Transportation Committee Discusses Green Infrastructure

The NWMC Transportation Committee met on January 17 and heard a presentation from Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Senior Planner Kate Evasic on the connection between transportation, stormwater and green infrastructure. She provided information and resources from the region’s ON TO 2050 plan including the urban flood susceptibility index. The full presentation, which details funding sources, can be found in the Agenda Packet.

For more resources and examples of green infrastructure in transportation projects, see the US EPA’s Green Streets website, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago’s Technical Guidance Manual, and the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Street Stormwater Guide. Green infrastructure can be simple and cost effective such as street trees which offer a nearly unmatched return on investment. In addition, the Committee heard updates on the NWMC Multimodal Plan and the CMAP call for projects. The Committee’s next meeting will take place on Thursday, February 21, 8:30 a.m. at the NWMC offices in Des Plaines.
Sam Schwartz Engineering Selected as Consultant for NWMC Multi-Modal Plan

On January 9, the CMAP Board approved a contract with Sam Schwartz Engineering for development of the NWMC Multi-Modal Plan. Sam Schwartz Engineering was one of three firms to respond to the RFP released by CMAP. CMAP and NWMC staff reviewed the proposals and ultimately recommended the team assembled by Sam Schwartz believing that they presented the strongest approach to the project, even going beyond the deliverables requirements in some areas.

The plan will:

Evaluate the regional corridors proposed in the 2010 Bicycle Plan to determine if these corridors remain the best options in terms of network connectivity and implementation feasibility;

Move beyond and broaden the 2010 Bicycle Plan, by incorporating analysis and recommendations related to the pedestrian and transit networks;

Provide updated information on best practices for safe and convenient accommodation for all three modes;

Prioritize proposed improvements (based on network connectivity, access to destinations, and quality of accommodation, cost, and overall feasibility); and,

Engage all NWMC members and partner agencies in the region who have a role in creating and maintaining the transportation system, as well as the general public—who are the end users of the system.

Staff met with Sam Schwartz for a kick-off meeting on January 18 and discussed the project timeline which shows completion of the project in approximately one year. Throughout the process, there will by numerous opportunities for engagement. Members of the NWMC Bike and Pedestrian Committee, with additional members from relevant agencies, will make up the project steering committee. There will be additional opportunities for engagement for both Conference members and the general public including NWMC member surveys, focus group meetings, a stakeholder open house, a community survey, and a visual preference survey. Staff will provide regular updates on the plan’s development and engagement.
NWMC Bike and Pedestrian Committee Discuss Des Plains River Trail, and Area Projects

The NWMC Bike and Pedestrian Committee met January 22 and heard from Active Transportation Alliance Trail Advocacy Manager Matt Gomez, who discussed the organization’s work in the northern suburbs and the recently completed Des Plaines River Trail Southern Segment Corridor Plan. The committee also discussed the recently approved contract with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and Sam Schwartz Engineering to conduct the NWMC Multimodal Plan update. Staff reviewed a draft timeline for the plan update and upcoming opportunities for stakeholder engagement. Finally, staff updated the committee on the CMAP call for CMAQ, TAP, and STP Shared Fund projects, which opened on January 15. The committee’s next meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 26, 10:30 a.m. at the NWMC office in Des Plaines.

North Shore Committee Discusses STP Methodology Update

A subcommittee of the North Shore Council of Mayors Technical Committee met at the NWMC offices on January 23 to discuss updating the North Shore Council of Mayors methodology for Surface Transportation Program (STP) project selection. This methodology would apply for the next and subsequent STP call for projects. The methodology will update new requirements for active program management and regional priority planning factors, including complete streets, green infrastructure, freight movement, inclusive growth, and transit supportive land use. A similar meeting for the Northwest Council will take place on Friday, February 8, 10:00 a.m. at the Village of Schaumburg Engineering and Public Works Department.

Numerous Funding Opportunities Available for Transportation Projects

As previously reported, the Call for Projects for the regional Shared Fund, TAP-L, and CMAQ is now open through March 15, with applications due through CMAP’s eTIP database by March 1 for Planning Liaison review. Planning Liaisons continue to discuss Shared Fund projects with area partners. Each Council of Mayors will have 25 bonus points to distribute to shared fund projects, with no project earning more than 25 bonus points and no council allocating more than 15 points to a single project. In the coming months, each council must determine a methodology for distributing bonus points, which may require coordination among neighboring councils to support regional priorities and advance projects in the North and Northwest suburbs. Recordings of informational webinars on the funding programs and submittal procedures are available on the call for projects webpage, and local Planning Liaisons are available to answer questions.

Additional funding sources include;

- **Invest in Cook** - Awarding $8.5 million to transportation improvement projects throughout Cook County – deadline March 15, 2019

- **Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Trails Grant** – Federal funds for recreational trails and bike paths – deadline March 14, 2019

- **Open Lands, ComEd Green Region Grant** - Grants of up to $10,000 to support open space projects (e.g. trails) - deadline March 15, 2019
Chicago Region’s Ozone Rating Downgraded from Moderate to Serious

The Chicago metropolitan region is moving from moderate nonattainment to serious nonattainment relating to the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). As a nonattainment area for Ozone, the CMAP region is subject to transportation conformity under the Clean Air Act of 1970. Both the ON TO 2050 plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) must demonstrate that the region conforms to the NAAQS for Ozone. Work has begun on the development of a new State Implementation Plan (SIP) with new Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets (MVEB) by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). CMAP presented relevant data at the January 18 CMAP Transportation Committee meeting and noted that the region needs to reach attainment by July 20, 2021 to avoid being reclassified as Severe 15.

CMAP My Daily Travel Survey

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is conducting the My Daily Travel survey, asking households in northeastern Illinois how they get from place to place in our region. Households can participate in the survey by signing up at www.MyDailyTravel.com. By providing accurate information about your daily travel, participants will help ensure that funding to maintain roads, bridges, and transit is spent where it is needed most. Households that complete the survey will earn $50. School districts can earn $10 for each student who takes the survey. Interested school districts should contact CMAP for more information.