



Community Planning Program



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Local Technical Assistance Program

Application form: Community Planning program and Local Technical Assistance program

DEADLINE: Noon on Wednesday, June 26, 2013

This application form is online at www.rtachicago.com/applications. You may submit the form by email to applications@rtachicago.com.

Upon receipt of application, you will receive an e-mail verifying that your application has been received.

1. Name of Applicant:

Village of Park Forest

2. Main Contact for Application (please include name, phone number and email):

Sarah Coulter, Sustainability Coordinator 708-283-5660, scoulter@vopf.com

3. Type of Applicant (please check any that apply):

Local government

Multijurisdictional group* → Please list the members of the group (including government and nongovernmental organizations):

Nongovernmental organization* → Name of local government partner(s):

*Applications submitted by multijurisdictional groups and nongovernmental organizations must include a letter indicating support from each relevant local government. See the FAQs for more information. Nongovernmental applicants are strongly encouraged to contact CMAP or the RTA prior to submitting their application to discuss their project and the demonstration of local support.

4. Project Type (please check any that apply):

Please check all statements below that describe characteristics of your project. (This will help us determine whether your project is best handled by CMAP or RTA.)

- My project involves preparation of a plan.
- My project helps to implement a past plan.
- My project links land use, transportation, and housing.
- My project has direct relevance to public transit and supports the use of the existing transit system.
- My project is not directly related to transportation or land use, but implements GO TO 2040 in other ways.

5. Project Location:

Please provide a brief description of the location of your project. You may include a map if that helps to describe location, but this is not required. If your project helps to implement a past plan, please include a link to that plan.

Park Forest lies on the southern edge of the Chicago metropolitan area, approximately 35 miles south of downtown Chicago. The northern part of Park Forest resides in Cook County and the southern in Will County.

Old Plank Road Trail, a regional bikeway, runs east/west through the northern part of the Village. The Old Plank Road Trail is a 22 mile trail that connects the towns of Joliet, New Lenox, Frankfort, Matteson, Richton Park and ends in Park Forest. There are many proposed eastern route expansion projects that would add over 11 miles of bikeways and extend the trail from Park Forest to Chicago Heights and into Indiana.

In May of 2012 the Village of Park Forest adopted a Sustainability Plan that was developed with assistance from CMAP, Village Staff and significant community support. A full assessment of current conditions, initiatives and programs was done as part of the plan. It was found that Park Forest households travel via automobile on average 4,000 miles more annually than the average household in Cook County and the transportation sector is a top contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Village. In Section 2, Transportation and Mobility, there are several recommendations to reduce the number of miles driven as well as plan for future transportation improvements including bicycle and pedestrian routes and pedestrian safety.

See the full plan below:

http://www.villageofparkforest.com/clientuploads/Economic_Development/Planning/FINAL_Sustainability_Plan_lowresolutionversion.pdf

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6. Project Description:

Please tell us what you would like to do in your community, and what assistance is needed. If you have more than one idea, please submit a separate application for each project. Please be specific, but also brief (less than two pages per project idea)—we simply want to have a basic understanding of what you want to do. CMAP and RTA staff will follow-up with you if we need any additional information to fully understand your proposed project.

(Please include any additional information that is relevant, preferably by providing links to online documents.)

The Village of Park Forest intends to create an active transportation plan for the community. This plan will seek to increase bicycling, walking and transit use, improve traffic safety, enhance local businesses and foster a healthier, more environmentally friendly community.

The proposed work will create a bicycle plan to develop a network of facilities that, in addition to the existing, will connect the regional bikeway system, the multiple transit options and the local businesses, recreation and services in the Village. Additionally, the plan will analyze the existing pedestrian network in order to increase connections, improve intersections, reduce network gaps and identify ADA compliance issues.

The plan will also include an education component that will increase pedestrian and bicycling safety throughout the Village. Creating a safer environment on sidewalks and streets will encourage more residents to consider walking or biking instead of driving. Additionally the education of motorists will make them aware that they share the road with pedestrians and cyclists. Fieldwork and outreach will identify the greatest areas of need in terms of safety and much effort will be dedicated to public engagement and input.

The community is served by five school districts and a large number of the student population in these schools commute by bus or private vehicle. Part of the original Park Forest community design included block cut-throughs which allowed school aged children to have a safe and quick route to their neighborhood school. The proposed plan will include an assessment of the current needs of these schools, students and parents.

The Village has sought CMAQ funding to build a network of Complete Streets by recently applying for funds to add pavement markings and signage to four newly reconstructed/repaved streets. There are currently 2.9 miles of designated bike lanes and with the proposed addition of 4.26 miles many areas of town will be connected to the regional Old Plank Road Trail system as well as key services throughout the Village. While this is a good start Park Forest has much to do to make Complete Streets a reality Village wide.

With the help of a CMAP LTA grant Park Forest is in the process of a complete revision of their zoning and subdivision ordinances. One goal of this revision is to promote infill and encourage compact development, promoting walkable neighborhoods and connecting the community with multiple transportation options. The proposed bicycle and pedestrian plan will play a big part in the future development of Park Forest.

The Village of Park Forest is very proactive in putting funding sources together however without a detailed plan, planning for future improvements is difficult. A bicycle and pedestrian plan is vital part to not only the sustainable development of Park Forest but also the region as a whole.

The project will support CMAP's GO TO 2040's objectives by providing continued air quality and congestion relief benefits, increasing the livability of the community by investing in the creation of Complete Streets and improving the health and wellness of the residents of Park Forest.

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