April 19 was Cole Jackson’s last day with the NWMC, as he has moved onto a new position with the Village of Glen Ellyn. Although he was only with us for a short time, Cole was instrumental in helping the North Shore Council of Mayors stabilize their transportation program and was the creative force behind the transformation of the NWMC Transportation Newsletter. Good luck and thank you Cole!

Transportation Committee Talks Expressway Vision

The NWMC Transportation Committee met on Thursday and discussed a presentation from Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Senior Planner Tom Murtha about the agency’s Expressway Vision Plan. The plan aims to modernize the expressway system in northeastern Illinois to be financially sustainable and better serve all users. The committee also heard an update on the NWMC Multimodal Plan, as well as updates from Pace, Metra, and CMAP.
NWMC Multimodal Plan Steering Committee Holds First Meeting

The NWMC Multimodal Plan Steering Committee held its first meeting during the NWMC Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee meeting on April 23. The committee heard from project managers Alex Hanson and Kelly Conolly of Sam Schwartz Engineering about the year-long planning process, as well as challenges and opportunities that NWMC communities face in relation to bicycle and pedestrian planning. The committee also discussed the project website (see related article below), results of the municipal staff member survey, potential updates to the priority bike corridors identified in the 2010 NWMC Bicycle Plan, and a sidewalk inventory of NWMC municipalities. The committee will next meet on Tuesday, May 21.

Last Chance to Complete the NWMC Multimodal Plan Survey

Thank you to those NWMC members who have publicized the NWMC Multimodal Plan survey. We have received over 400 responses and received some great feedback from NWMC constituents. The survey will close on Thursday, May 9, so we ask that all members participate in the survey as well as distribute it to residents and interested stakeholders.

As a reminder, the NWMC Multimodal Plan website is the official link between the project team and the general public. The website will remain up after the survey closes, and more interactive activities will be posted in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!
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 July 15 – July 20. Applications to the program are due on May 20. CMAP staff is requesting that communities send information about the program out to relevant groups in their community. More information on the program and application materials is available on the CMAP website.

U.S. DOT Soliciting Applications for BUILD Transportation Grants

The United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) has announced that applications are open for FY 2019 BUILD Transportation grants. 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.
Apply Today for Local Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Program

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 IDOT circular letter announcing the program.

IDOT Announces Call for Local Highway Safety Improvement Program Projects

IDOT has announced that it will be accepting applications for Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects that will be initiated in FY 2021. The goal of HSIP is to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. HSIP funds may be used to implement specific safety strategies that help to 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 staff or see the IDOT circular letter.
IDOT Announces New Transportation Enhancement Program Guidelines

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.
Kane Kendall Council of Mayors Hosting Bike Share Event

On Thursday, May 9, the Kane Kendall Council of Mayors (KKCOM) Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee will host four shared mobility companies that will be giving presentations and offering free demonstrations. Representatives from Spin, Via, Mike’s E-Bikes, and Zagster will each give a ten to fifteen-minute presentation, followed by an opportunity for attendees to try out each company’s offerings for themselves. If you do plan to ride one of the scooters or bikes provided by these companies, please bring a helmet. For more information, please contact KKCOM Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator Ryan Peterson, at petersonryan@co.kane.il.us.

Des Plaines River Trail Open House

Please join the Forest Preserves of Cook County for an Open House on Thursday, May 16 to learn about options for improvements along the Des Plaines River Trail at the Union Pacific Railroad crossing between Golf Road and Central Road. The project’s goal is to eliminate the existing gap in the trail at that location. The event will provide community members with the opportunity to review exhibits, provide comments, and meet with staff from the Forest Preserves of Cook County and study team representatives. The Open House will be held at the Des Plaines Public Library at 1501 Ellinwood Street in Des Plaines, Illinois on May 16, 2019 from 5:30-7:30 pm. Please contact Kindy Kruller at 708-771-1009 or kindy.kruller@cookcountyil.gov for additional information.

IDOT Issues Guidance on National Bridge Inspection Program

IDOT has released a circular letter outlining the procedures that local public agencies (LPAs) must take in order to help the State of Illinois comply with the National Bridge Inspection Program (NBIP). The letter addresses bridge inspection tracking, requests for bridge inspection delays, the format of bridge inspection reports, and other inspection procedures. Questions regarding the NBIP should be directed to the Bridge Management and Inspection Unit by telephone at (217) 785-4537, or by email at DOT.BBS.BridgeMgmt@illinois.gov.
Northwest Council Technical Committee Awards STP Bonus Points

The Northwest Council of Mayors Technical Committee met on April 5 and heard presentations from applicants for the Council’s STP Shared Fund Bonus Points. Applicants from eight different municipalities provided overviews of their STP-Shared Fund projects and took questions from the committee.

The committee then met again on April 19 to discuss the projects and determine the final allocation of the Council’s twenty-five (25) bonus points. The committee voted to recommend award of fifteen (15) bonus points, the maximum amount possible, to the Village of Barrington U.S. 14 Grade Separation project. The committee also voted to recommend the award of ten (10) bonus points to the Irving Park Road and Bartlett Road Intersection Reconstruction project in the Village of Streamwood. Final approval of the bonus point distribution will be considered by the full Northwest Council of Mayors at the May 15 NWMC Board meeting.

The committee also discussed the council’s list of STP projects and voted to move two projects from the Multi-Year “B” list (MYB) into the active program in order to capitalize on any funding that may become available before the end of FY 2020. Discussion of remaining projects in MYB is expected to continue at the committee’s June meeting (date to be determined).