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## Dates to Remember

- January 10**      **NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (Special Meeting)—10:30 a.m.**  
NWMC offices
- January 19**      **STAR Line Public Meeting—7:00 p.m.**  
*Arlington Heights Village Hall, 33 S. Arlington Heights Rd. (see article on page 4)*
- January 24**      **Route 53 Extension Design Workshop—9:00 a.m.**  
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Offices, Willis Tower
- January 26**      **NWMC Transportation Committee—9:00 a.m.**  
NWMC Offices

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Finishes 2011 with a Flurry

On December 20, the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee discussed ongoing planning projects and efforts to implement NWMC regional bicycle corridors. With regard to the North and Northwest Cook County Bicycle Signage Plan, the consultant team presented the draft signage network and implementation plan. Following the meeting, NWMC staff distributed the interactive map files and plan document for review by committee members and other municipal bike contacts. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is targeting approval of the signage plan at its January 17, 2012 meeting. Additionally, the committee discussed progress on the Northwest Highway Bicycle Facility Plan. The consultant team presented graphics of typical sections throughout the corridor. When complete, the plan will outline appropriate bicycle facility types paralleling Northwest Highway and the Union Pacific-Northwest Line. NWMC staff anticipates releasing the draft plan within the next week. Both planning documents will be reviewed by the

NWMC Transportation Committee before being forwarded to the NWMC Executive Board and full Board for final adoption.

In addition to the signage and Northwest Highway projects, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee discussed implementation of the 2010 NWMC Bicycle Plan. NWMC staff encouraged municipalities that did not secure Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding for NWMC regional bicycle corridors to consider applying for Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) funds. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) plans to begin accepting applications in February 2012 for a new programming cycle. For more information about ITEP, please visit [this link](#). NWMC staff also provided an update on implementation of the NWMC regional bicycle corridors. In the year since the plan's adoption, NWMC communities have been successful in securing funding, installing signage and beginning construction of bicycle facilities.

The NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is planning to hold a special meeting on January 10 at the NWMC offices to focus on comments and changes to the draft signage and Northwest Highway plans.

### **New Bicycle Plan Implementation Webpage**

The NWMC has introduced a new Bicycle Plan Implementation page on its website. The webpage contains updated information about implementation of the Tier One regional bicycle corridors identified in the Conference's 2010 Bicycle Plan. In addition, the webpage contains links to interactive maps of the Tier One corridors. The NWMC will add additional updates on Tier Two and Three corridors in the coming weeks. If you have any suggestions for the webpage or updates on bicycle corridors, please contact Chris Staron ([cstaron@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:cstaron@nwmc-cog.org)).



## News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

Currently, fiscal years 2013, 2015 and 2016 in the Northwest Council's Surface Transportation Program have funds available. With Technical Committee approval, projects currently on the MYB list can move up at any time. New projects applications are always accepted, but must stay on the MYB list for one year, typically during Phase I Engineering.

Federally funded projects in the Northwest Council scheduled for the upcoming January letting are: McDonald Creek bike path reconstruction in *Arlington Heights* (CMAQ funded) and Walnut Lane culvert replacement in *Schaumburg* (BRP funded).

Federally funded projects in the Northwest Council projected to be on the March letting are: Dundee Road sidewalks in *Buffalo Grove* (CMAQ funded); Central Road bike lanes in *Des Plaines* (CMAQ funded) and Meacham Road and Rohlwing Road lighting improvements in *Elk Grove Village* (STP funded).

The next meeting of the Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee will be scheduled soon. Please send any requests for project updates, project changes, or new applications to Mike Walczak.



## Route 53 Council Agrees on Purpose Statement, Plans Workshop

The Route 53 Blue Ribbon Council met on December 12 at the Lake County offices in *Libertyville* to hear the latest project developments and discuss the purpose of the project. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has been preparing a 2040 baseline model of transportation needs in the corridor upon which to build alternative networks. Once this is complete, CMAP can start testing a set of 2040 alternatives, including options such as dedicated transit lanes, higher tolls to manage demand, truck prohibitions and various combinations of all factors. CMAP will produce data, maps and charts to share with the council.

The council's three subcommittees have continued their policy oriented work and will guide decisions including: the amount and location of access points to the facility; transit accommodations; commercial vehicle use; acceptable levels of delay/congestion on 53/120 and other area roadways; value pricing; and, the funding and financing of the project. The council held a discussion on the purpose of the road and agreed on the following language: "The purpose of the Route 53/120 project is not to provide

an alternative for interstate travel, but rather to serve regional and local mobility and community needs in the Central Lake County Corridor. The route will connect people and jobs and facilitate economic development that is consistent with local and regional plans. The project will encourage use of transit, and enhance the natural environment." This language reflects the council's desire to improve the transportation system in Lake County while discouraging a high capacity roadway.

To that end, the council will hold a full day design workshop on Tuesday, January 24, at the CMAP offices in Chicago. All council members and interested parties are invited to attend the workshop which will feature leading designers, planners and practitioners. Attendees will consider national and international best practices, leading to the collective development of an initial roadway concept. The next full council meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 14.

## News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

On December 21, the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met at the *Village of Skokie* to discuss the future of the council's Surface Transportation Program (STP). First, the committee discussed the programming direction of the North Shore Council. Because the North Shore Council anticipates having funding available within its five-year program, the Technical Committee agreed to bring multiyear B (MYB) list projects into the program and hold a call for STP projects in the second half of 2012. NWSM staff will contact MYB list project sponsors in early 2012 to discuss moving projects into the program.

In preparation for a new call for projects, the Technical Committee approved a new project selection methodology and programming policies. A subgroup of the Technical Committee spent the second half of 2011 working to revise the North Shore Council's methodology and programming policies. The recommended changes aim to improve consistency in the methodology, ensure a focus on maintenance and create more predictable multi-year programming. The new methodology and programming policies will be considered by the North Shore Council members at the NWSM Board meeting on January 11.

The next meeting of the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2012 at the *Skokie Village Hall*.



# Hoffman Estates Making Bicycle Plan a Reality

The Village of Hoffman Estates has come a long way since 2008, when its Village Board directed staff to begin development of its first comprehensive bicycle plan. Input received during the update to the Village's Comprehensive Plan highlighted a desire to improve conditions, connections and opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle travel. With these as general guiding principles, Hoffman Estates staff worked to produce the plan in-house with some technical oversight and review provided by the League of Illinois Bicyclists and the Active Transportation Alliance. Additionally, the Village consulted local and regional agencies, such as the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC), during the plan's development as well as surrounding communities. The Village's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee oversaw the development of the plan. Furthermore, the Village brought together members of various departments and held open house meetings to solicit comments.

The plan includes maps of existing and potential on-street facilities, off-street facilities and an evaluation of the Bike Level of Service (Bike LOS) for on-street candidates. The plan also includes sections on education, enforcement, encouragement, funding and coordination. The Village Board approved the Comprehensive

Bicycle Plan and Map on May 17, 2010.

Hoffman Estates wasted little time moving forward towards implementation of the bicycle plan. The Village's bicycle plan identified 44.5 miles of on-street facilities ready for the installation of bicycle signage. In December 2010, the Village applied for a Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) Model Communities grant from Cook County for bicycle signage and development of a complete streets policy. The Village ultimately received the grant in early 2011.

Using the grant funds, the Village staff planned for and designed approximately eighteen miles of on-street bicycle route signage in 2011. Installation through a contractor was completed in fall 2011. The signs are intended to help bicyclists reach key destinations in the Village as well as ultimately link to regional destinations such as those included in the NWMC plan. The new signs meet the latest federal standards and include distance and direction information to help riders navigate along the new routes. The project helps to implement the Village Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, which identified the potential for 65 new miles of on-street and off-street bicycle facilities. The installed signage represents forty percent of the 44.5 miles ready-to-go on-

street facilities identified in the 2010 plan.

In addition to the physical improvements outlined in the Village's Bicycle Plan, Hoffman Estates developed a complete streets policy. By adopting a complete streets resolution, Hoffman Estates has made it clear that it desires to ensure that all users of the Village's transportation system are able to travel safely and conveniently on all streets and roadways in the Village. The Village has committed to designing, operating and maintaining all streets in accordance with complete streets principles. Following the adoption of the resolution on November 14, Village President William D. McLeod stated, "The adoption of the Complete Streets philosophy through Village Board resolution establishes the policy on which to base specific implementation strategies. While the Village previously advanced a number of projects over the years to improve accommodations for non-motorized users, the Complete Streets resolution furthers these efforts by broadening the scope of future projects. Building off elements of the Village's Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, Comprehensive Plan and involvement of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Complete Streets policy will lead development of updates to Village codes and guidelines with the ultimate goal of benefiting all users of the transportation system."

For more information on the Hoffman Estates' Bicycle and Pedestrian planning efforts, please visit [this link](#).

*Thank you to Mike Hankey, Hoffman Estates Director of Transportation & Engineering, and Nathan Roseberry, Senior Transportation Engineer for providing the information for this article.*



Installed Bicycle Signs in Hoffman Estates

*Picture courtesy of Jeff Skender, Village of Hoffman Estates Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee member*

## Municipal Spotlight

If your municipality is undertaking a transportation plan or project of note, please contact NWMC staff to be featured in an upcoming edition of the NWMC Transportation Newsletter.



## Metra Announces STAR Line Public Meeting Dates

Please be advised that the final round of Public Meetings for the Metra STAR Line Alternatives Analysis have been scheduled for the following locations, dates and times:

Naperville Municipal Center  
Meeting Rooms B & C (lower level)  
400 S. Eagle Street  
Naperville, IL 60540  
Tuesday, January 10, 2012  
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (open house)  
Presentation at 7:30 p.m.

*Arlington Heights Village Hall*  
Board Room & Community Room  
(3rd floor)  
33 S. Arlington Heights Road  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005  
Thursday, January 19, 2012  
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (open house)  
Presentation at 7:30 p.m.

These meetings will provide an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the proposed Long Term Vision identified in the STAR Line Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. The AA Study was initiated in 2005, and has examined a range of alternatives to address the transportation needs in the project corridor. Meetings are open to the general public and are ADA accessible.

Please contact Mike Walczak ([mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org) or 847-296-9200 x34) to request the documents completed in the Alternatives Analysis Study.



## RTA Seeking Comment on Strategic Measures

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is seeking public comment on its strategic measures, which will assess how transit is impacting northeastern Illinois residents. Various economic, environmental and political conditions are influencing factors that shape strategic measures outcomes. The measures aid the RTA in linking its goals with those of other regional stakeholders including planning organizations, other transportation departments and units of local and state government. The strategic measures have been organized into the following four targeted areas:

- Provide Transportation Options and Mobility
- Ensure Financial Viability
- Enhance Livability and Economic Vitality
- Demonstrate Value

A Performance Measurement Task Force involving the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace have been actively engaged in the development of the strategic measures. Additionally, the RTA conducted outreach to a variety of transit stakeholders and the RTA's Regional Citizens Advisory Board.

The RTA has developed a draft document that lists the goals of the Strategic Plan and a companion set of measures that the RTA is proposing for consideration with each of the area's goals. The public comment period will last through January 13, 2012. To view the draft strategic measures, please visit this [link](#). Public comments can be sent to: [pmcomments@rtachicago.org](mailto:pmcomments@rtachicago.org).

## FY 2013 Local Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is requesting applications for the fiscal year 2013 Local Rail/Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program. The program is a set-aside of federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds designed to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries at public highway-rail crossings through the elimination of hazards and/or the installation/upgrade of warning devices at crossings. These include flashing light signals and gates, circuitry upgrades or approach work at railroad/highway grade crossings. Railroad crossing and approach work is eligible for 90 percent federal funding. Signals and gates can be funded with 100 percent federal funds.

IDOT is continuing to place a stronger emphasis on signal and circuitry related projects as opposed to crossing surface projects. Furthermore, IDOT is placing additional emphasis on locations with rail lines hosting passenger trains, locations with increased numbers of trains or vehicles and locations with a crash history.

Applications are due to IDOT by March 1, 2012. Following receipt of the applications, IDOT intends to perform on-site inspections at the candidate locations. After prioritization and selection of candidate projects, project applicants will be notified of the selected projects for this program. For an electronic version of the application, please visit [here](#). Click on Form BLR 04100 in the table of forms.



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