Welcome Kendra!

On June 25, Kendra Johnson began her career with the Northwest Municipal Conference as our new Program Associate for Transportation. Kendra has a Master’s Degree in Public Policy from DePaul University and previously served as Program Manager for the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. Her duties include staffing the North Shore Council of Mayors, the NWMC Transportation and Bicycle/Pedestrian Committees as well as the regional watershed planning councils established by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. Please join us in welcoming Kendra to the Conference family!

CMAP Releases STP-Shared Fund, CMAQ, and TAP-L Scores

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) staff have completed the evaluation of Surface Transportation Program (STP) - Shared Fund applications and have posted them for review on the CMAP website. Details of the scoring and evaluation processes are available in the scoring documentation.

The applicant comment period closed on June 19, and adjustments are being made to determine the final ranking of all projects. Final rankings will then be used to develop the staff recommended active and contingency programs, which will be discussed by the STP Project Selection Committee at their meeting on July 18. Questions may be directed to Kama Dobbs, kdobbs@cmap.illinois.gov or 312-386-8710.

CMAP staff have also evaluated Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L) applications. Those scores are available on the CMAP Call for Projects webpage. Questions may be directed to Doug Ferguson, dferguson@cmap.illinois.gov, or 312-386-8824.
North Shore Technical Committee Finalizes Draft STP Methodology

The North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met June 27 at the Skokie Village Hall and received a presentation from NWMC staff on the latest draft of the council’s updated Surface Transportation Program (STP) methodology. The final draft has been sent to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) for feedback and will be released for 30-day public comment following CMAP staff’s review. The final version will be presented for approval by the Technical Committee at its meeting on August 29, after which it will go to the full North Shore Council for approval in September.

In other business, the Technical Committee received updates from several agencies on area projects. Pace staff informed the committee that the agency’s Pulse service along Milwaukee Avenue is set to begin on August 11 and staff from the Cook County Department of Transportation informed the committee that the department has begun the process to adopt a new county-wide transit plan.
Northwest Council Technical Committee Discusses STP Methodology

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on June 14 to discuss the draft Northwest Council Surface Transportation Program (STP) project selection methodology. Staff presented the methodology — which outlines the procedures for applying for STP funding, managing the council’s STP program, and selecting projects during each call for projects — and received feedback from committee members on potential areas for change. Staff will continue work on the methodology through July, and the document will be released for public comment within the next few weeks. The final draft of the methodology will be presented to the Technical Committee for approval in August, after which it will need to be approved by the full Northwest Council of Mayors in September. More details on the public comment period are forthcoming.

The committee also heard updates from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) regarding the region’s current STP funding situation. CMAP staff noted that the region was on track to obligate a record amount of federal funds in Federal Fiscal Year 2019, and that the suburbs had been especially aggressive in moving projects forward. CMAP staff also explained the programming process heading into FFY 2020, noting that the region would likely need to continue operating on a letting by letting basis due to the significant amount of projects targeting obligation in the next fiscal year.

Metra staff was also on hand to review how the agency planned to spend the funding that the RTA has been allocated as part of the capital bill that was recently passed by the state legislature. The Technical Committee will next meet on Friday August 16, 8:30 a.m. at Barrington Village Hall.

NWMC Multimodal Plan Steering Committee Talks Priority Corridors, Sidewalks

The NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan Steering Committee met June 18 and discussed updated priority bicycle corridors as well as the results of a sidewalk inventory carried out across the NWMC region. The committee was presented with updated rating criteria for the priority bicycle corridors throughout the Conference, and heard about potential alignment updates to some of the more important regional corridors. The committee also viewed preliminary results of the Conference-wide sidewalk survey, which measured the completeness of each community’s sidewalk network along collector and arterial routes. The inventory also provided data on the presence of sidewalks within a half mile of CTA, Metra, and high-priority Pace Bus stations.

The project team also presented an analysis of access to transit in the region and reviewed the results of the public survey, which closed in May. In addition, members of the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian committee provided updates on local projects and gave input to staff on the upcoming committee field trip. The date, time, and location of the field trip will be announced at a later date.
Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program Applications Now Open

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has announced that $60 million in federal funds are available as part of the Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program. State and local governments, transit agencies, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are all eligible to apply for grants to aid in the development, installation, and operation of advanced transportation technologies. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Advanced traveler information systems
- Advanced transportation management technologies
- Transportation system performance data collection, analysis, and dissemination
- Advanced safety systems
- Technologies associated with autonomous vehicles.

Applications to the program are due on Friday, July 19. For more information please see the Notice of Funding Opportunity, or visit the ATCMTD Program information page.

IDOT Requests Agency Compliance with Bridge Inspection Programs

In order to improve compliance with the National Bridge Inspection Program (NBIP), the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) released a letter on June 7 clarifying policies for installing load posting signs and bridge closures. A recent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) review of the state’s bridge inspection program revealed deficiencies in the program, specifically relating to NBIP Metric 14 (inspection procedures). IDOT is asking those involved in the bridge inspection program to incorporate applicable procedures into agency inspection protocol as soon as possible.

For more information, see the IDOT circular letter, or contact the IDOT Bridge Management and Inspection Unit office, 217-785-4537.
Illinois EPA Announces CMAQ Green Fleets Funding Opportunity

On June 19, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) announced the availability of $860,329 in funding for the purchase of new natural gas or propane fleet vehicles as well as for retrofitting conventional vehicles to run on natural gas or propane. Eligible vehicles must be owned by applicants and operate at least 70 percent of the time in the Chicago ozone nonattainment area. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on September 17. Please visit Driving a Cleaner Illinois NOFO or contact Darwin Burkhart, epa.cmaqgrants@illinois.gov for further information.

IDOT Issues Updates to BLRS Forms

The IDOT Bureau of Local Roads and Streets (BLRS) has issued updates to a number of forms on its website. Each revised form now contains instructions on how to properly complete the required information, and is also now presented in a fillable Adobe format with drop-down options for certain fields. Revised forms are available on the IDOT website under the resources tab. Additional form revisions will be released in sets as they are completed.

In addition to the revision of a number of forms, BLRS has worked to eliminate unnecessary or duplicative forms. Old forms will be deleted from the website, but they may be used until August 1. For more information and a list of revised forms that have been released, please see the IDOT circular letter released on June 17.
Dates to Remember

Tuesday, July 16, 10:30 a.m. – NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and NWMC Multimodal Plan Steering Committee – NWMC Offices

Friday, August 16, 8:30 a.m. – Northwest Council Technical Committee – Barrington Village Hall

Thursday, August 29, 8:30 a.m. – North Shore Council Technical Committee – Skokie Village Hall