

Transportation Newsletter

July 2026
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Northwest Municipal Conference
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Cover Photo: City of Park Ridge, NWMC Staff



Northwest Municipal Conference

Dates to Remember:

North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee: Thursday, July 16, 8:30 a.m.—
Skokie Village Hall

Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee: Friday, July 24, 9:00 a.m.—
Palatine Village Hall

Committee Appointment Sign Up Deadline Extended

The Northwest Municipal Conference's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and Transportation Committee play an important role in shaping regional transportation policy and improving mobility that benefit our member communities. The success of these committees depends on the active participation and expertise of local elected officials and staff.

If you have an interest in transportation planning, bicycle and pedestrian safety, infrastructure, transit, or regional mobility, now is the time to get involved. The NWMC's annual call for volunteers to serve on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and Transportation Committee has been extended.

Registration forms were emailed earlier this summer. Members interested in serving are encouraged to complete and email the registration form to Larry Bury, lbury@nwmc-cog.org, by **Wednesday, July 15**.

IDOT Funding Now Available for Highway Safety Improvement Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has opened applications for its Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Applications that address an increase in roadway fatalities and serious injuries, or specific safety strategies to address a reduction of these incidents will be considered. Projects protecting bicyclists and pedestrians are especially encouraged. IDOT hosted a webinar to discuss HSIP priorities and provide guidance on how to submit a quality application. [A recording of the webinar can be found here](#). Applications are open through Friday, August 14 at 5:00 p.m. For more information, visit [IDOT's HSIP webpage](#) and see the [NOFO](#).

Tollway Introduces “Driving Connections” its Next Long-Term Capital Program

The Illinois Tollway has introduced Driving Connections, its new 15-year, \$26.5 billion comprehensive capital plan designed to strengthen the region's transportation network, reduce congestion, improve access, enhance safety and support economic development across northern Illinois. With the announcement, the Tollway is beginning a series of public hearings and engagement opportunities across all 12 counties served by the Tollway system. These meetings will provide stakeholders and residents an opportunity to learn more about the proposed investments, ask questions and provide feedback on the plan.

The hearings most relevant to NWMC members include:

- Monday, July 13, 5:30–7:30 p.m. (Lake County) – Greenbelt Cultural Center, Banquet Hall
- Tuesday, July 14, 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. (North Cook County) – Roosevelt University Schaumburg, Zurich Alumni Hall
- Tuesday, July 14, 6:00–8:00 p.m. (McHenry County) – Huntley Park District Recreation Center, Theatre
- Wednesday, July 15, 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. (DuPage County) – College of DuPage, Student Resource Center
- Wednesday, July 15, 6:30–8:30 p.m. (South Cook County) – Markham Park District, Roesner Multipurpose Room

NWMC members are encouraged to review the proposed improvements and participate in the public engagement process. Details about the planned projects, proposed toll rates to support these investments, the full schedule of public hearings and instructions for submitting public comments can all be found at www.illinoistollway.com/drivingconnections.

NHTSA Resources Available for “Speeding Catches Up With You” Campaign

Speeding Catches Up With You is a year-round social norming campaign that focuses on speed prevention. A national paid media buy will occur from July 6–31. Use any of [these resources](#) to encourage drivers to drive at the speed limit and to educate people about the dangers of going too fast, including information related to speed and road conditions. Many assets are available in English and Spanish. Please share this information with partner organizations to help spread the message across communities.

Prepare for the 2026 Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) with Statewide Webinar Series

The 2026 Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) will open for applications this fall, offering [\\$157 million in available ITEP funding](#) for walking, biking, and trail projects. To enable communities to develop strong, competitive applications, the Active Transportation Alliance and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will offer a three-part webinar series:

Grant Overview: Weds, July 15, 2026, 11 am – 1 pm CST – [Register here](#)

Scoring & Application Walk-Through: Weds, Aug. 12, 2026, 11 am – 1 pm CST – [Register here](#)

Q&A with IDOT: Weds, Sept. 16, 2026, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. CST – [Register here](#)

For additional details about the webinars and grant FAQ, visit <https://activetransportation.org/itep/>

Preparing a Strong ITEP Application: Webinar for Cook County Communities

Planning to apply for ITEP funding this year? Join Cook County and local partners on Wednesday, July 29 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for a free webinar focused on helping communities submit strong applications for walking, biking, and trail projects. Participants will hear lessons learned from three past ITEP awardees, learn about Cook County data tools and resources available to support project narratives and other grants, and have the opportunity to ask questions about the upcoming funding cycle. Registration can be found [here](#).

IDOT Opens New Round of EV Charging Infrastructure Funding

IDOT is accepting applications for a special round of funding through the Illinois National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program, making approximately \$30 million available to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the state.

This fourth round of NEVI funding features a significantly streamlined application process, requiring only basic site location information, including a map, simple schematic, photos and responses to several project questions. Proposed locations may be anywhere in Illinois and may be designed to serve passenger vehicles as well as medium- and heavy-duty vehicles. Eligible projects may include DC fast chargers, Level 2 chargers, or a combination of both, provided they meet all federal NEVI program requirements.

Applications are due July 20, and IDOT expects to announce selected project locations by the end of August.

To help prospective applicants understand the funding opportunity and application requirements, IDOT hosted an informational webinar. Application materials, the webinar recording, and additional information are available on the [IDOT NEVI website](#). Questions about the program may be directed to dot.driveselectric@illinois.gov.



Village of Skokie

Choose Your Own Adventure: Productive Meetings & Navigating Conflict for Plan Commissioners

Public meetings can be unpredictable. One moment the meeting is running smoothly, and the next moment emotional public testimony about a development proposal or a disagreement among commissioners creates tension and conflict. How commissioners respond in these moments can influence the effectiveness of the meeting and public trust in the process.

Join the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-IL) on Tuesday, July 14 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. for an interactive Choose Your Own Adventure® style webinar that puts commissioners in the driver's seat for organizing a successful public meeting. Using a case study and interactive tools, attendees will learn how to properly prepare for meetings, manage meeting flow, and foster collaboration among commissioners, staff, applicants, and the public. Attendees will also explore techniques for maintaining professionalism, promoting respectful dialogue, and guiding meetings back on track when tensions rise, while understanding the legal aspects to help avoid invalidating decisions.

This webinar will provide valuable tools for both new and seasoned members of a Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, etc. Professional urban planners are also welcome to attend this training (no CM will be offered). [Click here to register.](#)

IDOT Seeking Public Input on Strategic Highway Safety Plan

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is updating the Illinois Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), a key component of the Highway Safety Improvement Program. The SHSP is a statewide, data-driven plan that brings together state agencies, local governments and safety partners to improve roadway safety across Illinois. Guided by the Safe System Approach, the SHSP identifies safety needs, prioritizes strategies and helps direct investments to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on Illinois roadways. As part of this effort, IDOT is also updating the Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Assessment, which focuses on improving safety for people who walk, bike, or use other non-motorized modes of transportation.

Public and stakeholder input is a critical part of this process. You are encouraged to complete and share the statewide SHSP survey, which includes an interactive map for identifying locations with safety concerns. Survey responses will help identify safety priorities and may inform future projects, programs, and policies.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and share it with others by visiting [here](#). The survey will remain open through Friday, August 14, 2026.

Public Comment Now Open for CMAP Draft 2026 Regional Transportation Plan

CMAP invites residents, partners, stakeholders, and transportation system users to review and comment on the draft 2026 Regional Transportation Plan, Air Quality Conformity Determination, and FFY 2027–32 Transportation Improvement Program. The Regional Transportation Plan is a long-range blueprint for the future of transportation in northeastern Illinois. It outlines priorities and strategies to improve how people and goods move throughout the region, including by strengthening connections, improving safety, reducing pollution, supporting economic opportunity, and investing strategically in the transportation system. Public feedback will help shape the final documents before consideration for adoption by the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee in October. Review the [draft materials and share your comments](#) by **Friday, July 31**, including the [interactive map](#) of proposed constrained roadway and transit projects.

BRIC Grant Program Now Accepting Applications

[Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) is a Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant program that makes federal funds available to states, U.S. territories, federally recognized Tribal Nations, and local governments for hazard mitigation activities. It supports efforts to upgrade infrastructure and promote resilience against natural hazards.

FEMA published the Fiscal Years 2024/2025 BRIC funding opportunity. The application period opened on March 25, with applications due July 23 at 2:00 p.m. Eligible applicants and subapplicants must apply through FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO). The full notice of funding opportunity is available on [Grants.gov](#).

Registration is Open for Safe Routes to Libraries Virtual Learning Series

From the Safe Routes Partnership:

On Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00 p.m.: July 14, August 11, September 8, join us for our new Safe Routes to Libraries Virtual Learning Series presented by the Safe Routes Partnership and the Urban Libraries Council! This series shares best practices and inspiring ideas for increasing safety and access to public libraries. You will learn practical strategies for implementing Safe Routes activities, explore innovative data tools, and connect with library staff and Safe Routes practitioners from across the country. If you have been waiting for updates on Safe Routes to Libraries, this is the place to be! Our first session will feature Taylor Arnold, Makerspace Librarian from Billings Public Library in Montana. Taylor will share how he blends creativity and DIY activities to promote community bike safety. Read more about Taylor's work in the [Urban Libraries Council's Safe Routes to Libraries Impact Brief](#). Visit our website for details on upcoming sessions and stay tuned for more Safe Routes to Libraries updates. We're just getting started! [Register for the series today!](#)

IDOT Funding Available for Non-Enforcement Traffic Safety Programs

IDOT 2027 Local Agency Non-Enforcement grant program is now open for applications. \$1,000,000 in total funding to reduce serious motor vehicle crashes, serious injuries, and fatalities through education, prevention, and training. Applications are open through Thursday, July 15 at 12:00 p.m. For more information, including example projects, required deliverables, performance measures, funding guidance, and how to apply, [read the NOFO](#).

Learn More About Financing TOD in the Suburbs

Join the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) at *Mount Prospect Village Hall* on Wednesday, July 29, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm for a conversation with leaders at the forefront of transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Chicago suburbs. This discussion will explore the financial and regulatory barriers communities face, innovative funding tools that can help unlock development opportunities, and lessons learned from implementing TOD projects across the region.

[RSVP here.](#)

Upcoming Transportation- Related Webinars

America Walks: Tuesday, July 14, 1:00 p.m.— [What Will It Take To Be A “Sidewalk Nation”?](#)

League of American Bicyclists: Tuesday, July 14, 2:00 p.m.— [Federal Transportation Policy: What Advocates Need to Know](#)

Active Transportation Alliance: Wednesday, July 15, 11:00 a.m.— [ITEP Grant Overview + Eligibility Criteria](#)

Cook County Department of Public Health: Wednesday, July 29, 11:00 a.m.— [Preparing a Strong ITEP Application Webinar for Cook County Communities](#)

Did You Miss It? News Items in Brief

NPR: [As climate change damages streets and highways, the road ahead may be expensive](#)

Daily Herald: [Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle proposes new transit board members](#)

Chicago Tribune: [What's in the Illinois Tollway's \\$26.5 billion construction program?](#)

Pioneer Press: [Lake Bluff, Lake Forest officials preparing for new state laws for e-bikes, scooters, etc.](#)

Chicago Tribune: [Cook County sheriff signals support for dedicated transit law enforcement agency](#)

Daily Herald: [‘We are going to get it right’: Dart outlines plans to curb crime on trains, buses](#)

Suburban Chicago Bicycling: [Top suburban Chicago bike trails: A beginning look](#)

Daily Herald: [Hitting the brakes: Why new law puts restrictions on e-bikes, e-scooters for younger riders](#)

The Record North Shore: [Yellow Line extension in Skokie could take ‘decades’ but CTA is studying it](#)

Daily Herald: [Pedaling literacy: Libraries hit the streets this summer with book bikes](#)

Pew Research: [Building Homes Near Jobs, Stores, and Transit Saves Public Dollars](#)

RTA: [How the NITA trailer bill and 2027 state budget will impact Chicagoland transit](#)

SmartCitiesDive: [Biking in US cities is getting better, 2026 report says](#)

New York Times: [The Deadly Rise of Giant Trucks and S.U.V.s](#)

Yale School of the Environment: [The Suburban Street Design That’s Been Driving Emissions Since WWII](#)

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