



**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. 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:

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

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.

A capital improvement program to implement the Blue Island Comprehensive Plan (2012). A link to the comprehensive plan can be found at <http://www.blueisland.org/planning/plans-projects-grants/> and on the CMAP website.

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.

The City of Blue Island seeks assistance with the creation of a Capital Improvement Program – the first for the City. The need for a Capital Improvement Program was identified by our Comprehensive Plan (2012). As the plan notes, “the alignment of City funding priorities to plan strategies will directly enable implementation.”

The failure of critical infrastructure, such as two bridges that cross the Cal-Sag Channel, and community concerns for the condition of the roadway and sewer system, all point toward a need to address Blue Island’s capital requirements in a measured and efficient manner. A recent report from the City’s engineer indicated that over \$30MM would be required to bring all of Blue Island’s roadways up to “excellent” standards. As Blue Island continues to embrace sustainability goals, and with the Mayor’s announcement of “[Blue Island Going Green](#)” a triple-bottom line approach to capital planning is needed.

A Capital Improvement Program figures prominently within the implementation of the Blue Island Comprehensive Plan. Over the past year, the City has achieved successful implementation of several action items found in each strategy’s Implementation matrix. A key strategy for Blue Island’s newly elected Mayor and City Clerk was “Improve organizational structure and implementation prioritization.”

Administrative changes made by the new leadership include the creation and appointment of three Directors, responsible for Finance & Administration, Public Safety and Public Works. Each Director reports to the Mayor and is responsible for various City departments, clarifying roles and

responsibilities. In accord with the comprehensive plan, a schedule of weekly cross-departmental meetings has been established by the Directors. To further implementation, workshops have been organized with Blue Island's fourteen Aldermen to gather constituent feedback regarding issues such as land use, infrastructure, sustainability and quality of life. Additionally, the City of Blue Island participated in the Living Cities "Capital Absorption" workshop with its regional partners.

The newly appointed Director of Finance and Administration worked closely with the aldermen of the Finance Committee to align the City's annual appropriations with expected revenues, providing realistic expectations for the City's expenditures. Having operated with a deficit for several years, Blue Island closed FY2014 on April 30th positively, made possible by cutting expenditures and reducing salaries, all while revenues continue to decline for the City. The Capital Improvement Program would help the City of Blue Island usher in a new approach to capital planning for public infrastructure, emphasizing long-term sustainability, fiscal efficiencies and enhanced quality of life for our residents.

The need for a Capital Improvement Program figures prominently in several comprehensive plan strategies. Strategy #5, "Repair of reprogram bridges to reconnect the community," and strategy #7, "Undertake small-scale and low-cost infrastructure improvements" both call for prioritization within a capital improvement plan. In 2013, Blue Island was awarded grant funds to hire staff for implementation of the comprehensive plan. Strategies of focus are #1, "Reconfigure Western Avenue and Gregory Street as two way Complete Streets," strategy #2 "Consolidate commercial uses along Western Avenue," and strategy #7 "Undertake small-scale and low-cost infrastructure improvements." We have begun to see success with each strategy, most notably with strategy #1, "Reconfigure Western Avenue and Gregory Street as two way Complete Streets." Having met with legislators and IDOT, Blue Island was awarded STP funds in March 2013 to begin Phase I Engineering for Western Avenue and Gregory Street.

Blue Island has elected to adopt a calendar year Fiscal Year, which will begin January 1, 2015. As stated in our Comprehensive Plan:

The City should reference this comprehensive plan's strategies during their annual appropriations process. Linking these strategies with the annual appropriations — as well as with longer-term Capital Improvements Program (CIP) planning — will help to ensure that the City completes the recommended actions and is programming its public dollars in a strategic manner. This will also assist the City in focusing on a manageable set of shorter-term steps before moving on to other strategies or projects.

Future monitoring and continued progress within these strategies, as well as other related strategies expected to receive capital improvement investment, will benefit from the approach outlined in the Blue Island Comprehensive Plan and provided by a Capital Improvement Program.