



# NWMC Transportation Newsletter

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## Dates to Remember

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<b>March 15</b>	<b>TMA of Lake Cook Highway Construction Meeting – 10:00 a.m.</b> Baxter Healthcare, 1 Baxter Parkway, Deerfield, IL (see article on page 4)
<b>March 16</b>	<b>North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee Meeting</b> Skokie Village Hall, 5127 W. Oakton Street
<b>March 22</b>	<b>NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee —10:00 a.m.</b> NWMC Offices
<b>March 24</b>	<b>NWMC Transportation Committee—9:00 a.m.</b> NWMC Offices
<b>April 7</b>	<b>Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee Meeting</b> Arlington Heights Village Hall, 33 S. Arlington Heights Rd.



## Transportation Committee Discusses Metra Plans, PPPs, State Funding Outlook

The NWMC Transportation Committee met on February 24 and approved a draft letter to the Metra Board in anticipation of the agency's plans to conduct a strategic plan update. The letter stresses the Conference's commuter rail priorities, including maintenance of existing transit infrastructure, inter-agency cooperation with CTA and Pace and important capital projects. Highlighted capital projects are the STAR Line, expansion of service on the North Central Service line and upgrades/future improvements to the Union Pacific Northwest and North Lines.

The Committee also heard a presentation from Peter Skosey and Kristi De-Laurentiis of the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) on the proposed Public-Private Partnership (PPP) legislation (SB 146/HB 1091). The legislation allows the Illinois Department of Transportation

(IDOT) and the Illinois Toll Highway Authority (Illinois Tollway) to enter into PPPs for the construction of new facilities or to add additional capacity on existing facilities. The lease of existing facilities without improvements would not be allowed. The legislation could allow for private funding on such projects as the Route 53 Extension or the Elgin O'Hare – West Bypass project; however, the Committee had questions about local control issues under the legislation and chose to remain neutral on the bill. MPC will provide the Committee and NWMC staff additional information in hopes of gaining the Conference's support.

Ylda Capriccioso from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) outlined the agency's state legislative agenda, headlined by proposed changes in the distribution of state transporta-

tion dollars. The current unwritten funding agreement sends only forty-five percent of road funding to the six-county northeastern Illinois region (IDOT District 1), with the remainder spread to the rest of the state. CMAP will be lobbying the region's legislators on the issue in hopes of introducing a needs based programming strategy for the entire state.



## NWMC Examines CMAQ Funding for Bicycle Plan Implementation

In the time since the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) issued the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program call for projects in early February, the Conference has been working with municipal members to identify bicycle corridors and projects for potential CMAQ applications. On February 16, the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee discussed the CMAQ call for projects, which will cover federal fiscal years 2012-2016. CMAP will program all five years in this cycle. The Committee recommended forming steering committees for the Tier One corridors and considering joint CMAQ applications.

On February 18, the NWMC sent letters to communities within Tier One bicycle corridors, as identified in the 2010 NWMC Bicycle Plan, to solicit interest in pursuing joint CMAQ funding applications. As a follow-up to these letters, NWMC hosted corridor specific steering committee meetings on Tuesday to discuss opportunities for joint CMAQ applications. For each corridor, attendees discussed the appropriate bicycle facilities within their municipality and their readiness for submitting CMAQ applications. During the discussion, it became apparent that corridor-wide applications for the Higgins Road Corridor, Golf Road Corridor and Howard/Sibley Corridor are unlikely given short timeframe for applications and a number of difficult segments within the corridors. NWMC staff will continue to work with municipalities interested in pursuing segments of Tier One corridors through this CMAQ application cycle.



## Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Learns about Complete Streets

On February 16, the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee learned about complete streets policies and programs. Prior to the start of the Committee meeting, a number of Committee and NWMC members viewed a webinar on Complete Streets presented by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP). The concept of Complete Streets is that pedestrians, bicy-

Although they are Tier One corridors, the NWMC did not hold meetings for the Skokie Valley Trail, the Deerfield Road Corridor or the Fairfield/Quentin Corridor. These corridors are further along in considering CMAQ applications and implementation strategies. The municipalities along the Skokie Valley Trail are actively pursuing a joint CMAQ application. Lake County is planning to submit a CMAQ application for a missing segment of the Deerfield Road Corridor. Additionally, Lake County is planning to start Phase I Engineering on a portion of the Fairfield/Quentin Corridor.

NWMC efforts surrounding Tier One corridors do not preclude municipalities to seek funding for Tier Two or Tier Three corridors or segments within those corridors. CMAQ applications are due to regional Planning Liaisons on March 18, and the NWMC encourages members to review CMAQ application information as they consider projects. For more information about the CMAQ call for projects, please visit:

<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/cmaq>.

### Other CMAQ Information

The Regional Transportation Operations Coalition (RTOC), which is the focus group that will be reviewing CMAQ applications for intersection improvements, signal interconnects and bottleneck eliminations has approved its goals and strategies as they relate to CMAQ project selection. You can review the document [here](#) (pdf).

## Status of SAFETEA-LU

Earlier today, President Obama signed an extension of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which originally expired on September 30, 2009. This is the seventh extension of SAFETEA-LU. The United States House of Representatives and Senate voted to extend SAFETEA-LU through the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30) on Wednesday and Thursday, respectively.

Because Congress has not passed a federal budget for the current federal fiscal year, federal transportation funding remains in jeopardy. The extension of SAFETEA-LU signed by President Obama authorizes surface transportation funding through September 30; however, Congress and the President could only agree to a two-week appropriations bill. The stopgap bill will prevent a government shutdown and provide time for Congress and the President to negotiate an appropriations bill to cover the remainder of the federal fiscal year. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) reports that the continuing resolution cuts \$967 million from transportation ([see full story](#)).

Earlier this month, President Obama released his budget proposal for federal fiscal year 2012, which included a six-year surface transportation program totaling \$556 billion. This proposal would replace the oft-extended SAFETEA-LU legislation; however, the administration's proposal does not outline the revenues necessary to support a long-term surface transportation authorization. As this newsletter has repeatedly reported, Congress and the administration have not been able to agree on how to fund a multi-year surface transportation program.



## News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

The North Shore Council of Mayors secured advanced funding from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAQ) Council of Mayors Executive Committee for two projects. The Council secured \$3.75 million in Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for construction of the Skokie Boulevard at Old Orchard Road intersection improvement project within the *Village of Skokie*. This project is targeting a June letting. In addition, the Council secured just over \$483,000 for phase II engineering and right-of-way acquisition for the Chestnut Avenue at Waukegan Road intersection improvement project within the *Village of Glenview*. Last month, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) approved the phase I engineering report for this project, which means it

can move to obligate the recently acquired STP funding.

The North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee meets at 8:30 a.m. on March 16 at the *Skokie Village Hall*. The Committee will discuss the progress of the Councils federal fiscal year 2011 STP, CMAQ applications and other issues.



## News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

Through IDOT's January letting, the Northwest Council has spent approximately \$4.5 million of its funding mark of \$11.4 million of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for federal fiscal year 2011. One STP funded project is scheduled for the upcoming April letting, Golf Road lighting from Basswood Drive to I-290 in *Schaumburg*. This project will use \$665,000 in STP funds. Another project on the April

letting in *Schaumburg*, bike paths along Higgins Road and Irving Park Road, is funded through the CMAQ program.

The next Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee meeting will be April 7th at 8:30 a.m. at *Arlington Heights Village Hall*. Northwest Council members are requested to submit all STP project updates or other agenda items to Mike Walczak by March 25.



## News from Other Councils of Mayors

### Lake County Council of Mayors

The Lake Council Transportation Committee will meet at 9:00 am on March 31 at the Lake County Division of Transportation offices.

### McHenry County Council of Mayors

The March Council of Mayors meeting for McHenry County has been cancelled. The Village of Algonquin and McHenry County are planning to submit a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) application for a bicycle and

pedestrian crossing over or under Randall Road. The Village will be leading this project. McHenry County will begin its 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan in April. This project is funded in part with \$200,000 in Unified Work Program (UWP) funding for the public outreach portion of the project.

## Changes to Seniors Ride Free Program Coming

Last month, Governor Quinn signed Senate Bill 3778, which amends the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Act to allow low-income seniors, aged 65 or older, to continue riding free on fixed-route service operated by the CTA, Metra and Pace. Until the RTA and the service boards implement the new program, existing Seniors Ride Free passes will be honored. After the new program becomes effective, seniors who are not eligible for the Circuit Breaker program will resume paying reduced fares as they did before the Seniors Ride Free legislation was enacted in 2008.

With the new program, seniors will first have to be registered in the Illinois Department of Aging's Circuit Breaker Program. The Circuit Breaker income eligibility amounts range from \$27,610 or less for an individual, \$36,635 for a two-person household to \$45,657 for a household of three or more people. The RTA has up to 180 days to implement the means-tested program which gives seniors an opportunity to prepare for the transition.

The RTA will follow up to provide all seniors registered in the Seniors Ride Free program with detailed information about the transition. Until then, seniors can continue to use their passes for fixed-route service.

The RTA will work with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace to transition the program. The RTA has ensured that seniors already qualifying for the Circuit Breaker Program and already holding free ride cards will continue free rides without interruption.

The Seniors Ride Free program, which was part of an amendatory veto by former Governor Blagojevich, entitled all seniors living in the six-county region to unlimited rides on the CTA, Metra and Pace regardless of their income. A University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) study commissioned by the RTA last year showed that up to \$30 million in revenue would be generated with a means-tested program and 44 percent of seniors would continue to enjoy free rides. Over 435,000 seniors are currently registered in the Seniors Ride Free program.

For more information, visit RTA's online [Frequently Asked Questions page](#).



## CMAQ 2011 Summer Data Collection Program

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAQ) has opened its request for projects for its 2011 Summer Data Collection Program. Local governments can submit requests for the following types of projects:

- Vehicle Traffic Counts—12 hour for intersections, interchanges and railroad crossings, with pedestrian and vehicle classification data.
- Visual inventory of pavement features, physical roadway features and traffic stabilization features.
- On-street and off-street public parking inventories and occupancies, including commuter parking lot occupancy/residence counts.
- Other projects—freight (truck/rail) movements, bicycle and pedestrian facility inventory and utilization and vehicle occupancy.

Interested municipalities should submit requests for summer field data collec-

tion directly to CMAQ. The requests should indicate the location of the data collection, the data to be collected, any related programs and the priority of each request.

Send project requests no later than Friday, April 29 to Jose Rodriguez ([jrodriguez@cmap.illinois.gov](mailto:jrodriguez@cmap.illinois.gov)) at CMAQ.



## TMA of Lake Cook Highway Construction Meeting

The TMA of Lake Cook will once again be hosting its Annual Highway Construction Meeting on Tuesday, March 15, 2011. This meeting will be attended by state, county and local elected officials as well as members of the business community and provides an excellent overview of construction projects planned for 2011. Presentations will be given by the Illinois Department of Transportation, Lake and Cook Counties and the Illinois Tollway on 2011 Projects. A 2011 construction map will also be distributed at the meeting.

Please RSVP via email to Lynn Stailey at [lynn\\_stailey@baxter.com](mailto:lynn_stailey@baxter.com) by March 10.

### Meeting Information:

Tuesday, March 15, 2011  
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
Baxter Healthcare  
1 Baxter Parkway  
Deerfield, IL



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## 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.