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Local Technical Assistance Program: Project Priorities March 9, 2011

The CMAP local technical assistance program is meant to advance the implementation of GO TO 2040, the long-range comprehensive plan for the Chicago metropolitan area, by providing resources to local governments. This program focuses on technical assistance by CMAP staff; a separate grant program in conjunction with the RTA will be launched in April of this year.

The history and background of the local technical assistance program can be found in memos to the CMAP Board for the past several months, including:

- An [initial description](#) of the program's intent (December 2010)
- A [summary of proposals](#) received during the first call for projects (February 2011)
- A description of the [proposal review and prioritization](#) process (March 2011)

The purpose of this memo is to explain the status of each project submitted to CMAP for consideration as part of the local technical assistance program. Within the following pages, projects are classified into two basic types:

- Higher priority projects. This includes projects which are immediate priorities that not only align with the purposes of the program, but are ready for CMAP to start work immediately with minimal additional scoping. Only six projects are in this category. A second tier of projects includes those which are priorities to advance through the local technical assistance program, but for which detailed scoping is needed before work can begin. Meetings with the sponsors of these projects to determine the level and type of assistance needed from CMAP will be scheduled in the short term. For some but not all of these projects, these scoping meetings will result in CMAP assigning staff to the project in the near future. For others, CMAP's role will likely involve scoping projects, identifying and securing funding, and helping the applicant to seek private consultant assistance. Fifty-eight applicants submitted projects in this category.
- Lower priority projects. Projects which are lower priorities or can be deferred to future years, or require minimal staff assistance from CMAP, are in the next tier. Many of these projects are worthwhile, and it is hoped that they can be advanced in future years or through the actions of other groups. Also in this category are projects which requested very limited assistance, such as reviewing existing plans or participating in a study process; these projects can be taken on in the short term but are so small in scope that they do not need to be individually listed and tracked. Finally, a small number of projects are ineligible for assistance through this program; most of these are heavily focused on accomplishing a single capital project.

Before the list of individual project status, this document includes some summary statistics concerning distribution of priority projects by geography, community need, and project type.

Geographic balance

In the design of the local technical assistance program, an effort was made to identify projects to be pursued in many different parts of the region. In the following table, the distribution of higher priority projects by geography is summarized. In the cases where communities cross geographies, they are assigned to only one area based on Council of Mayors boundaries. A map showing the distribution of projects is included later in this document.

	Chicago	Cook total	N and NW Cook	W Cook	SW Cook	S Cook	Collar total	DuPage	Kane/Kendall	Lake	McHenry	Will	No specific geography	Total
Higher priority	9	31	5	10	6	10	24	6	5	7	3	3	0	64
Total applicants	16	55	18	14	8	15	62	18	11	16	10	7	2	135

Please note that in addition to the staff assignments that are the focus of this program, small amounts of grant funding are also available. (This funding is separate from the grant funding opportunity in conjunction with RTA that will be launched in April.) It will be used to complement the staff assignments rather than fund entirely new projects, and can be used (for example) to support public engagement activities, retain urban design or architecture consultants to prepare illustrations, fund necessary data collection, or similar activities. During the first year, approximately \$225,000 in grant funding will be available. It is expected that the distribution of this funding will parallel the membership of the CMAP Board, with approximately \$75,000 (one-third) being spent in Chicago, \$75,000 in suburban Cook County, and \$75,000 in the collar counties. The specific activities that will be funded are still to be determined, but will be brought to the Board for approval as funding needs are identified.

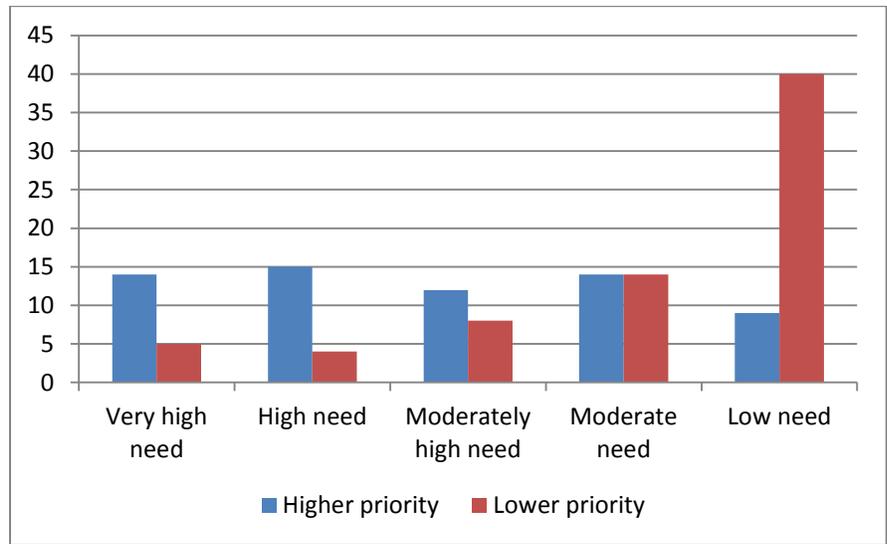
Community need

An important factor in the review process was the need of the community for assistance. The program is meant to prioritize projects in communities that have limited resources and would not have the ability to take on the project without CMAP’s assistance. This is also consistent with the stated goal of HUD’s grant to focus on providing assistance to disadvantaged groups, including lower-income residents, residents of public housing, and minorities, among others.

Socioeconomic statistics, namely median household income and poverty rate, were the primary drivers of the estimation of community need. Community size was also used but was not as significant of a factor as the socioeconomic variables. Communities were divided into five categories based on these factors, ranging from “very high” to “low” need. CMAP

acknowledges that many communities in the “low” need category submitted excellent projects and could still certainly benefit from assistance, but priority was given to communities with lower median incomes and higher poverty rates, as well as to smaller municipalities. The following table and chart summarizes the distribution of higher priority projects by community need.

	Very high need	High need	Moderately high need	Moderate need	Low need	Total
Higher priority	14	15	12	14	9	64
Total applicants	19	19	20	28	49	135



As this demonstrates, higher priority projects were identified from communities of all types, but those from higher need communities were more likely to be prioritized.

Project type

As the following project list demonstrates, higher priority projects are of a variety of types. Comprehensive plan updates (or in some cases, the first comprehensive plan in a community’s history) are common, as are corridor or subarea plans. Many projects are environmentally focused, and a number deal with water conservation. In some cases the project type is not yet certain, as CMAP is working with a number of applicants who submitted multiple requests to prioritize which will be pursued first.

Project Status

Higher priority projects

A list of communities submitting higher priority projects by geography is below, and a narrative describing them follows.

Higher priority projects by geography

Chicago	Suburban Cook County	Collar Counties
Bronzeville Alliance	Alsip	Addison
Bronzeville Community Development Partnership	Berwyn	Algonquin
Centers for New Horizons	** Blue Island	Antioch
Chicago Dept of Cultural Affairs	Des Plaines	Bensenville
Chicago Dept of Environment	Elmwood Park	Campton Hills
** Chicago Dept of Housing and Economic Development	Evanston	Carpentersville
Chicago Housing Authority	Hazel Crest	DuPage County
Developing Communities Project	Justice	Elburn
Openlands	Lansing	Elgin
	Lynwood	Fox Lake
	Maywood	Hanover Park
	** Metropolitan Mayors Caucus	Joliet
	Midlothian	Kane County
	Morton Grove	Lake County
	Niles	** Lake Zurich
	Norridge	Lakemoor
	Northlake	Liberty Prairie Conservancy
	Northwest Suburban Housing Collaborative	McHenry County
	Oak Lawn	New Lenox
	Oak Park	Round Lake Heights
	Olympia Fields	Waukegan
	Orland Park	** Will County (Fairmont)
	Palos Park	Wood Dale
	Park Forest	Woodridge
	Richton Park	
	Riverdale	
	Riverside	
	South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association	
	West Central Municipal Conference	
	** West Cook Housing Collaborative	
	Westchester	

** Indicates the project is an immediate priority for startup.

The highest priority project within the City of Chicago is the “Green and Healthy Chicago” neighborhood plans in the Greater Englewood, Washington Park, and Woodlawn community areas. This project was submitted by the *Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development* and was previously submitted unsuccessfully for consideration for a HUD Challenge grant earlier this year. Three projects in a similar geographic area submitted by the *Bronzeville Alliance*, *Bronzeville Community Development Partnership*, and *Centers for New Horizons*, focusing respectively on retail corridors, historic heritage, and food access, will also be pursued in conjunction with this project.

Several projects were submitted that covered the entire City of Chicago. CMAP will work with the sponsors of these projects to determine if they can be focused in the Greater Englewood, Washington Park, and Woodlawn community areas in the short term and then expanded to cover the entire city. If not, they will not be pursued aggressively in the first year of the program but will be scoped for a future year. The sponsors of these projects include the *Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs*, the *Chicago Department of Environment*, and *Openlands*.

Finally, two additional projects in different neighborhoods are considered priorities, although work during the first year of the program in these areas will be limited. The *Chicago Housing Authority* requested assistance in planning for the redevelopment of LeClaire Courts on the southwest side. The *Developing Communities Project* requested assistance in continuing to advance the extension of the Red Line to 130th Street; for this project, CMAP will coordinate with the CTA to ensure that our work supports their efforts.

Outside of Chicago, the most common type of assistance will involve updating a municipality’s comprehensive plan. Overall, CMAP prioritized assistance to the municipalities with the most outdated comprehensive plans. Five municipalities, including *Blue Island*, *Campton Hills*, *Justice*, *Norridge*, and *Westchester*, do not have comprehensive plans at all, so assistance to these communities will be a high priority. The project in Blue Island is considered an immediate priority because of a previous commitment that CMAP has to that community through a project sponsored by Cook County. Beyond these communities, assistance will be provided to nine municipalities, including *Addison*, *Berwyn*, *Elburn*, *Lansing*, *Lynwood*, *Northlake*, *Olympia Fields*, *Riverside*, and *Round Lake Heights*. In general, these communities have comprehensive plans from before 1995, which was used as a cutoff for assistance. One exception is Olympia Fields, which most recently updated its plan in 1997; assistance with comprehensive planning to that community is prioritized because of the ongoing “Homes for a Changing Region” project in that community, which is likely to lead to specific recommendations related to the comprehensive plan. Several communities that were not prioritized in this round of assistance had plans from 1995 or 1996; these will likely become higher priorities in future years, as these older comprehensive plans are updated.

Another common project type included subarea or corridor plans, which focus on an area smaller than the entire jurisdiction. Higher priority projects of this type submitted by municipalities include:

- Land use planning around IL 31 bypass, submitted by *Algonquin*
- Multimodal corridor planning in *Antioch*
- Downtown planning in *Carpentersville*
- Dundee Avenue corridor plan in *Elgin*
- Redevelopment of Old Joliet Prison site, submitted by *Joliet*
- Industrial areas plan for *Morton Grove*
- US 30 corridor plan, submitted by *New Lenox*

County planning departments also submitted several projects of this type which are considered high priority. These include:

- Unincorporated land use plan in *DuPage County*
- Subarea plans for unincorporated areas along Fox Lake, Pistakee Lake, or Wonder Lake in *McHenry County*
- Subarea plan for the Fairmont area in unincorporated *Will County* (this project is a priority for immediate startup due to CMAP's past and ongoing work in this area)

Three interjurisdictional housing projects are considered high priorities, as this will be a major way that CMAP addresses housing moving forward. One project conducting the "Homes for a Changing Region" process in four communities in south Cook County, led by the *Metropolitan Mayors Caucus*, is already underway. A second project covering five communities in west Cook County, sponsored by the *West Cook Housing Collaborative*, is considered an immediate priority for startup. Finally, the *Northwest Suburban Housing Collaborative*, covering five municipalities in northwest Cook County, is also a priority but is in an earlier stage of development than the south Cook and west Cook projects.

Many projects with an environmental focus were also identified as higher priorities. Four were specifically focused on water conservation, a recommendation of GO TO 2040 and Water 2050; these include projects in *Evanston*, *Lake Zurich* (which has already been initiated), *Oak Park*, and *Orland Park*. Several communities submitted requests for assistance in developing sustainability plans. CMAP intends to do initial projects with *Park Forest* and *Lake County* to develop a standard approach to sustainability plans, and then work with additional communities in future years using this approach. A number of stormwater projects were submitted; the highest priority among these were submitted by the neighboring municipalities of *Bensenville* and *Wood Dale*, which will be coordinated with each other.

Only two projects exclusively focusing on zoning updates are considered priorities for this first round of assistance: those submitted by *Alsip* and *Lakemoor*. A limited number of zoning assistance requests were submitted, and many of those that were received were from larger or more prosperous communities that could likely undertake this work themselves. It is hoped that future rounds of assistance will attract requests of this type from smaller or lower-income

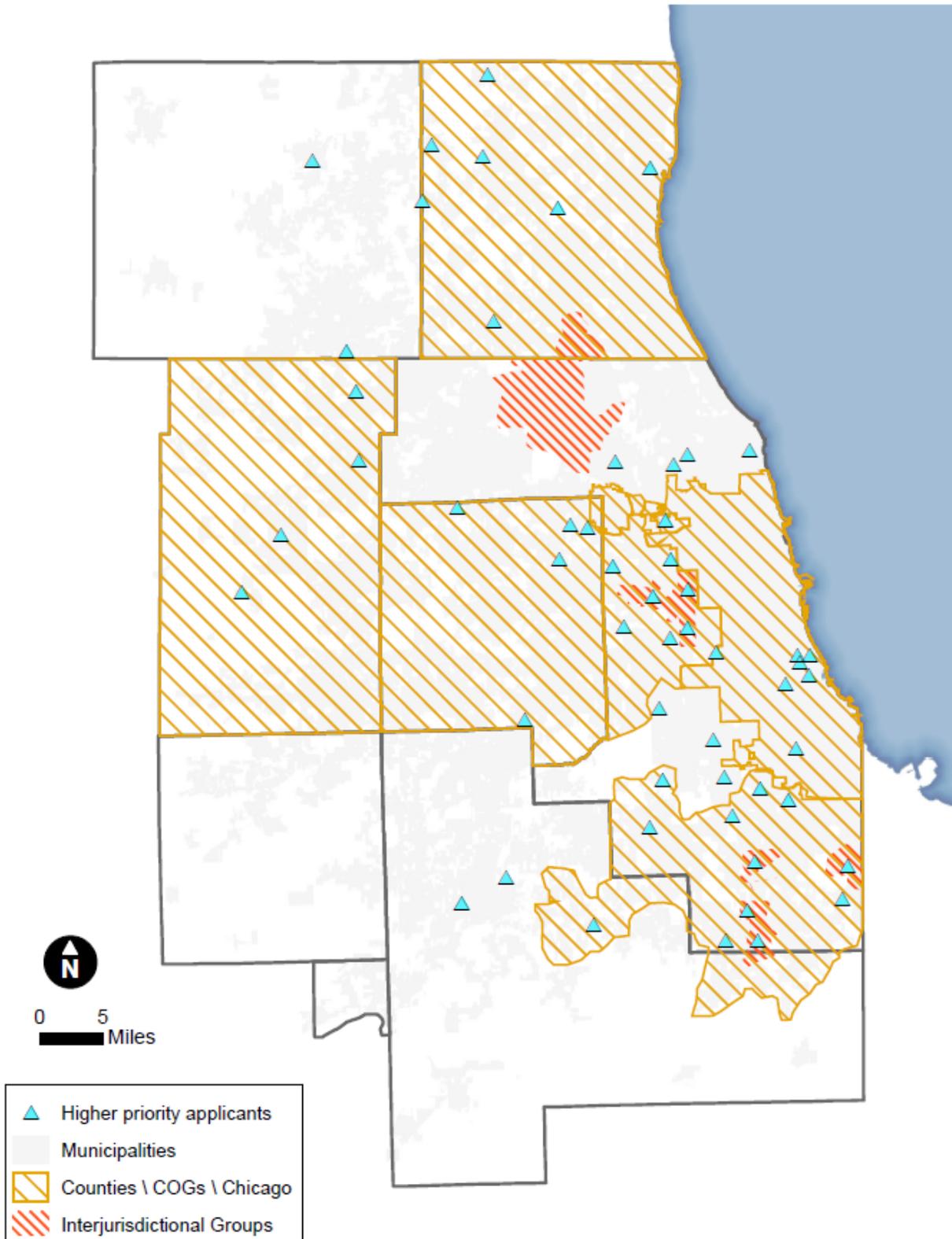
communities, including those receiving assistance in comprehensive plan development in the short term.

Other projects submitted which were considered priorities include transit-focused projects in *Kane County* and *Woodridge*. The RTA will be involved in these projects as well, and ultimately they may be good candidates for RTA funding or implementation assistance, but CMAP is interested in assisting with the development of these projects. A priority project involving planning for both transit oriented development (TOD) and cargo oriented development (COD) was submitted by the *West Central Municipal Conference*. Two projects focusing on local food are considered priorities, including a study of vacant land that could be used for small-scale food production in *Kane County* and an effort to create a local food economy in Lake County, submitted by the *Liberty Prairie Conservancy*.

Finally, many communities submitted multiple requests for assistance; while CMAP considers working with these communities to be a priority, further scoping of the assistance needed remains to be determined. The projects undertaken will generally be of the types described above – comprehensive plans, environmental planning activities, subarea plans, zoning ordinance updates, and many others. Applicants in this category include *Des Plaines, Elmwood Park, Fox Lake, Hanover Park, Hazel Crest, Maywood, Midlothian, Niles, Oak Lawn, Palos Park, Richton Park, Riverdale, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, and Waukegan*. Further discussions with these communities to further prioritize among their requests will begin immediately, and specific projects will be identified and fully scoped.

A map of all priority projects is shown on the following page.

Higher Priority Project Locations



Lower priority projects

Projects could be considered lower priority for many reasons, described further below:

- Municipalities requesting comprehensive plan updates were considered lower priority if their plans were from 1995 or later, due to the many communities with older plans that expressed interest in assistance. As noted earlier, this cutoff date will change in future years as older plans are updated.
- Priority for assistance was given to communities that had lower incomes or were smaller in size, meaning that more prosperous or larger communities were less likely to receive assistance during this first round.
- Several requests were deferred to future years to allow CMAP to prepare model approaches to certain topics. These included parking; *Barrington, Cary, Homewood*, and *Oswego* were asked to participate in CMAP's development of model parking approaches in the first year, with more localized work occurring in future years. The same also applied for sustainability plans. *Barrington* and *Hoffman Estates* were asked to wait until a future year of the program to receive assistance in creating a sustainability plan, after a standard approach had been developed.
- A number of communities submitted requests which can be accommodated with limited commitment of staff time, meaning that CMAP can provide small-scale assistance to these communities but will not be reporting progress as part of the technical assistance program. These include requests from *Crystal Lake, Harwood Heights, Spring Creek Watershed Partnership, Upper Des Plaines Ecosystem Partnership*, and *Wheaton*.
- Some projects were focused on site-specific redevelopment, rather than larger-scale planning activities. While CMAP supports many of these projects, site-specific economic development is not a major priority of the technical assistance program. Many of these proposals have been referred to the Urban Land Institute (ULI), an association of development professionals which can take on projects of this type.
- Within the above categories, several projects were related to the implementation of previously-adopted transit oriented development (TOD) plans; this type of activity is a priority of the RTA and these projects will be referred to them. Other transportation-focused projects may be good candidates for CMAP's new grant program being offered this spring.
- Finally, some projects were simply not a good fit for the local technical assistance program, as they focused on capital improvements or regional-level research, did not demonstrate the full support of affected local governments, or did not demonstrate alignment with the recommendations of GO TO 2040.

Many lower priority projects are still important, and may become higher priorities in future years of the technical assistance program. Although these projects will not receive extensive assistance now, CMAP can meet with many these applicants to discuss the potential for future assistance. A list of lower priority projects by geography is on the following page. In addition, two projects which were not geographically specific, submitted by an independent consultant and the Morton Arboretum, are also considered lower priority.

Lower priority projects by geography

Chicago	Suburban Cook County	Collar Counties
Beverly Improvement Association Blacks in Green Bronzeville Urban Development Edgewater Community Council Near Northwest Arts Council Six Corners Association Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce	Barrington Barrington Area COG Bartlett Buffalo Grove Cook County Countryside Diversity Inc Evergreen Park Glenview Harwood Heights Hoffman Estates Homewood Interfaith Housing Center Northern Suburbs La Grange Lemont Northfield Oak Forest Palatine Prospect Heights Riverside/Brookfield Skokie University Park Upper Des Plaines Ecosystem Partnership Wilmette	Big Rock Burr Ridge Cary Crete Crystal Lake Darien Downers Grove DuPage County FPD Glen Ellyn Glendale Heights Grayslake Park District Hawthorn Woods Highland Park Homer Glen Housing Authority of Joliet Huntley Itasca Kendall County Lake Bluff Lake in the Hills Libertyville Lindenhurst Lisle Mundelein Nunda Township Oswego Plainfield Port Barrington River Valley Workforce Investment Board Spring Creek Watershed Partnership Sugar Grove Tower Lakes Warrenville West Dundee Westmont Wheaton Winfield Winthrop Harbor