



# Transportation Newsletter

## Table of Contents:

NWMC Transportation Committee Update	1	Metra Proposing Minor Schedule Changes	3
NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Update	2	IDOT Announces ITEP Application Cycle	4
News from the Northwest Council of Mayors	2	IDOT Concludes Outreach Meetings	4
News from the North Shore Council of Mayors	2	TMA of Lake Cook Tollway Presentation	4
Surface Transportation Authorization Update	3	APWA Training Opportunities	5
Metra Fare Increase Proposal	3	Contacts	5

## Dates to Remember

- October 17**      **IL 53 Advisory Council—2:00 p.m.**  
Lake County Central Permit Facility, *Libertyville*
- October 18**      **NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee—10:30 a.m.**  
NWMC offices
- October 20**      **APWA Social Media Communications for Public Works Seminar—8:00 a.m.**  
*Schaumburg* Prairie Center, 201 Schaumburg Court (see article on page 5)
- October 20**      **Moving Forward with the Illinois Tollway Capital Plan and Route 53 Extension—10:00 a.m.**  
Baxter Healthcare, One Baxter Way, *Deerfield* (see article on page 4)
- October 27**      **NWMC Transportation Committee—9:00 a.m.**  
NWMC Offices
- October 28**      **APWA Proposed Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines Seminar—8:00 a.m.**  
*Schaumburg* Prairie Center, 201 Schaumburg Court (see article on page 5)
- November 3**      **Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee—8:30 a.m.**  
*Arlington Heights Village Hall*, 33 S. Arlington Heights Road
- November 3**      **STAR Line Municipal Task Force—2:30 p.m.**  
*Hoffman Estates Village Hall*, 1900 Hassell Rdoad

## Transportation Committee Kicks Off New Year

The NWMC Transportation Committee held its first meeting of the fiscal year on September 28 at the NWMC offices under new chair, *Northbrook Village President Sandy Frum*. Staff presented a recap of events from the summer and a preview of projects and issues on the horizon for this coming year. Major topics discussed included:

- The current impasse in Washington over a new federal transportation bill, due mainly to differences in preferred funding levels (see article on page 3)
- The Illinois Tollway's new capital program and its impact on NWMC area projects including the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass, I-90 reconstruction/widening and Illinois Route 53 extension
- The development of IDOT's 2012-2017 Capital Improvement Program (see article on page 4)
- Future of the 55/45 transportation funding split between downstate and northeastern Illinois
- Pace's proposed I-90 express bus service, which is being coordinated with the Tollway's widening project
- Pace's future planning efforts, including tying density and pedestrian accommodations to increased transit service
- The future of the Metra STAR Line, UP North Bridge replacement project, and the Metra's budget, including possible fare increases (see article on page 3)
- Implementation of CMAP's Go To 2040 plan through local planning funds and capital programs
- Bike plan implementation including

(Continued on page 2)



## Transportation Committee Continued

(Continued from page 1)

the development of a regional bike sign network and corridor planning efforts (see article on page 2)

- The future of value capture as a transportation funding tool

The full memo prepared by staff is available on the [NWMC's website](#) under the September 28 agenda packet. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 27, 9:00 a.m. at the NWMC offices.



## NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

On September 20, the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee met and provided input on the Conference's two current planning projects. The Committee discussed custom identity signage for the North and Northwest Cook County Bicycle Signage Plan as well as the prioritization hierarchy for regional destinations. The consultant team will have a completed inventory of existing bicycle signage along NWMC bicycle corridors early in October. As the planning process moves forward, the consultant team will use existing signage information and the destination prioritization to produce a regional signage network for North and Northwest Cook County.

With regard to the Northwest Highway Bicycle Facility Plan, the consultant presented the final draft alignment that links *Barrington* to *Park Ridge*. The consultant team has identified a long-term alignment and will provide a more detailed analysis of typical cross-sections, construction barriers and cost estimates. Additionally, the consultant team identified short-term alternative alignments, which aims to provide a contiguous bike-way in the corridor while bypassing construction barriers. The next meeting of the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on October 18 at the NWMC offices.



## News from the Northwest Council of Mayors

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee will hold its next meeting on Thursday, November 3 at 8:30 a.m. at the *Arlington Heights Village Hall*. Please note that this meeting was originally scheduled for October 26, but has been moved due to a conflict with Veto Session in Springfield.

The agenda for the meeting will include a review of the Council's methodology for ranking projects, a review of projects scheduled for letting in Federal Fiscal Year 2012, and an update to the Northwest Highway Bicycle Facilities Plan from *Park Ridge* to *Barrington*. If your municipality has any items for the agenda, including cost increase requests or other projects updates, please send them to Mike Walczak ([mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org)) by October 21.

Staff will also be discussing a guide to quick take authority for right-of-way acquisition as it relates to federally funded municipal projects. The issue of lengthy right-of-way acquisition has been a factor in a number of current and recently let projects in the Northwest Council and some municipalities have inquired as to how and when quick take can be used.

Projects scheduled for the upcoming November letting from the Northwest Council are: Lee at Perry Intersection Improvement in *Des Plaines* (STP funded), McDonald Creek bike path in *Arlington Heights* (CMAQ funded) and State Parkway reconstruction in *Schaumburg* (STP funded).

## News from the North Shore Council of Mayors

On September 21, the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee approved its federal fiscal year (FFY) 2012-2016 Surface Transportation Program (STP). The North Shore Council will enter FFY 2012 on October 1 with its lowest negative balance since FFY 2007. The Technical Committee approved seeking \$5.2 million in advance funding for projects programmed in FFY 2012. The full North Shore Council will consider the FFY 2012-2016 program at the October NWMC Board meeting. In addition, the Technical Committee continued discussions related to programming strategies. Currently, the North Shore Council has no projects programmed in FFY 2015 and 2016. If federal funding remains relatively constant, staff anticipates that the North Shore Council will regain a positive STP balance in FFY 2015. Consequently, the Technical Committee discussed the appropriate mix of multi-year B list projects, project cost increases and new projects. The committee anticipates approving a programming strategy at its next quarterly meeting.

Finally, the STP Methodology Subgroup will continue to meet and consider recommendations to the North Shore Council's project selection methodology and funding guidelines. The subgroup anticipates making recommendations to the Technical Committee at the next quarterly meeting. The North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee's next quarterly meeting is scheduled for December 21 at the *Skokie Village Hall*.



## Surface Transportation Authorization Update

On September 16, President Obama signed a six-month extension of SAFETEA-LU, which is the current federal surface transportation authorization. This marks the latest short-term extension of SAFETEA-LU, which originally expired on September 30, 2009. The extension will provide the funding authority for surface transportation spending through the end of March 2012. Congress has not acted on a new six-year highway and transit package during the past two years because of disagreements on the appropriate funding levels and finding the necessary revenue to fund a comprehensive investment program. The revenues coming into the Highway Trust Fund are not sufficient to continue SAFETEA-LU spending levels. The question now is whether or not Congress and the President can formu-

late a long-term authorization in the next six months during a presidential election year.

One positive sign is that House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Florida) has been given a green light from House Republican leadership to seek additional revenue for a multiyear surface transportation reauthorization bill that could avoid a 34 percent cut proposed in a House budget earlier this year; however, the source of the additional revenue is still largely in question. Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio) has suggested that transportation funding could be supported by revenues from increased domestic energy production.



## Metra Proposes Fare Increases

On September 16, the Metra Board heard options for balancing its budget with fare increases, service reductions or a combination of both. Metra is proposing an overall increase in revenues from fares of 27.9 percent. Metra reports that the exact details of the fare increase are still under discussion. Metra finds itself facing a difficult operating budget. Proceeds from the regional transportation sales tax are far below projections due in part to the struggling economy. In addition, the rising cost of diesel fuel, new federal regulations, higher insurance premiums and other rising cost factors are straining Metra's resources.

Metra is proposing \$4.4 million in cuts and savings in administrative and operating costs. Metra believes the agency will need an additional \$64.7 million in additional revenues from fares to balance the budget. Metra has met budget shortfalls in previous years by transferring money from its capital budget; however, this is unsustainable in the long-term.

In addition, Metra has noted that its fares have not kept pace with inflation.

If they had, a Zone E one-way fare that cost \$3.35 in 1983 would now cost \$7.65, instead of \$4.50.

On October 14, Metra will release its 2012 Capital and Operating Budgets for public comment. In November, Metra will schedule and hold public budget hearings and the Metra Board will approve the budget. Metra anticipates implementing fare increases in February.

For more information about the proposed fare increases, please visit:

[www.metrrail.com](http://www.metrrail.com)

## Minor Metra Schedule Changes Announced

Metra has announced proposed schedule changes to four lines, two of which affect Northwest Municipal Conference communities – the Milwaukee District-North and Milwaukee District-West lines. Metra has proposed the changes to better reflect current operating conditions and therefore make the schedules more accurate.

In two cases on the Milwaukee District-North line, Metra would move train departures up by 10 minutes. Inbound Train No. 2156, which now departs Fox Lake at 7:25 p.m., would instead depart at 7:15 p.m. to avoid conflicts with outbound Train No. 2143 in a single-track section of the line. Outbound Train No. 2121, which now leaves Union Station at 2:35 p.m., would instead leave at 2:25 p.m. The equipment used for that train turns around at Fox Lake, returns to Union Station and then makes another outbound run, and adding 10 minutes at the beginning of the trip will help keep all segments on time.

Comments about the changes can be made via the online comment form (click on the "Contact Us" link from Metra's [homepage](#), via email to [onthebilevel@metrarr.com](mailto:onthebilevel@metrarr.com) or by calling Metra's Customer Service number on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 312-322-6777 (Press 7 to talk to a Metra representative). Metra will accept comments until Friday, September 23. A final decision about the proposed changes will be made after all comments have been reviewed. For more information please visit <http://tinyurl.com/3vumd9u>.



## IDOT Announces ITEP Application Cycle for 2012

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is reopening the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) application process in 2012. IDOT intends to establish a bi-annual application process following the same basic schedule for each application cycle. IDOT is working to update the on-line application process which will improve efficiency for both IDOT and the public. Project sponsors who submitted an ITEP application in 2010 will be required to re-submit a new application, but as part of the on-line updates the department is working to allow applications submitted in 2010 to be copied and updated for the 2012 application process. All applications must be submitted through the on-line process.

The following is the projected timeline for the 2012 application process. IDOT plans to announce exact dates later this year.

### **February 2012:**

IDOT will start accepting on-line applications

### **February – May 2012:**

Application process open

### **June – August 2012:**

Application reviews

### **September - October 2012:**

Selection committee review & announce approved projects

For more information about ITEP funding and the application cycle, please visit:

<http://dot.state.il.us/opp/itep.html>.



## TMA Hosting Tollway Presentation

On Thursday, October 20, the TMA of Lake Cook will host a presentation to discuss the Illinois Tollway Capital Plan and Route 53 Extension.

The meeting is being held at Baxter Healthcare (1 Baxter Parkway, Deerfield) and will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Kristi Lafleur, Executive Director of the Illinois Tollway and David Stolman, Lake County Chairman and Co-Chair of Route 53 Advisory Committee, will speak at the meeting.

The Illinois Tollway Board approved the \$12 billion Capital Plan on August 25, 2011. Illinois Tollway, Executive Director Kristi Lafleur will discuss the recently passed Tollway Capital Plan and “next steps” for plan implementation. In addition, Lake County Board Chairman David Stolman will provide an update on the Route 53 Advisory Committee process toward developing a consensus plan for the Tollway to initiate their planning study.

Please RSVP by October 18, 2011 to [lynn\\_stailey@baxter.com](mailto:lynn_stailey@baxter.com).

## IDOT Concludes Outreach Meetings

Beginning in July, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) began holding public outreach meetings concerning the development of its proposed Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Proposed Highway Improvement Program. Those outreach meetings concluded earlier this week and IDOT is specifically seeking comments concerning three areas:

1. Overall highway system performance;
2. Regional transportation priorities that might affect the development of the next multi-year highway program; and
3. Specific comments concerning projects that should be considered for inclusion in the program

The Department is also seeking comments on how to improve the effectiveness of our public outreach efforts. Individual comments can be forwarded to the appropriate district offices at the addresses listed on the map included in this Executive Summary or to the Central Office in Springfield at the following address:

Illinois Department of Transportation  
Office of Planning and Programming  
Bureau of Statewide Program Planning  
2300 South Dirksen Parkway, Room 307  
Springfield, Illinois 62764

For more information about providing public input on IDOT’s program, please visit:

<http://www.dot.il.gov/opp/outreach/outreach.html>.

You can review IDOT’s current Fiscal Year 2012-2017 Proposed Highway Improvement Program and the projects currently included by visiting here:

<http://www.dot.state.il.us/hip1217/hwymprov.htm>.

## APWA October Training Opportunities

---

The Chicago Metro Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) is holding the following seminars in October.

### **Social Media Communications for Public Works**

On Thursday, October 20, the Chicago Metro Chapter of the APWA will host a seminar on social media and public works. With increased use of the internet and social media, online communication has become an important part of municipal operations. Come learn how you can communicate with constituents during crisis situations, power outages, water boil orders, community meetings or local festivals using Twitter, Facebook and social media. Listen firsthand how Sean Stegall, city manager of the city of Elgin, communicated to residents using Facebook during the February 2011 blizzard. He will share the how, why and outcome of his outreach efforts.

The Apps for Metro Chicago held an Apps contest to design transportation Apps for Chicago. Organizers of this event will share ideas, tips, and experiences from this ground-breaking initiative and leave you with some pointers for launching your own App contest for your agency/company.

ClickFix, 311, City Sourced - the list seems to go on for ways the public can now send in work requests to public works departments. Hear from experts

in the field about what all of this means to you and how to best handle the coming deluge of online requests.

Does your community have a social media policy? How should an agency go about creating one? APWA member Robert Lewis will take us through an exercise of answering the questions needed to develop a framework for establishing a social media policy.

The seminar will run from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on October 20 and will be held at the *Schaumburg* Prairie Center for the Arts. The seminar fee is \$75 for APWA members and \$85 for non-members, which includes a PDH certificate, morning snacks and lunch.

To get more information or to register online, please visit:

<http://chicago.apwa.net/events/7572/>.

### **Updates of the Proposed Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines**

On Thursday, October 28, the Chicago Metro Chapter of the APWA will host a seminar on the proposed Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). The U.S. Access Board has submitted the proposed guidelines and will proceed to finalize the guidelines after considering public comment. When standards consistent with the final PROWAG guidelines are adopted by

the DOJ, they will become the new minimum design standards under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) for both new construction and alterations of pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way. The deadline for comments to the Access Board is November 23, 2011.

Join Kevin Burke III, P.E. of IDOT, will review the proposed changes regarding the effect on projects within the public ROW. Kevin is IDOT's Local Policy & Technology Engineer and is responsible for implementing statewide policies for local agencies to follow when using federal, state or motor fuel tax funds. In addition, he directs the Illinois Local Technical Assistance Program's Technology Transfer Center.

The seminar will run from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on October 28 and will be held at the *Schaumburg* Prairie Center for the Arts. The seminar fee is \$35 for APWA members and \$40 for non-members, which includes a PDH certificate.

To get more information or to register online, please visit:

<http://chicago.apwa.net/events/8274/>.

## Contacts

---

Mike Walczak  
NWMC Program Manager for Transportation and Environment  
Northwest Council Planning Liaison  
1616 E. Golf Road  
Des Plaines, IL 60016  
847-296-9200, ext. 34  
[mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:mwalczak@nwmc-cog.org)

Chris Staron  
NWMC Program Associate for Transportation  
North Shore Council Planning Liaison  
1616 E. Golf Road  
Des Plaines, IL 60016  
847-296-9200, ext. 31  
[cstaron@nwmc-cog.org](mailto:cstaron@nwmc-cog.org)