



Village of Villa Park

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
ATTN: CMAQ Public Comment
233 S. Wacker Dr. Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

**Subject: CMAQ FY14-18 Public Comment - Villa Park North Side Sidewalk Project
And Transportation Alternatives Program Consideration**

Dear Doug Ferguson:

Villa Park has read the Draft CMAQ Program and understands that CMAP has not recommended the North Side Sidewalk Project as part of the \$285 million five-year program that improves air quality, mitigates congestion, and helps implement GO TO 2040. We offer comments based on our ongoing efforts to implement a Pedestrian Project that meets or exceeds the CMAQ criteria. We also observed that no Pedestrian projects are currently recommended for CMAQ Funding.

The Village of Villa Park is proposing to install sidewalks in the "North Side" area of the Village: a nine square block residential area of Villa Park bound by Armitage Avenue on the north, North Avenue (IL 64) on the south, Harvard Avenue on the west, and Ardmore Avenue on the east. There are no sidewalks in the project area, except along North Avenue; thus there is no safe, viable means of pedestrian access to existing pedestrian facilities on bordering streets. The proposed sidewalks will provide access to numerous commercial destinations, businesses and institutions, a 16 acre park, the Salt Creek Greenway Trail and the Villa Park Metra station. This project connects them all.

We are aware that the CMAQ Selection Committee did not recommend the project for the 2014-2018 CMAQ Program when it evaluated, discussed and developed projects for submittal to the MPO Policy Committee. We request re-consideration for a number of reasons, including that we believe there should be at least one Pedestrian Project in the Program. We requested \$ 130,000 in CMAQ funding, which is only 12.5% of the total estimated project cost of \$ 1,039,000.

Considerations used for developing the CMAQ program would have included the air quality cost/benefit ratio in each program category and other technical evaluations. CMAP's project analysis indicated: -\$ per ton NOx \$ 5,347; \$ per trips eliminated \$ 612; \$ per 1,000 VMT eliminated \$ 838; \$ per Kilogram VOC eliminated \$ 3,915.

While air quality is a CMAQ goal, there are other benefits and technical reasons we feel the project should be considered for the Program:

Appropriate consideration given to project readiness - The Village has demonstrated commitment to this project by dedicating 100% local funds (\$55,500) towards Phase I Engineering. We worked aggressively over the past year to complete initial scoping studies and prepare Group I Categorical Exclusion documentation. The Village submitted a draft Project Development Report (PDR) to the Illinois Department of Transportation in June 2013 and will submit the final PDR for Design Approval this month. We commit to prepare design improvement plans forecast for completion in May, 2015 and construction forecast to start in August, 2015. The Village has already obtained STP funds (which in Du Page County can only be used for construction) for construction of the sidewalk improvements. We reiterate our request of \$130,000 of CMAQ funds is limited to Phase 2 Design Phase 3 Construction Engineering.

Mode mix - This effort's foundation is in the Village's 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update, confirming community livability and "complete streets" among its goals. The project area encompasses approximately 350 homes that house approximately 1,000 residents. The improvements accommodate pedestrians that currently must walk in the street in the project area; keep more motorized vehicles off the streets due to increased pedestrian usage; provide direct connections to numerous land uses including - retail, commercial, business, mass transit, and park / recreational. This project also connects the 1,000 residents via North Avenue to the Salt Creek Greenway Trail, one half mile east; and to the Villa Park Metra Station via Ardmore Ave., one half mile south.

Sub-regional equity - Villa Park, and other smaller government agencies throughout the region, deserve consideration, despite CMAPs general intent to focus on larger projects. We see there are fifty projects recommended in the CMAQ FY14-18 Program, with an average total cost of over \$ 15 mil., average request of \$ 8.3 mil, and average recommended funding amount of \$5.7 mil. The smallest recommended amount is \$87,400 so we believe there is recognition of, and room for, smaller projects such as ours.

Achieving focused program – This project is scheduled for implementation in 2015, and Villa Park is fully committed to completing all tasks to complete the project. GO TO 2040 is recognized by the project's enhancement of safety and walkability in a "livable community" that is "healthy, safe and walkable".

Recommended program projects have to be eligible under federal authorizing legislation – Villa Park has done everything necessary to allow the project to meet federal criteria, guidelines and approvals. Villa Park has a strong history of completing numerous state and federally funded projects on schedule and within budget.

We're aware that our project was ranked using the total project cost of \$ 1,039,000. We believe Villa Park's commitment to the project was demonstrated by independently obtaining funding for construction. We ask that this be noted by the Project Selection Committee. Villa Park has funded initial studies, two CMAQ applications and the Phase I Report / PDR. Villa Park has been and remains committed for the full amount of any local match.

We know that projects that are "ready to go" can receive funding. Other projects are constantly being delayed for various reasons. The existing unobligated balance of the CMAQ funds, beyond our project's strong characteristics, could possibly provide sufficient funds to place our North Side Sidewalk project in the CMAQ FY 2014-2018 Program now.

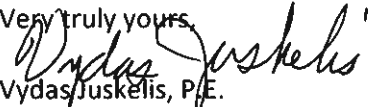
We request that the CMAQ FY 2014-2018 Program include this project, but as TAP is now an option, we also request consideration from that funding source as well. We understand through its FY 2013-14 TAP, CMAP plans to fund bicycle and pedestrian facilities totaling \$17.5 million. We realize there are no upper or lower dollar limits on the cost of each project, but are aware that "only a small number of facilities are expected to be funded".

Our project meets all TAP criteria, and is located entirely within CMAP's service area. The Village is providing at least 20 percent of the total project cost using non-federal sources, and these matching funds were committed when the project was submitted to CMAP.

Villa Park can show that this project is defined in the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which calls for pedestrian accommodation throughout the community. The document, in Chapter 5 - Pedestrian Circulation, calls for "linkages to be established in and between neighborhood areas" and further states "pedestrian ways are encouraged". This goal is specifically focused on connections to North Avenue. The Plan also indicates "there should be an emphasis on universal accessibility". This project is also called for in the Villa Park Business District Master Plan, 2001, which established a goal of increasing pedestrian access and linkages to business districts.

The Village, for the North Side Sidewalk Project, developed and submitted a draft Project Development Report (PDR) to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in June 2013 and will submit the final PDR for Design Approval this month. In addition, all necessary environmental clearances (biological and special waste) have been obtained from IDOT.

Thank you for reconsidering our request for CMAQ funding and TAP funding. We are ready to use the CMAQ and / or TAP funds now! Please contact me at 630-834-8505 if you need any additional information that may influence your decision to approve funding.

Very truly yours,

Vydas Juskelis, P.E.
Public Works Director

Cc: Jesse Elam