



# NWMC Transportation Newsletter

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## Dates to Remember

<b>May 5</b>	<b>CMAP/RTA Call for Projects</b> <i>See article on Page 2</i>
<b>May 16</b>	<b>CMAP/RTA Planning Grant Symposium</b> <i>See article on Page 2</i>
<b>May 18</b>	<b>NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee - 10:30 a.m.</b> <i>NWMC Offices—Please note the revised meeting date</i>
<b>May 24</b>	<b>NWMC Transportation Committee - 8:30 a.m.</b> <i>NWMC Offices</i>



## Transportation Committee Talks STP Funding, Need for a State Budget

The NWMC Transportation Committee met on April 27 and discussed possible changes in the distribution and programming of regional Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds. Representatives from the Council of Mayors, including NWMC staff, have been meeting with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), City of Chicago, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In anticipation of their upcoming recertification process by FHWA this summer, CMAP recommended examining the current practice of sub-allocation to the City of Chicago and the Council of Mayors, which is unique in the country and has been identified by

FHWA as possibly being inconsistent with federal planning regulations. Federal transportation funds must be closely tied with regional transportation goals and tracked using performance measures.

The committee also discussed the importance of having a state budget in place to allow the uninterrupted flow of federal transportation funds. Without a budget or a bill allowing funds to be appropriated, projects currently under construction and those on upcoming lettings could be halted. Within the NWMC area, staff estimates that projects with federal funding totaling over \$30 million could either be halted or withdrawn from upcoming lettings

without a state budget or other agreement giving IDOT appropriation authority.

Finally, the committee approved the annual resolution needed to secure federal Unified Work Program funds, which are used by the Conference for transportation-related salaries and expenses.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 25 at 8:30 a.m. at NWMC offices and will feature a workshop hosted by CMAP staff to discuss Alternative Future scenarios as they develop the On To 2050 regional comprehensive plan.



## CMAP and RTA Open Call for Planning Grants

Applications are now being accepted by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) for their Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) for their Community Planning program.

Both programs assist local governments with local and regional planning efforts. CMAP's LTA program offers broad options for planning for transportation, land use, housing, the natural environment, economic growth and community development. RTA's Community Planning program focuses on planning around transit stations or corridors.

For more information on these programs, including current and past examples of projects, please visit the [CMAP LTA website](#) or the [RTA Community Planning website](#).

On Tuesday, May 16, CMAP and the RTA are hosting a symposium to provide assistance with the application process. The symposium will feature panel discussions on local best practices in transportation planning, climate resilience, shared services and plan implementation. Communities of many types and sizes will serve as panelists and staff from both agencies will be present for one-on-one input on the application process.

The symposium will be held at Roosevelt University's Murray-Green Library Auditorium Building, 430 S. Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Check-in and breakfast is from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and the program runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The cost for attendees is \$30. To register, please visit [cmap.is/TAsymposium](http://cmap.is/TAsymposium).

## Bike/Ped Committee Talks Planning and Grants

The NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee met Tuesday, April 18 and provided feedback on a proposed request for qualifications (RFQ) to update the 2010 NWMC Bicycle Plan. The Committee has expressed a desire to see the plan address additional issues including enhanced pedestrian and transit access. Staff will incorporate the committee's comments on the RFQ and present it for approval at the May meeting. In other committee action, staff provided an update on bicycle and pedestrian-related legislation currently under consideration in the Illinois General Assembly.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 18 at 10:30 a.m. at NWMC offices. Please note the meeting will not be held on Tuesday due to a conflict with the CMAP/RTA Symposium.



## Federal Transportation Legislation Updates

### **Omnibus Spending Bill**

Earlier this month congressional leaders unveiled a spending plan that would keep the federal government open until September, averting a potential shutdown. The omnibus spending bill would provide \$19.3 billion for the US Department of Transportation (DOT). That figure is a \$681 million increase above current funding levels. This is in contrast to the President's proposed budget, which would slash DOT funding by 13%.

The omnibus deal preserves funding for several programs the President's budget would have eliminated or reduced. The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)

grant program will continue to receive funding at current levels. The congressional deal increases funding for the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment program and maintains the Essential Air Service subsidy program for rural communities.

The deal provides \$16.4 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration including \$1 billion for the NextGen modernization program. It also provides additional funding for the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC), crude-by-rail safety and automated vehicles.

### **MPO Reform Bill**

On April 27, the House of Representatives voted 417-3 to repeal the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Coordination and Planning Area Reform rule enacted by the previous administration late last year. The rule would have required the boundaries of a metropolitan planning area (MPA) to include an entire urbanized area (UZA). If that area contained more than one MPO, the MPOs would be required to significantly coordinate their activities with a unified long-range plan and a unified transportation improvement plan (TIP).

The Senate unanimously voted to repeal the rule in March. The bill, S. 496 now heads to the President for his signature.

## North Shore Council Update

The North Shore Council of Mayors had one project on the April 2017 IDOT construction letting. The *City of Evanston* will receive Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to install additional bike parking at the Main Street CTA and Metra stations. This grant was acquired through the RTA's Access to Transit Improvement Program. This program seeks capital funds for small-scale projects that increase bicycle and pedestrian access to transit stations. RTA staff assists interested municipalities in the grant application process and projects are bundled into one application to the CMAQ program. For more information on the RTA Access to Transit Improvement Program and other local assistance available through the RTA, please visit: <http://www.rtachicago.org/index.php/plans-programs/grants-projects/access-to-transit.html>



## Northwest Council Update

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on April 13 at the *Barrington Village Hall*. Staff from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) provided an update on discussions about the regional distribution of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding. CMAP is working with partners including the Council of Mayors, Illinois Department of Transportation, City of Chicago and Federal Highway Administration to ensure that the region's use of STP funds meets new federal requirements for performance-based funding.

The committee held a lengthy discussion on the funding and ranking of projects in the active program. The council currently has more projects funded in FY 2017 and 2018 than available funding, necessitating a request

for advanced funding from the Council of Mayors Executive Committee. The large number of projects will likely require additional requests for advanced funding and the committee may need to prioritize the requests based on project score and readiness. Staff will work to update project schedules and scores to ensure the funds are spent in a timely manner. The scheduled biannual call for projects was postponed until at least May, as the committee will wait until after the Council of Mayors' decision on the advanced funding request. The committee did approve lighting projects on Milwaukee Avenue and Waukegan Avenue in *Niles* to move into the council program in FY 2018, provided that the council secures the advanced funding for the project.



## Highway Safety Funds Available

Applications for the FY 2019 Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) are being accepted through Friday, June 2. The HSIP is a core federal-aid funding program with the goal of significantly reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The anticipated funding level is

approximately \$35 million. The maximum federal funding level is 90 percent of the total eligible cost and all phases of safety improvement projects are eligible. Selected projects will be announced during the week of July 24. For more information, please visit the [HSIP website](#).



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