



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Northwest Municipal Conference Rolls Out Multimodal Transportation Plan

Des Plaines, IL – A fresh focus on improving mobility and the regional network used by bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users across the northwest suburbs are among the hallmarks of a new multimodal plan being rolled out by the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC). As one of the first such comprehensive efforts in the region, the NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan will help create a more connected, equitable and healthy region.

“The Northwest Municipal Conference serves 1.2 million residents and hosts 800,000 jobs in our 43 member communities,” said NWMC President and Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering. “The Multimodal Plan will play a key role in identifying projects to improve the regional network.”

The NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan furthers collaboration across municipal boundaries by providing shared data and tools to support project implementation. The Plan builds upon the organization’s previous bicycle plans and expands the focus to include pedestrians and those who walk or bike to access transit. In addition to analyzing conditions throughout the region, the NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan includes a toolbox of design and policy strategies to improve the experience of people walking, biking and accessing transit and guidance on how to implement more projects throughout the region.

“At the time the Plan was being put together, our surveys showed that 60% of NWMC residents rode a bike at least once a week for exercise” said NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Co-Chair and Northbrook Civil and Special Projects Engineer Jim Baxa. “We know that changing habits during the pandemic have likely only increased that number. The Multimodal Plan gives our communities the tools to keep up with emerging trends by making targeted investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.”

Development of the Plan relied heavily on community engagement and feedback from residents and regional stakeholders. This process yielded a wealth of information on the habits and preferences of residents that proved critical to determining the goals of the Plan. One survey received over 550 responses from more than 50 communities, and the results indicated that over 30 percent of residents either walk, bike or take transit to get to work. Responses showed that some of the main barriers to doing so were a lack of safe spaces to ride on and off road, safe street crossings and frequency of transit options. The NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan incorporated this feedback and created tools communities can use to implement comprehensive solutions.

Through a combination of detailed data collection and analysis, in-depth interviews and focus groups with transportation staff throughout the region and in-person and multimedia community engagement, the NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan:

- Identifies priority bicycle corridors to better connect the region's existing system of trails and creates a comprehensive bicycle network that is safe and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities.
- Evaluates sidewalks along major roads and surrounding transit stops and identifies key gaps.
- Analyzes the issues that make it difficult for people to walk and bike to Metra, Pace and CTA stops and identifies scalable solutions that can be used throughout the region.

“Good planning doesn’t happen in silos” said NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Co-Chair and Mount Prospect Assistant Village Manager Nellie Beckner. “It is essential for municipal planners and engineers to have access to these kinds of shared resources to provide better travel options for our residents and sustain vibrant communities.”

An emerging system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities—some connected and others isolated—can be found throughout the NWMC service territory. The backbone of the Multimodal Transportation Plan is a network of 19 Priority Corridors, spanning 584 existing and potential route miles. Additionally, sidewalks in each NWMC community were assessed and mapped to show the existing network as well as areas where sidewalks are absent or barriers impede a continuous network. These priority networks are tracked and displayed on NWMC’s website via Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping applications that staff can update in real time and allow regional planners to visualize gaps and target projects that have the greatest impact. To that end, the Plan also identifies toolboxes, resources, implementation strategies and funding opportunities to implement projects and improve overall safety.

Originally approved in March, 2020, the Plan roll out was curtailed by the COVID-19 global pandemic. “The Plan was adopted by our Board of Directors just before the state went into lockdown due to the pandemic. Since then, the need for safe ways to get around the region without a car has become even more apparent” said NWMC Executive Director Mark Fowler. “We look forward to rolling out the Plan over the coming months and engaging elected officials, agencies, stakeholders, project sponsors and funders to continue work on this important and comprehensive plan.”

About the NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan

To download the full plan and for more information about its development, please visit the [NWMC Multimodal Plan](#) website.

About the NWMC

Founded in 1958, the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC) has worked to strengthen communities and enhance intergovernmental relationships in the north and northwest suburbs of Chicago. As one of the premier regional councils of government, the Northwest Municipal Conference represents over 1.2 million citizens residing in our 42 municipalities and 1 township. Our membership area covers over 350 square miles in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and McHenry counties.

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