NWMC Transportation Committee Discusses Legislation

The NWMC Transportation Committee met on March 21 to discuss potential revenue sources for a new state capital program. Following up on a recent discussion held by the Council of Mayors Executive Committee, the committee reviewed informational materials on transportation revenue provided by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and discussed the potential structure of revenue-generating legislation. Committee members agreed that any initiative must generate significant, sustainable, and dedicated funding for transportation infrastructure.

The committee also discussed a number of transportation-related bills and resolutions that are currently being considered by the General Assembly. Bills that were discussed include SB1642 Driver’s Education – Bike and Pedestrian Safety, SB2016 ITEP DOT Supplemental Funding, SB2144 Complete Streets Act, HB 1590VEH CD-Electric Scooters, and SB 1256 VEH CD-Excessive Idling. NWMC staff provided updates on the NWMC Multimodal Plan and the process for allocating STP Shared Fund bonus points. Staff from CMAP, the Regional Transportation Authority, and Metra also gave reports.
NWMC Launches Multimodal Plan Website

The NWMC Multimodal Plan website, www.nwmcmultimodalplan.org has officially launched! The site, designed by The Lakota Group, includes information on the plan, the Conference, and the planning team. The website also encourages participation in a survey aimed at local residents and presents an opportunity to sign up for email updates on the plan.

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in distributing the website and survey to members of your community. In addition, please provide either Josh Klingenstein, jklingenstein@nwmc-cog.org or Cole Jackson, cjackson@nwmc-cog.org with the name of the appropriate marketing and/or communications staff member in your community who can serve as a point person for distributing outreach materials.

Bike & Pedestrian Committee Discusses Call for Projects, Legislation, Multimodal Plan

The NWMC Bike and Pedestrian Committee met on March 26 and heard an overview of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and locally programmed Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L) applications submitted by members of the Northwest and North Shore Councils of Mayors. Fourteen projects were submitted for these funding sources, with five applications from communities in the North Shore Council and nine projects from members of the Northwest Council.

Staff presented the committee with an overview of the NWMC Multimodal Plan website (see article below) and heard feedback on public engagement opportunities. Staff also presented on bike and pedestrian planning legislation pending before the General Assembly.
CMAP Looking for Future Leaders in Planning

Future Leaders in Planning (FLIP) is the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) leadership development program for high school students in Northeastern Illinois. FLIP is a free program where teens learn about the issues that shape the region and think of solutions with other students from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties. Participants meet and interact with selected regional leaders who make key planning decisions in our communities. This year, the program will take place between July 15 and July 20. CMAP staff requests that communities send information about the program out to relevant groups in their community. More information on the program and application materials are available on the CMAP website.

APA-IL Launches Healthy Communities Website

The American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter (APA-IL) has launched a first-of-its-kind website, HealthyCommunitiesIllinois.org, which aims to facilitate learning, idea sharing, and connections among urban planners, engineers, and public health professionals. The website was created by APA-IL and the Illinois Public Health Institute. The goals of the website match with the regional goals outlined in ON TO 2050, which includes strategies for the Chicago region and its communities to advance health equity. These strategies include supporting initiatives that target resources and encourage collaboration.
Register for IDOT Phase I Training Course

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has opened an additional IDOT Phase I Training Seminar on Wednesday, May 22, from 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the McHenry County Administration Building in Woodstock. This course comes highly recommended by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is designed for technical staff that want to better understand IDOT’s Phase 1 process.

Topics include: developing a transportation project's purpose and need; roles and responsibilities of local, state and federal agencies; environmental studies conducted through the Environment Survey Request process; analyzing and incorporating necessary engineering and environmental findings; differences among Categorical Exclusions (CE), Environmental Assessments (EA), and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS); and, a discussion on environmental laws and related permits. Please note, space is limited and these courses fill up fast. Click here to view the course registration information.

Registration Open for GATA Training Seminar

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is offering a free training seminar on the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) on June 13 in Hoffman Estates. The seminar will include a presentation by IDOT staff discussing GATA and its impact on highway agencies. For more information on the course and how to enroll, please see the Illinois Technology Transfer Center Spring Training Catalog.

Subscribe to Updates from IDOT’s Bureau of Local Roads

The Bureau of Local Roads and Streets (BLRS) subscription service for local agencies allows information to be sent out electronically and reduce the number of mailings sent from BLRS. This effort will complement information currently issued at local agency committee meetings. Information provided will include circular letters, form updates, funding opportunity information, procedural memorandums, newsletters, and other updates.

To subscribe, click on the stay connected tab, open the subscribe drop down box, and enter the relevant information.
RTA Launches Call for Senior and Disabled Mobility Improvement Projects

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has announced a call for Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities projects. The RTA is inviting local governments, private non-profit organizations and transportation providers to apply for Section 5310 funding through an open competitive process initiated by the RTA. The RTA estimates $9 million will be available for award through this program.

The program currently funds a number of projects that provide approximately 650,000 trips per year helping to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. These funds are dedicated to removing barriers to transportation service and expanding the transportation mobility options available. The Section 5310 program is the only available source of federal transit funds for projects that go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to serve older adults and people with disabilities. To obtain an application and for more information on the program, please visit the RTA website. Applications are due by noon on Thursday, May 2.

Statewide Planning and Research Funds (SPR) Call for Projects Now Open

IDOT has announced a call for projects for the Statewide Planning and Research Program (SPR). The program provides federal funds for planning and research activities used to establish a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions and to carry out transportation research activities throughout the State. The funding available for this program in FY 2020 is approximately $20 million. A 20 percent non-federal match is required for these federal funds.

All proposed projects should be related to studying or implementing a goal, strategy or objective within the state’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or one of its associated plans, implementing performance based program development, or implementing asset management. IDOT will evaluate proposed projects based on those criteria. The call for projects will close April 30 and awards will be announced July 1.

IDOT Opens Local Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program Applications

IDOT is now accepting applications for the Fiscal Year 2020 and 2021 Local Rail / Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program (Section 130 Funds).

The following safety improvements will be considered:
1. Crossing Closure
2. Railroad Warning Devices for the roadway or pedestrian crossings
3. Railroad Circuitry
4. Railroad Crossing Surface Renewal. This will be allowed only if the warning devices and / or circuitry are improved. Pictures of the existing crossing surface will need to be submitted.
5. Roadway Approaches. This will be allowed only if the warning devices and / or circuitry are improved and the existing profile grade does not meet IDOT / Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) requirements
6. Other (Signal interconnect, grade separation, or etc.)

Applications are due to IDOT by Friday, May 17, 2019 at 11:59 p.m. For more information, please see the GATA website.
The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will be accepting applications for the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) beginning October 2 through December 6, 2019. The reason for the advance notice is due to changes in the program as outlined below. The ITEP provides funding for community-based projects that expand travel options and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. Awards are anticipated to be announced in May 2020 with a Sunset Clause to have all funds federally authorized by September 30, 2023.

Please note that every applicant must be registered through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, and all pre-award requirements must be fulfilled prior to application submission.

New for this cycle, the ITEP will no longer fund Street Lighting or Phase I Engineering. Potential Grantees may apply during the 2020 cycle provided a Project Development Report has been submitted to IDOT for review and approval and the submittal date is included and can be verified in the application. Further guidance for the upcoming cycle is currently under development. New information will be posted on the ITEP website as it becomes available, so please continue to check for updates. All general ITEP questions may be directed to DOT.ITEP@illinois.gov.
North Shore Technical Committee Meets

The North Shore Technical Committee met on Thursday April 4 at Skokie Village Hall. The committee discussed the North Shore Council of Mayor’s Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the update to the STP project selection methodology. The committee decided to meet at a later date to continue refining the methodology and to hear presentations from the two North Shore shared fund applicants, The Villages of Northfield and Glenview. The committee will also use that meeting to vote on the Council’s distribution of its shared fund bonus points.

North Shore Technical Committee Meets

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on Friday, April 5 and heard presentations from applicants for the Council’s STP Shared Fund Bonus Points. Applicants from eight different municipalities, three of which are in the Northwest Council of Mayors, provided overviews of their respective STP-Shared Fund projects and took questions from the committee. The Committee will make a final decision on bonus point allocations at a special meeting on Friday, April 19.

The Committee also voted to approve the Northwest Council’s updated STP program and received and update from NWMC staff about the STP methodology development process.