



NWMC Transportation Newsletter

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Dates to Remember

- July 15** **NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee—10:30 a.m.**
NWMC Offices
- August 1** **Deadline for comments on CMAP Go To 2040 Update (see article on page 3)**
- August 15** **Deadline for Local Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program (see article on page 4)**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Discusses Joint Purchasing Opportunities, Bike Sharing Feasibility Study

On June 17, the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee met to discuss joint purchasing opportunities and future planning initiatives. The committee reviewed current opportunities for joint purchasing through the Suburban Purchasing Cooperative's lane marking contract and the potential to pursue additional programs for bicycle racks. Staff is following up with committee members to gauge interest in bike rack purchases and understand if municipalities could agree on standard specifications. Staff will update the committee at a future meeting.

Additionally, the committee discussed the Community Planning and Local Technical Assistance Program and came decided to pursue an application for a feasibility study of bike sharing in the NWMC service area. Bike sharing in the Washington D.C. region has expanded to the surrounding suburbs and there are examples of successful bike share systems in smaller cities as well. If selected, the study would examine the

appropriate bike sharing model for the NWMC communities, such as the extension of the Divvy system in Chicago or an independent system. Additionally, the study would consider the land use characteristics and transportation infrastructure necessary to implement a successful bike sharing system. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) will select projects this fall.

The committee went on to discuss bike count locations for CMAP's summer data collection program. The committee provided input on potential locations and assisted in prioritizing potential count locations. CMAP ultimately selected the following locations to conduct bicycle counts:

- IL 21 @ Winkleman Road, *Prospect Heights*
- Beckwith Rd. @ North Branch Trail, *Morton Grove*
- Shoe Factory Road @ Bridlewood Lane, *Hoffman Estates*

- Palatine Trail south of Harper College, *Palatine*
- Kennicott Ave @ Palatine Road, *Arlington Heights*
- Woodfield Rd @ Busse Woods Trail, *Schaumburg*
- Central Road @ Circle Drive (Oakton CC), *Des Plaines*
- Howard Ave @ North Branch Trail, *Niles*

Finally, staff informed the committee that CMAP is planning to conduct a joint call for projects for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) in early 2015. Both programs require Phase I Engineering to be nearly complete before a project will be selected for funding. Communities should start considering projects now.

The next NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee meeting is scheduled for July 15 and will focus on the examination of the revised draft of the Des Plaines River Trail Plan.



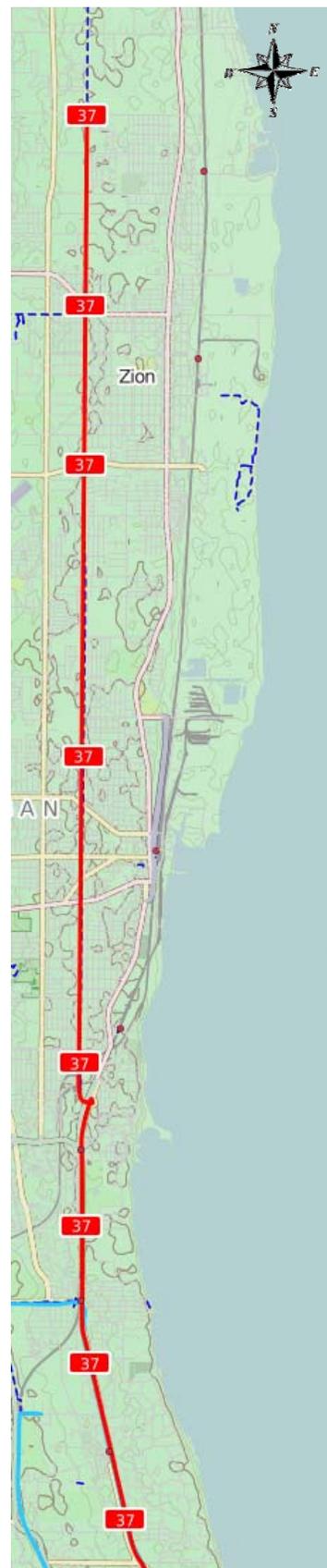
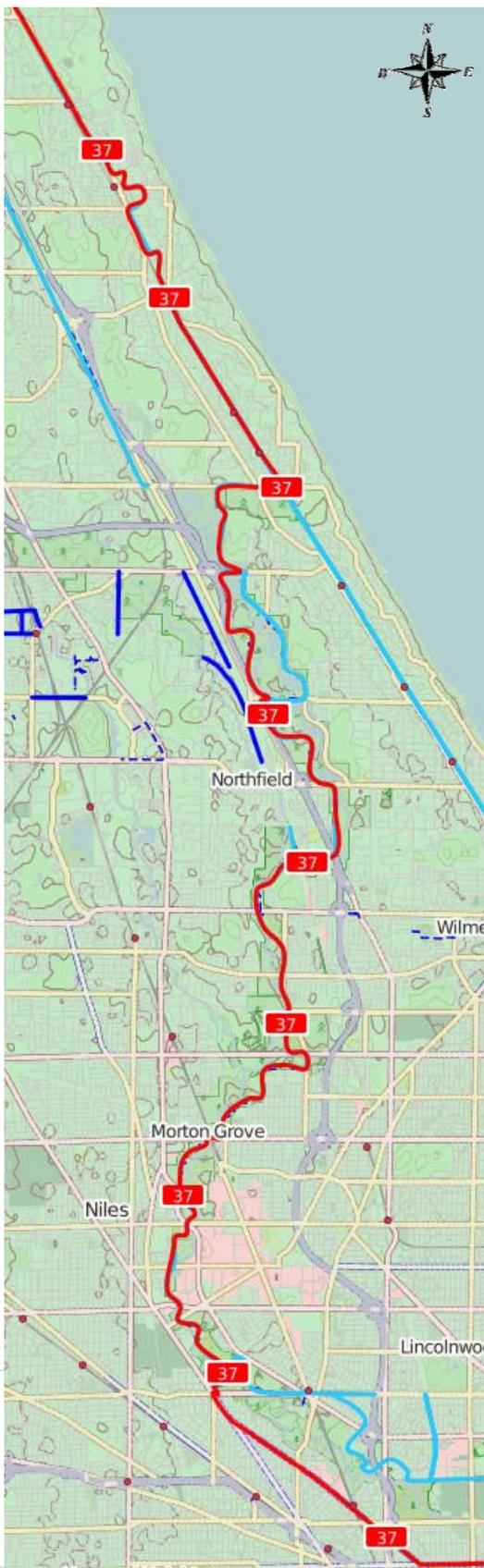
U.S. Bicycle Route Designated in NWMC Area

On June 12, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announced that a 72.6-mile network of existing trails, designated bike routes and bicycle-friendly streets between the Indiana and Wisconsin state lines has been selected to become part of the U.S. Bicycle Route System. The new U.S. Bicycle Route 36/37 follows the Lake Michigan coastline and passes through the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC) service area, providing communities and neighborhoods with an opportunity to take advantage of the tourism and economic development possibilities of being on an interstate bike system.

Traveling from Chicago, the new U.S. Bicycle Route 37 enters the NWMC service area via the North Branch Trail in *Niles* and follows that trail north to the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Cook County border. The route then heads east to the Robert McClory Path in Lake County beginning in *Highland Park* and traveling all the way to the Wisconsin border.

The Illinois Department of Transportation collaborated with nine local partners on the application to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Committee on U.S. Route Numbering. The designation is the first for an Illinois bike route in more than 30 years. The last U.S. Bicycle Route created in Illinois was the TransAmerica Trail in 1982. To date, the national system encompasses 6,834 miles in 12 states. When fully developed, the national system will have more than 50,000 miles of interstate bicycle routes crisscrossing the country.

U.S. Bicycle Route 37 through NWMC service area.
Southern segment on left
Northern segment on right





News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

On June 18, the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met to approve Surface Transportation Program (STP) modifications and discuss future programming of STP funds. The committee approved a minor cost increase for the *Lincolnwood* led Central Avenue and Pratt Avenue intersection improvement project, which is a joint project with *Skokie* and Chicago. This project will begin construction later this year. Additionally, the committee approved a reprogramming request from the *Village of Glenview*, which removes the Techny Trail projects from the current program and replaces them with four resurfacing projects from the 2012 call for projects.

Next, the committee turned its attention to future STP programming. The North Shore Council will end federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014 with a positive STP balance. Additionally, the Chicago region has done a poor job spending STP funds in FFY 2014, thus providing an opportunity to access unspent funds.

Given these factors and since it has been two years since the last call for projects, the Technical Committee agreed to hold a call for new STP projects. In order to allow time for local planning and prioritizing, the next call for projects from the North Shore Council is tentatively scheduled to take place in December of this year. The programming of new projects will occur in early 2015. The Technical Committee believes that the regional STP circumstances will enable the North Shore Council to move regionally significant projects forward.

Finally, the committee heard a report from Maria Choca Urban of Cook County on the county's Long Range Transportation Plan. She provided an overview of the planning process and the recently completed multimodal corridor analysis. Please visit <http://www.connectingcookcounty.org/> for more information on the planning process.



News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

The Council's STP Methodology Review Working Group will meet on August 1 at 9:00 a.m. at NWMC offices. The goal of the group is develop a methodology which will maximize the Council's ability to spend its annual allotment of STP funds and reflect the priorities of the Council's members, the current regional plan (Go To 2040) and federal legislation. It will present at the next North-

west Council of Mayors Technical Committee meeting.

The Council still has Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds available for transportation projects in all upcoming fiscal years. These projects can include road resurfacing or reconstruction, bike and pedestrian projects, transit infrastructure improvements and lighting projects.



Get Projects Ready Now for CMAQ and TAP

CMAP is planning to issue a call for new projects for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) later in 2014 or early 2015. Under current rules for both programs, Phase I design approval must be given by IDOT before any project can receive funding.

If your municipality has any potential projects for either program, please contact your Council's Planning Liaison

soon to set up a meeting with IDOT to scope the project and determine how long the design approval process will take. Environmental clearances on projects which involve state right-of way can take between six months to one year, so planning now will put your project in a better position when applications are officially released.

More information on the programs can be found by visiting [here](#).

CMAP Seeking Input on Go To 2040 Plan Update

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is updating the Go To 2040 comprehensive regional plan, as required by federal law. The draft update is available for public comment until August 1, 2014.

CMAP is in the midst of series of public open house meetings throughout the region during the comment period. Each event features posters and plan update materials for review, as well as the draft 2014-19 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), with comment cards available to leave input and CMAP staff on hand to answer questions. Additionally, anyone may review the plan and submit written comments at the [CMAP website](#). The remaining relevant meetings for NWMC members are listed below:

McHenry County

Thursday, July 17, 2014

3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

McHenry County Administration Building
Conference Room A

667 Ware Road

Woodstock

CMAP Public Hearing

Thursday, July 31, 2014

4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800

Chicago

To learn more and to RSVP for the meeting, please contact Jessica Gershman, jgershman@cmaphillinois.gov or 312-386-8631.



IDOT Accepting Applications for Local Rail/ Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is requesting applications for the Fiscal Year 2015 Local Rail/ Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program. IDOT is continuing to place a strong emphasis on signal and circuitry related projects as opposed to crossing surface projects. Additional emphasis is being placed on locations with an increased number of trains or vehicles and at locations having a crash history. Please note that signal related projects are eligible for 100 percent federal funding.

A completed application providing as much information as possible, along with a location map showing the cross-

ing, should be submitted to IDOT for each location where safety improvements are proposed. An application form for the project is available by visiting www.dot.il.gov/blr/blrforms.html. Click on Form BLR 04100 in the table of forms. Applications to IDOT are due by Friday, August 15. Following receipt of the applications, IDOT intends to perform on-site inspections at the candidate locations. For additional information, please contact Jason L. Johnson, 217-557-1399.



Regional Freight Leadership Taskforce Issues Final Report

The Regional Freight Leadership Task Force, created last summer by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Board, presented its final report to the CMAP Board and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Committee in June 2014. The Task Force included public, private and civic representatives and was convened to explore governance and funding issues as recommended in Go To 2040. In its final report, the Task Force recommended a preferred scenario with three main components:

- Incorporate freight planning into the regional comprehensive plan

- Secure new funding from user fees to invest in the regional freight system
- Harness the new revenues to build freight projects and fund operational programs identified in the regional plan.

Additionally, and consistent with Go To 2040, the report recommends relying on existing institutions to deliver enhanced freight governance in the region. More information, including the full report, is available by visiting the [CMAP website](#).



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RTA Seeks Injunctive for New Sales Tax Rules

On June 27, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) filed a lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court seeking a preliminary and permanent injunction to bar enforcement of administrative rules concerning sales tax sourcing recently approved by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) and filed by the Illinois Department of Revenue. The lawsuit asks the Court to declare that the new rules are invalid, because they exceed the Department's authority to regulate. The Department promulgated new rules following the Illinois Supreme Court's decision last November in *Hartney Fuel Oil v. Hamer*, which invalidated the Department's previous sales tax sourcing rules. The new rules were approved by JCAR on June 17 over the objections of the RTA, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and numerous individual municipalities.

Over the past several years, the RTA has pursued legal action against a number of retailers, which it believes are deliberately avoiding paying the RTA sales tax by establishing remote sales offices outside of the RTA region. While these retailers have been paying sales tax in these lower-taxing jurisdictions, the RTA's lawsuits assert that these companies continue to operate within the RTA region. While these companies benefit financially from this tax avoidance practice, the RTA and other local governments within the RTA region are burdened with the responsibility of having to continue to provide services to these companies and their employees without receiving the sales tax revenue necessary to support these services.

The RTA believes that the new rules recently filed by the Department of Revenue will provide retailers with a justification to continue to divert sales outside of the RTA region in violation of Illinois law.

For more information, please visit the [RTA website](#).