



**Application form:  
Community Planning Program and  
Local Technical Assistance Program**

**DEADLINE: Noon on Thursday, June 26, 2014**

This application form is online at [www.rtachicago.com/applications](http://www.rtachicago.com/applications). You may submit the form by email to [applications@rtachicago.com](mailto:applications@rtachicago.com).  
Upon receipt of application, you will receive an e-mail verifying that your application has been received.

**1. Name of Applicant:**

City of Blue Island

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

Jason Berry, AICP  
Deputy Director of Community Development  
708-396-7146  
[jberry@cityofblueisland.org](mailto:jberry@cityofblueisland.org)

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

Local government

Multijurisdictional group\*  $\longrightarrow$  Please list the members of the group (including government and nongovernmental organizations):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nongovernmental organization\*  $\longrightarrow$  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.

The City of Blue Island is a strategically-positioned south suburban community located just outside the City of Chicago's and contributes to the overall region as a gateway to the quality of life and economic fabric that characterizes the Southland. Blue Island is located at the heart of the region's transportation infrastructure, and features an extensive network of major roadways (I-57, Tri-State Tollway, Western Avenue / Dixie Highway) and convenient public-transit connections to and from the greater Chicago region via six Metra stations, Pace Bus service, and the nearby CTA. Additionally, the City is home to an equally extensive network of freight railroads, waterways, and is accessible from Midway and O'Hare airports.

Collectively, these attributes contribute to the overall development profile of Blue Island – one that recognizes the City's connectivity and accessibility to the City of Chicago, the Southland region and country overall as a unique community asset capable of enhancing the City's value and appeal towards unique economic and physical development opportunities. Acknowledging these uncommon assets, Blue Island remains well positioned for future investment and long-term, sustainable redevelopment of key commercial nodes, specifically those that overlap with the City's most frequently used transportation hubs.

In 2012, Blue Island adopted its first comprehensive plan in nearly thirty years, leveraging a number of recent and successfully designed plans that emphasize targeted areas for development and investment decisions: Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Cargo Oriented Development (COD), Economic Development, Main Street (Central Business Corridor) Development, and Brownfield Redevelopment.

A link to the comprehensive plan can be found at <http://www.blueisland.org/planning/plans-projects-grants/>

#### 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 City of Blue Island seeks technical assistance to conduct an analysis of its current development review process, specifically for project sites deemed high-interest/high-priority and feature a high level visibility due to site location(s). In seeking an analysis of the current review process – and development of recommendations to improve the process – the City aims to strengthen its ability to attract aggressive and feasible development opportunities by implementing an internal/external review and communications protocol that adds transparency to the development administration process. We envision this redesigned protocol as establishing inter- and cross-departmental input and collaboration, organizing City departments such as Building & Zoning, Planning, Public Works, Engineering, Sustainability, Public Safety and Finance. In doing so, Blue Island hopes to ensure projects receive critical analysis and input from all municipal departments positioned to influence the ability to successfully impact project execution, while also reducing inefficiencies that occur as a result of poor department coordination and unrecognized opportunities at critical planning stages.

One example of a high-profile redevelopment project with the potential to benefit from an improved development analysis is a 3.5 acre property located at Burr Oak and Vincennes Avenues. A former Jewel-Osco store, this highly visible vacancy anchors one of the primary cross-street intersections in Blue Island. Due to its size, location and association with a prominent grocer, this site generates tremendous interest from the private developer community. Incorporating an integrated development analysis process into the former-Jewel project site would help keep developer responses and potential considerations aligned with Blue Island's strategic implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Creation of a fully integrated development review process would contribute to the implementation of Comprehensive Plan strategy #10, "Improving organizational structure and implementation prioritization," where it is recognized as a needed *External Action* directed at improving the efficiency of communication and distribution of resources between the City and external stakeholders and the private development community. Implementation of a fully integrated development review process would also serve to strengthen the City's ability to identify industry and business that is sensitive to the City's existing conditions, yet proactive enough to see future potential and can assist in preparation for such changes.