 and IL 53/290) became a reality on July 8, 2013.

This overpass connects the north and south sections of the Busse Woods 11.2 mile bike path. The previous bike path crossed six lanes of traffic at the inter-

section of Higgins Road and the Interstate 290/ Route 53 Frontage Road. The relocated path and new overpass will carry patrons of the Busse Woods Trail over Higgins Road avoiding the roughly 50,000 motorists a day that travel this busy stretch of roadway.

The design engineering costs for the project was approximately \$350,000. The Village received a Federal grant which covered eighty percent of this cost. The full cost for construction and construction engineering is anticipated to be \$2,100,000. The Federal funding received for the construction work is also eighty percent. The Village's portion of the project cost is estimated to be \$490,000.

The Village held a ribbon cutting to officially open the pedestrian bike bridge on November 22. Elk Grove Village Mayor Craig B. Johnson said, "The November

22 dedication of the new pedestrian bike bridge culminates a coordinated effort by the Village and the Forest Preserve District to provide a regional trail overpass for the Busse Woods Trail System. It is with great pleasure that we dedicate this path for the safety of the residents of Elk Grove Village and regional trail users."

## CTA Oakton Yellow Line Station Area Attracts New Development

*Reprinted from the RTA In Transit Newsletter*

The Village of Skokie Plan Commission recently approved a pedestrian-friendly, 27-unit transit-oriented single family home development near the Oakton station on the CTA Yellow Line. This project, located on Floral Avenue, will connect new residents to Downtown Skokie as well as area transit options. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) funded two studies through the Community Planning Program to help Skokie identify new locations for intermediate stops on the Skokie Swift Yellow Line; The Skokie Swift Station Location Feasibility Study, which identified Oakton as an ideal location for an intermediate station, and the Skokie Swift Corridor Travel Market Analysis, which explored the potential need for additional intermediate stations in either Skokie or Evanston. These studies were completed by 2007 and culminated with Skokie securing Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding in 2008 to construct a new Oakton St. station. Additionally, Skokie received Innovation, Coordina-

tion and Enhancement (ICE) funding through the RTA in 2009 for improvements complementing the station including bus stops, taxi access lanes, pedestrian walkways, shared vehicle lanes, kiss and ride, bicycle parking and landscaping. The new station opened in April 2012 with better than expected ridership. The Village has been working to attract redevelopment in the down-

town since the Illinois Science + Technology Park opened in the early 2000's and the Floral Avenue development is the next step in the Village's efforts to redevelop the downtown into a walkable destination with access to multiple transit options.



Oakton Yellow Line Station



## Safe Routes to School Call for Projects

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is conducting a call for projects for the Safe Routes to School Program. The program is responsible for oversight and implementation of the Safe Routes to School Program using funding set aside from the federal Transportation Alternatives Program. IDOT is requesting candidate projects that will be initiated in state fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

The Safe Routes to School Program is a federally funded program with the goal of enabling and encouraging children to walk and bicycle to school. As part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) federal transportation program, the Safe Routes initiative was consolidated under the Trans-

portation Alternatives Program. This legislative change affects the federal share for local projects. While Safe Routes projects previously were funded with 100 percent federal funding, under MAP-21, federal funding will now cover 80 percent of the project cost.

IDOT anticipates programming a total of \$6 million (\$5 million of infrastructure and \$1 million for non-infrastructure projects) statewide. IDOT will fund infrastructure projects up to \$200,000 and non-infrastructure projects up to \$30,000.

More information and applications are available by visiting the [IDOT website](#). The deadline to submit applications is January 31, 2014.



## UP Reminder on Work that Impacts Train Operations

*From the desk of Union Pacific Director of Public Affairs Adrian Guerrero:* Union Pacific Railroad reminds all municipalities to notify and coordinate any work that changes the flow of traffic that crosses our tracks (i.e. traffic directional changes which cause cars to use lanes without crossing gates). Without notice and coordination with the railroad, these traffic changes leave the dangerous possibility for the public to drive into the side of train without a flashing gate in front of them.

In these instances, the municipality or contractor performing the work is re-

**quired** to coordinate with Union Pacific so that we may provide a flagger at the crossing. Without notice to Union Pacific, we cannot provide this necessary safety measure. Union Pacific's top priority is safety, and in working together we can keep the public safe. Any applicable work should be directed to Union Pacific Engineering, 312-496-4726.



## I-Pass Turns 20

The Illinois Tollway is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the introduction of the I-Pass transponder. According to the Tollway, more than 2.2 million daily toll transactions are made every day, 86 percent of those with an I-Pass. This is the highest transponder usage percentage in the country. Customers with IPASS pay fifty percent less than custom-

ers who pay cash (I-PASS rates for trucks and vehicles with trailers vary) and open road tolling saves drivers an estimated two hours of travel time per week.

## Census Tools Workshop

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) will host a number of workshops to introduce local government staff to the Census Bureau website. Attendees will learn about the most recent census data, where to find data, step by step instructions for getting data and options for formatting and downloading tables. The target audience is plan commissioners and municipal staff in administration, planning, zoning, public works and economic development.

All workshops will be held at the CMAP offices (233 W. Wacker Dr., Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606) from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the following dates:

December 20 (very limited space)

February 4

March 18

April 29

May 27

June 17

Laptops will be provided for the free workshops. Please contact Jon Hallas ([jhallas@cmap.illinois.gov](mailto:jhallas@cmap.illinois.gov) or 312.386.8764) at CMAP for additional details or to register. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.



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