Visit the NWMC Multimodal Plan Website and Take Our New Quiz!

How do you define your comfort and confidence level when it comes to biking? Take the new NWMC Multimodal Plan quiz to find out what type of cyclist you are! The results of the quiz will help the planning team better understand how to design bikeways that are safe and comfortable for everyone. To take the quiz, please visit the project website, http://www.nwmcmultimodalplan.org. While you’re there, be sure to sign up for project updates to stay in the loop on the plan’s development.

Also, staff extends a big thank you to everyone who helped promote the NWMC Multimodal Transportation Plan public survey! We received 551 responses from 32 NWMC communities and received invaluable data on how and why people choose to walk, bike, or take transit. The project team will analyze this data and use it to craft the plan’s final recommendations.
Capital Program Dramatically Expands Funding to Local Governments

During the final two days of the General Assembly’s legislative session, lawmakers passed an ambitious capital program, Rebuild Illinois, funded by multiple new and expanded revenue sources. Rebuild Illinois relies on the creation or increase of various revenue sources. The most significant revenue change from a transportation funding perspective is a doubling of the Motor Fuel Tax from 19 cents to 38 cents per gallon (Senate Bill 1939), generating over $1.2 billion annually. A NWMC analysis estimates that municipalities can expect a 67 percent increase over their traditional MFT allotment. In particular, NWMC communities can expect a roughly $22.3 million increase in MFT funds as a result of the legislation.

Funding for the “vertical” capital infrastructure package is contained in Senate Bill 690. Senate Bill 690 includes the Leveling the Playing Field for Illinois Retail Act, developed by the Illinois Retail Merchants Association in consultation with the IML, to allow for the collection of the Retailers’ Occupation Tax from remote (i.e. out of state) online retailers. Other revenues to fund the vertical infrastructure components includes a parking tax, increases to cigarette taxes, legalized sports wagering, electronic gaming at racetracks and new casinos throughout the state including Chicago.

House Bill 62 is the construction appropriations bill and House Bill 142 is the bond authorization to support those appropriations that are not funded by pay-as-you-go revenues. Line item appropriations in House Bill 62 total over $30 million for NWMC communities. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has published a breakdown of the capital bills and revenue sources associated with them, which is available here.
Last Chance to Apply for IDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program Funding

June 14 is the final day to apply for funding for Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects that will be initiated in FY 2021. The goal of HSIP, which is administered through IDOT, is to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. HSIP funds may be used to implement specific safety strategies that help reduce fatal and serious injury crashes on a given roadway or for system-wide safety improvements such as signage, pavement markings, or guardrails. The deadline to apply is Friday, June 14 and selected projects will be announced on August 30. For more information, please contact NWMC staff or see the IDOT circular letter.

BUILD Grant Applications Remain Open

Applications are still open for FY 2019 BUILD Transportation grants, administered by the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT). More than $900 million in total funding is available for road, bridge, transit, rail, port, or intermodal projects which have a significant local or regional impact. The maximum award for a single grant is $25 million. States, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, transit agencies, port authorities and other political subdivisions of state and local governments are eligible to apply. Interested applicants should view the application instructions on the U.S. DOT website. The deadline to apply for funding is 8:00 p.m. EDT on Monday, July 15. For more information, please visit the U.S. DOT website.
Transportation Committee Discusses Tollway Projects, Capital Proposal

The NWMC Transportation Committee met May 23 and heard a presentation from Illinois Tollway Chief of Engineering for Planning Rocco Zucchero, who provided an overview of ongoing work on the O’Hare Western Access project and the Central Tri-State Tollway widening and reconstruction. He also outlined future construction projects around O’Hare airport, both on expressways and arterials, that will have a significant impact on the north and northwest suburbs.

The committee also discussed the Rebuild Illinois capital plan, released by Governor Pritzker’s office prior to the end of the legislative session. Staff reviewed the provisions of the plan as well as its potential impact on NWMC communities. Additionally, the committee approved the FY2020 Planning Liaison budget and scope of services, heard an update on the development of the NWMC Multimodal Plan, and received reports from Metra, Pace, and the RTA.

Bike-Ped Committee Discusses Evanston Cycle Track

The NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee met May 21 and received a presentation from Evanston Transportation and Mobility Coordinator Jessica Hyink on the Sheridan Road cycle track. She highlighted the need for the cycle track, planning and final design, and the community outreach process leading up to construction. The committee also heard an update from staff on the recently-announced Safe Routes to School grant awards, and discussed upcoming focus groups for the NWMC Multimodal Plan. The committee’s next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 18, 10:30 a.m. at the NWMC offices. Please note that this meeting will also serve as the second meeting of the NWMC Multimodal Plan Steering Committee.
Given new eligibility requirements for the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), it is vital that communities interested in applying for ITEP funding this fall ensure that a Project Development Report (PDR) is submitted to IDOT prior to submitting an ITEP application. IDOT will no longer fund Phase I engineering through ITEP, and applicants must have submitted a PDR to IDOT for review and approval in order to be considered eligible for the newest round of funding.

ITEP applications will be open beginning October 2 through December 6, 2019. The program 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. New for this cycle, ITEP will no longer fund street lighting projects if they are not co-located with a transportation alternative facility.

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.

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.
IDOT District One Releases New Agreement Requirements for Local Agencies

IDOT District One released a letter on Wednesday informing local agencies that locally executed agreements must be submitted by the close-of-business two days prior to the service bulletin date for any project on a state letting. This requirement will go into effect starting with the September 20, 2019 state letting. The service bulletin date can be viewed as part of the letting schedule available on the IDOT website. Questions may be directed to IDOT Bureau of Local Roads and Street Program and Office Engineer Chad Riddle, Charles.riddle@illinois.gov or 847-705-4406.