2017 Community Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program
Call for Projects

Program Guide
The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) announce the availability of funding and technical assistance for transportation, land use planning and implementation projects throughout the region.

While the RTA and CMAP have separate technical assistance programs, applicants may apply for either/both with a single application accessible at www.rtachicago.org/applications. Through this coordination, the agencies are able to offer planning and implementation assistance to an expanded base of eligible applicants, align all efforts with the Regional Transit Strategic Plan, the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan and the emerging priorities of ON TO 2050, and provide interagency expertise, technical assistance, and capacity.

Eligible Applicants
Municipalities, counties, townships, councils of government (COGs)/municipal associations, groups of two or more municipalities, and the RTA Service Boards (CTA, Metra, Pace) located within CMAP’s seven-county region (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties) are eligible to apply for assistance. Nongovernmental organizations in the region are eligible to apply for CMAP assistance but are required to have support from the local government in which their project will take place. A nongovernmental organization must partner with a governmental organization to submit a transit-related project application to the RTA (please see the FAQs for more details).

Eligible Projects
The funding programs encourage applicants to undertake a balanced, coordinated, and integrated approach to land use and transportation planning benefitting local communities while maximizing the use of the RTA transit system and advancing the implementation of the Regional Transit Strategic Plan, GO TO 2040, and emerging 2050 priorities. Eligible projects are generally one of the following types:

- Transit-oriented development (TOD) plans
- Corridor, subregional, or neighborhood mobility plans
- Comprehensive plans
- Downtown, neighborhood, or subarea plans
- Site-specific plans
- Multimodal transportation plans or bicycle and pedestrian plans
- Sustainability plans
- Water resource management plans
- Housing plans, including Homes for a Changing Region plans
- Planning priorities reports
- Targeted planning assessments
• Planning studies on special topics, such as economic development, natural resources, or other issues covered in GO TO 2040 and emerging priorities in ON TO 2050*

Implementation
• Zoning code updates (municipality-wide or sub-area (e.g. TOD areas) and Unified Development Ordinances
• Developer discussion panels (TOD areas, transit corridors, or otherwise)
• Transit neighborhood mobility improvement plans
• Developing special funding districts
• Training for elected or appointed officials
• Capacity-building training for staff
• Innovative implementation projects

Please see the project category descriptions at the end of this guide for more details. Funds available through these programs are for planning purposes only. Capital, engineering, operating, staffing, land acquisition, or equipment costs are not eligible. Acceptance of projects is dependent on funding availability.

*Projects that do not have direct transportation or land use components are eligible, but CMAP’s ability to pursue these projects depends on its success in securing outside funding.

Local Match and Local Commitment
Local match depends on which type of project you are submitting. The RTA and CMAP require a local financial match for larger projects such as comprehensive plans, TOD plans and corridor plans, while some smaller project types, including many implementation project types, may not require a match. Match requirements are based on the economic and demographic characteristics of the area served, with lower match rates for smaller communities and those with lower tax bases or median incomes. Match rates range from 5%-20%. CMAP and the RTA are happy to provide match rate information to communities upon request. Further information on match requirements is found at the end of the FAQ section. Applicants are notified if a local match is required prior to project approval. Regardless of whether a match is required, significant local commitment of time and effort is needed to make a project a success, and applicants should be prepared to answer questions from the funding agencies about their overall level of commitment.

Project Evaluation and Selection Process
These programs are competitive, and both agencies expect to receive more project applications than can be accommodated in the 2017 Program. Each application is initially screened for program eligibility based on the following criteria:

• Project is located in the seven-county CMAP region
• Applicant is eligible
• Project type is eligible
• Project does not duplicate previous work (i.e., projects that duplicate other recent efforts will not be selected)

Eligible projects are then evaluated based on the following criteria that are shared by CMAP and the RTA:
• Project aligns with the recommendations of GO TO 2040, emerging ON TO 2050 priorities, and the Regional Transit Strategic Plan
• Project is feasible and there is illustrated commitment to implement
• For implementation projects, the project must implement a recommendation from an adopted plan (TOD plan, comprehensive plan, etc.). Priority for implementation assistance is given to previous RTA and CMAP grantees, but others are also eligible to apply.
• Feedback and support from the community, county, COG, and transit Service Boards

CMAP and the RTA also have criteria that are unique to their programs:

RTA. All transit-related planning and implementation projects are evaluated and, if selected, conducted through the RTA’s Community Planning program. Transit/TOD projects must be located on the existing transit system. Transit service planning projects are restricted to the Service Boards (Metra, Pace, CTA) only to apply. Municipalities interested in transit service planning should contact the appropriate Service Board(s) to apply for funding. All applicants are encouraged to obtain a letter of support from the impacted Service Board by emailing a brief description of their project to the appropriate Service Board contacts. Requests for letters of support must be submitted by June 2, 2017. Please email your request to:

  - CTA – Gerald Nichols, g nichols@transitchicago.com
  - Metra – David Kralik, dkralik@metrarail.com
  - Pace – Lorraine Snorden, Lorraine.Snorden@pacebus.com

CMAP. Projects without an explicit transit focus are evaluated and, if selected, conducted through CMAP’s LTA program. Projects undertaken by CMAP are also prioritized in part based on community need, with communities that have lower incomes, smaller tax bases, or smaller sizes receiving priority. CMAP also prioritizes multijurisdictional applications and seeks to maintain a geographic balance in its LTA projects.

Once all applications are submitted, the RTA and CMAP determine which agency each application should go to and then notify applicants of the decision. Other partner agencies including Counties, COGs, and transit agencies are involved in the decision-making process when appropriate. During the review process, the RTA and CMAP staff (or representatives) will contact each applicant to ask questions regarding the details of the proposed project. Project acceptance is dependent on funding availability. Most accepted projects should expect to commence within six months.

Program Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Call for projects released</td>
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| May 16 | LTA and Community Planning Technical Assistance Symposium Roosevelt University (430 S. Michigan, Chicago) 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
RSVP to Brandon Nolin (bnolin@cmap.illinois.gov or 312-386-8752) |
| May 18 | Application Information Session 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.  
Attend virtually at www.rtachicago.org and click “Live Meeting” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June 2</th>
<th>Transit-related project applicants make contact to transit agency for letter of support</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 29</td>
<td>Applications due before <strong>noon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>RTA / CMAP staff and representatives notify applicants which agency will evaluate their application</td>
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<tr>
<td>July-August</td>
<td>RTA / CMAP staff and representatives review applications and contact applicants with additional questions on their application</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Preliminary project selection recommendations released</td>
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<td>RTA conducts a public comment period on the recommended projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>CMAP Board approves recommended LTA projects; successful applicants notified</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RTA Board is notified of recommended Community Planning projects; successful applicants notified</td>
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**How to Apply**

Applicants should complete the application form available at [www.rtachicago.org/applications](http://www.rtachicago.org/applications).

**Additional Information**

For questions regarding the Community Planning or the Local Technical Assistance programs or regarding your application, please contact:

**Community Planning program**
- Michael Horsting, AICP
- Regional Transportation Authority
- Principal Analyst, Local Planning and Programs
  - [horstingm@rtachicago.org](mailto:horstingm@rtachicago.org)
  - 312-913-3159

**Local Technical Assistance program**
- Tony Manno
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Senior Planner
  - [tmanno@cmap.illinois.gov](mailto:tmanno@cmap.illinois.gov)
  - 312.386.8606

Please find detailed information on the Community Planning and Local Technical Assistance programs at [www.rtachicago.org/applications](http://www.rtachicago.org/applications) and [www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/lta/call-for-projects](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/lta/call-for-projects).
**Project Category Descriptions**

**PLANNING PROJECTS**

**Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plans**
TOD plans are based on the basic tenets of transit-oriented development; mixed land uses, higher residential densities, and pedestrian-friendly environments. These plans produce recommendations for an appropriate mix of land uses and transportation improvements to support increased transit ridership within a ¼- to ½-mile radius of a rail station, major bus station, or along a major bus corridor. They also address urban design elements, including streetscape improvements, and recommend multi-modal mobility improvements to and within the station area. Emphasis should also be placed on an equitable planning process, the identification of the health benefits of implementing TOD plan recommendations, and an in-depth understanding of the parking utilization in the study area. If your community has an existing TOD plan, but it is more than ten years old or out of touch with current market realities or best planning practices, the RTA will work with you to update the plan with a focus on updating the market assessment, development program and implementation strategies. More information on TOD is found on the RTA’s Transit-Oriented Development Page. Examples include completed TOD plans for Bartlett and Lombard.

**Corridor, Subregional, or Local Access Improvement Plans**
These plans create recommendations for improved transit opportunities by identifying options to enhance local mobility or improved access within a specific study area. Access improvement plans identify ways to improve multi-modal access to existing or planned transit routes and facilities and identify opportunities to enhance transit-related infrastructure. Possible improvements investigated include amenities such as sidewalks, bus shelters, bus pads, and multimodal transit centers, as well as roadway improvements to reduce traffic congestion. Multimodal access and circulation, and/or wayfinding and signage, may be addressed. These plans also typically include land use, zoning, and development components to spur economic development within the study area. These plans can also identify options to solve the "last-mile problem" for reverse commuters by recommending improved connections among the transit services used by reverse commuters, such as Pace Vanpools or community transit services, and identifying increased roles that employers can take to improve transit opportunities within the study area. More information on these types of plans is found on the RTA’s Community Planning website. The Harlem Avenue Corridor Study and 95th Street Corridor Study are good examples of completed projects.

**Comprehensive Plans**
Comprehensive plans establish a long-term vision for a community and provide a policy framework intended to help the community achieve that vision and community goals. Typically a yearlong process, comprehensive planning involves the public and community stakeholders (business owners, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, staff, etc.) in conversations about challenges, opportunities, priorities, and aspirations for the future of the community. Early stages of the planning process involve an inventory and assessment of the community existing conditions including population, housing, economic development, transportation, land use, and natural resources, and may include other topics relevant to individual communities such as stormwater management, health, historic preservation, food and farming, or community character. Subsequent stages involve developing and discussing planning scenarios, preparing future land use plans and maps, and establishing effective policies and implementation strategies for moving forward. Communities with specific stormwater management challenges and an interest in integrating green infrastructure and land use based solutions within the comprehensive plan are also encouraged to apply. Sample projects include comprehensive plans for Blue Island, Lakemoor, and North Aurora.
**Downtown, Neighborhood, or Subarea Plans**
These plans typically address specific area or topical needs or challenges rather than the comprehensive approach used for comprehensive plans. They may focus on economic development and revitalization, housing, retail, industry or a combination of these topics for a discrete area of a community. While the planning process for these smaller-scale plans is similar to that for comprehensive plans, they result in more specific recommendations for the particular topics and areas of interest. Plans that will result in projects that are consistent with the LEED-ND rating system are encouraged. Sample projects include the [Riverside Central Business District Plan](#), the [Fairmont Neighborhood Plan](#), and the [Chinatown Community Vision Plan](#).

**Site-Specific Plans**
These plans would address a specific, locally controlled site in a community rather than a subarea or corridor. This effort is meant to help communities identify the type of land use most appropriate for a single redevelopment site based on previous planning work, local zoning regulations, and existing market data and analysis. A site-specific plan will result in a basic understanding of what type of use is most appropriate on the site, where development should be located on the site, and how to estimate potential development costs. This type of plan is appropriate for communities interested in redeveloping a municipally-owned site, in which case the project may include developing an RFP for the subject site.

**Multimodal / Active Transportation Plans or Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans**
These plans address non-motorized and transit-based transportation needs, often with the goal of improving and increasing access and use of alternatives to automobiles. Beginning with an inventory of existing resources and conditions, the planning process engages users and the public in conversations that lead to the identification of problem or conflict locations, the development of feasible solutions, and a plan for implementing the identified solutions. Topics can include route planning and infrastructure, intersections, stations and transfer points, signage and signalization, streetscapes and furnishings, and access to people with disabilities. Examples of this type of projects include the [Wheeling Active Transportation Plan](#), the [South Elgin Bicycle and Transportation Plan](#), and the [University of Illinois at Chicago Multimodal Transportation Plan](#).

**Sustainability Plans**
Sustainability plans serve to identify and forward the environmental goals of a community. Such plans can address a wide range of potential topics depending on a community’s specific interests and issues, including land use and development, transportation, energy, water resources, waste management, greenhouse gas emissions, education, and many others. The planning process is similar to that of a comprehensive plan, with a detailed existing conditions analysis and thorough public participation process, followed by the development of recommendations. Implementation of a sustainability plan is of particular importance, since making progress in reversing current environmental trends is essential to long-term sustainability. One unique element typically included in a sustainability plan to help spur implementation is the development of “baseline” and “target” indicators. Baseline indicators, which are developed as part of the existing conditions analysis, serve to evaluate current conditions related to a topic (for example, a community’s current waste diversion rate or amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced). Target indicators are essentially quantifiable goals for the future (such as a percent increase in waste diversion or reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by a target year). Setting quantitative targets is a way to ensure that implementation strategies are effective and that the community is held accountable for making progress toward its sustainability goals. Resiliency plans, which would also fit within this category, are focused on preparing a community for potential challenges due to changes in the frequency and intensity of climatic events. Many such plans in the region are likely to address
stormwater management and flooding challenges. Sample projects include sustainability plans in Park Forest and Niles.

**Water Resource Management Plans**
Communities seeking to improve water resource management, including stormwater management and urban flooding, improved water quality, green stormwater infrastructure, local plan and policy updates, and other planning related activities, will be eligible for CMAP’s LTA assistance. Stormwater management and urban flooding projects are restricted to Cook County communities due to funding limitations. For plans focused on water quality, projects within watersheds that have Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved watershed-based plans are preferred; however, assistance shall not be restricted to these communities. Watershed-focused organizations may apply with demonstrated support from the community or communities where the project will occur. Proposals for watershed implementation and water quality focused projects will be reviewed jointly by Illinois EPA and CMAP staff. Examples of this type of project include Evanston’s Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan, ordinance work on the Ferson-Otter Creek in Elgin, and the Northwest Water Planning Alliance’s Drought Preparedness and Response Plan.

**Housing Plans, including Homes for a Changing Region Plans**
*Homes for a Changing Region (Homes)* projects develop long-term housing policy plans for one or more municipalities. These plans aim to create a balanced mix of housing types, serve the needs of current and future residents and workers, and enhance the livability of participating communities. Plans recommend policies that address current and avoid future gaps between demand and supply of housing available to all income, tenure and age groups. Since housing markets do not conform to municipal boundaries, applications involving groups (4-5) of collaborating municipalities will receive priority. In these cases, CMAP will create plans for each municipality individually and for interjurisdictional collaboration. CMAP collaborates with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC) and Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) whenever possible to provide Homes technical assistance. Applications that request training for a County, COG, or nongovernmental organization to perform technical tasks associated with the Homes process after the initial project is complete will also receive priority. For more information about Homes, please visit [www.cmap.illinois.gov/homes](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/homes).

**Planning Priorities Reports**
Communities with limited planning experience, few professional planning staff, or several competing priorities may not be certain what type of project they should pursue. In this case, CMAP recommends starting with a planning priorities report to help identify the community’s needs and priorities. Planning priorities reports involve interviews with local stakeholders, review of past planning work, and analysis of local data. Communities that know they have planning needs but are not certain exactly how to solve them are good candidates for planning priorities reports. Examples include recent projects in Richmond and Steger.

**Planning Studies on Special Topics: Economic Development, Natural Resources, or Other Issues Covered in GO TO 2040 and Emerging Priorities in ON TO 2050**
Other types of projects are also eligible for LTA assistance. These specialized projects may focus on economic or workforce development (such as the Franklin Park industrial areas plan), parking (such as the Hinsdale parking management plan), studies of shared services (such as the Lower Fox River Partnering Initiative), integrated health, and land use and transportation plans. Also eligible are targeted assessments, which would look at one or more specific topics within an existing plan. Links to various types of specialized projects are available on the [LTA home page](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta) of CMAP’s website. Potential sponsors of projects of these types are encouraged to contact CMAP to discuss their project idea before submitting an application to determine eligibility.
IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

Zoning Code Updates
Clearly-defined land control regulations minimize uncertainty for developers. They can also streamline development review processes while promoting the community’s goals for design, form, and character. Additionally, ordinance updates can minimize administrative confusion by outlining all standards, requirements, and guidelines in a user-friendly, easily understood manner. CMAP and/or the RTA will work with local government staff to create land use controls and review processes that make investment in the community more attractive to potential developers and residents seeking to improve their property. The project team will assess the current regulations and existing conditions in each chosen community and deliver a revised zoning ordinance, unified development ordinance (UDO), or other appropriate land control document. Zoning updates can be completed for an entire municipality, sub-area, for a specific TOD area, or for a specific section of the ordinance. More information on approaches to revising zoning for a TOD area can be found in the RTA’s TOD and Zoning Report, and sample TOD zoning code updates can be found in Brookfield and Winthrop Harbor.

Developer Discussion Panels
Developers bring a realistic outlook to the future of the real estate market. Facilitating discussions early in the redevelopment of a parcel will allow the community and potential developers to outline needs, goals and incentives while working together to utilize land to its highest and best use. For municipalities that have adopted long-range land use plans or have participated in a corridor plan with identified opportunity sites, but have had difficulty connecting with the development community, assistance will be provided to solicit guidance and advice from development experts through a half-day discussion panel. This panel discusses the development climate and potential strategies to prepare for and attract development in a specific subarea, corridor, or particular site. Multiple bordering municipalities along a corridor that has been studied may apply jointly for a discussion panel. Additionally, if a community owns and controls a development-ready parcel of property, RTA and/or CMAP staff can assist with the preparation of an RFP. Examples of summary reports from previous developer discussion panels are available for Des Plaines and River Grove.

Transit Neighborhood Mobility Improvement Plans
These plans help municipalities identify ways to improve access to existing transit bus routes and rail stations for residents and commuters in a targeted neighborhood or station area. For these plans, RTA staff will work with the local applicant and other agencies to examine existing modes of access to the transit station and develop recommendations for improvement. Possible improvements include amenities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signal heads, bus shelters, bus pads, and station amenities such as benches, wayfinding signage, etc. Other recommendations could include the implementation of additional modes to further advance connectivity, particularly in suburban settings, to transit stops and stations, such as offering bike share, carpool, car share, and discounted ride share programs to the residents. The plan will include an implementation strategy that prioritizes and suggests phasing for the recommendations. These plans can be used as a basis for grant applications to pay for recommended improvements. Further information on pedestrian access improvement plans is found in the Making Way Access to Transit Guide. Sample completed plans are found in LaGrange, Aurora and Robbins.

Special Funding Districts
In order to transform the ideas from their TOD plan into reality, municipalities often establish economic development funding districts. This usually includes creating a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, Special Service Area (SSA), or Business Improvement District (BID) within the plan’s study area. These tools are a great way to help finance the implementation of completed plans including transit
infrastructure investment. The RTA will help municipalities with planning for these districts/areas in their community with the type of district that best implements the recommendations of their plan. Consultant tasks will include assisting the municipality with proposing an ordinance to enact the district and with completing the public process required for ordinance adoption.

Training for Elected or Appointed Officials
GO TO 2040 notes that the building blocks of local planning for livable communities are high-quality plans, ordinances and other regulations that are consistent with adopted plans, and trained and educated decision-makers. Plan commissioners, zoning board members, and elected officials regularly make decisions that determine the built environment of their communities, and it is important for them to understand their legal responsibilities related to planning as well as their role in shaping the overall region’s future. CMAP currently offers trainings to plan commissions after the completion of LTA projects but is now also accepting applications for stand-alone trainings of decision-makers on planning issues and best practices important to the community.

Capacity-building Training for Staff
The task of developing staff expertise and improving staff capacity to incorporate best practices in their job functions can be difficult, particularly when constrained by available resources or time. Trainings can be a helpful tool to assist staff development and facilitate improved performance in planning, zoning, and implementation activities. CMAP is now accepting applications for stand-alone trainings to assist local government staff in building local capacity to pursue and achieve their goals.

Innovative Implementation Projects
Implementation projects are the focus of the Community Planning program and an increasing emphasis of the LTA program. While the primary types of implementation projects are outlined in this section, the RTA and CMAP recognize that applicants may have different implementation needs that will help move an adopted plan forward. The RTA and CMAP are open to taking on new, innovative implementation projects through this program that can improve land use and transportation. If you have an idea for an implementation project that is not listed here, please contact the RTA or CMAP to discuss before submitting an application.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **Who is funding this program?**
   Funding for this program comes from a combination of federal, state, and local funds from the RTA and CMAP.

2. **Is a funding match required?**
   It depends on the type and size of the project proposed. Please see page 2 of this program guide and contact the RTA or CMAP with any questions. Applicants are notified prior to project approval if a local match is needed.

3. **What types of projects have the RTA and CMAP funded in the past?**
   The RTA has funded TOD Plans, transit improvement plans, corridor studies, TOD zoning code updates, developer discussion panels, and transit access improvement studies. A full list of previously funded RTA planning projects is found at http://www.rtams.org/rtams/planningProgram.jsp?id=1.

   CMAP has funded comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, unified development ordinances, housing policy studies, corridor plans, neighborhood/subarea plans, sustainability plans, water
conservation studies, and many other specialized plans. A full list of previously funded CMAP planning projects is available at [http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta/](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta/).

4. **Can I submit more than one idea?**
   You may submit more than one project proposal. Please submit a separate application form for each project idea you are proposing.

5. **What projects are NOT eligible?**
   Project phases such as land acquisition, engineering, or capital investment are not eligible through either program. These programs focus on planning and small-scale implementation activities.

6. **Can I request money to cover staff time at my organization?**
   These programs do not offer funds for staff time. Any financial commitment from CMAP or the RTA is dedicated to hiring external contractors/consultants or providing RTA or CMAP staff assistance.

7. **If I applied to either the RTA or CMAP in past years and was not selected, can I apply this year?**
   Yes, you are able to apply again. Please note that this year will be quite competitive, so an application that was not selected in a previous year is not guaranteed to be selected this year. Feel free to reach out to the RTA or CMAP to discuss how you could improve your application this year.

8. **If I have received assistance in past years, can I apply again?**
   Yes. CMAP and the RTA encourage applicants to submit applications that seek to implement existing plans, particularly if CMAP or the RTA assisted with preparing those plans in the first place. You may also submit applications for completely separate projects as well. However, please make sure that your application does not duplicate work done in the recent past – it will not be selected.

9. **How competitive is the application process?**
   Very competitive. Higher demand is anticipated this year because the 2016 call for projects was cancelled. Only 25% of applications to CMAP were able to be funded in past years.

10. **How are projects evaluated?**
    Projects are evaluated based on criteria derived by the RTA and CMAP. The RTA will evaluate and select transit-related projects for the Community Planning program, while CMAP will evaluate and select projects for the LTA program that are not explicitly transit-focused. Criteria are described in the main text of this document.

11. **How do CTA, Metra and Pace get involved in transit-related projects?**
    Each transit agency potentially impacted by the study is invited to participate. Additionally, it may be appropriate to involve CMAP in an RTA-led project and vice versa.

12. **Do other external groups get involved in these projects?**
    Yes – other government or nongovernmental groups are often involved in projects, either serving on steering committees or reviewing materials. Both RTA and CMAP also contract with outside groups for assistance on some projects. Your application is strengthened by identifying any partnerships that you already have with external groups.
13. Who is responsible for managing the project?
A CMAP or RTA staff member or representative will be assigned to each project to assist with project development and management. Please note the local grantee will be responsible for overall project management. Administrative and invoicing responsibilities will vary depending on the assigned funding agency (CMAP or RTA) and procurement method selected.

14. How is it determined which agency manages the selected projects?
Once the applications are received, the agencies will discuss the alignment of the applications with each agency’s interest. Projects with a direct transit focus are more likely to be managed by the RTA; those without transit components will go to CMAP. You do not need to specify at the time of submitting the application whether you think your project is a better fit for the RTA or for CMAP – this will be decided during the application review.

15. How do CMAP and the RTA decide whether to provide selected communities with staff assistance, consultant assistance or other types of assistance?
During the project review and evaluation process, staff will contact each applicant to gain a better understanding of their project and determine what type of assistance is most appropriate. After selection, the agencies confirm with project sponsors whether the project will be accomplished through assigning staff time, providing grant funding, conducting a consultant selection process led by CMAP or RTA, or other options. The final decision on type of assistance is made jointly by the funding agency (CMAP or RTA) and the project sponsor.

16. I submitted an application by the June 29 due date. What are the next steps for project selection?
Staff will begin a review of the applications immediately following the receipt of all submittals. While staff make the final project selections, staff considers feedback from all three Service Boards (CTA, Pace and Metra) and other agencies as appropriate. During this time, staff will also contact applicants to ask questions as necessary. The applications are qualitatively reviewed by the set of criteria listed in the application. You will be notified by staff from the appropriate agency regarding selection outcomes. Subsequent steps for projects admitted into the program will depend on which agency funds the project. A detailed timeline is included in the program guide.

17. What is the anticipated timeframe for projects?
Once a project is selected into the program, project development begins. Our goal is to initiate most of the projects within six months and complete each project within eighteen months of project initiation.

18. Who do I contact if I still have questions?
Please contact Michael Horsting (horstingm@rtachicago.org) or Tony Manno (tmanno@cmap.illinois.gov) for any questions.

19. What if I am not sure what type of project my community needs? We know we need planning assistance, but am not sure whether it is a comprehensive plan, corridor study, etc.
Please describe the problem that you are trying to solve to the best of your ability. We will work with you to determine what planning product best meets your community’s needs. Please see the description for the Planning Priorities Reports, which may be a good product for your community to do first.
20. My project does not relate directly to transportation, and I saw the note that projects of this type are contingent on CMAP receiving additional funding. What is the likelihood of this happening? Is it worth my time to submit an application for these types of projects?
CMAP continually applies to non-transportation funding sources to supplement our transportation sources. CMAP does encourage applicants to put in requests for projects related to housing, economic and community development, natural resources, and similar topics, for three reasons:

a. The application form is simple, and it will not take you much time to do.
b. CMAP does think there is a good chance it will get additional funding.
c. Having firm examples of good non-transportation project requests may even increase our chances of receiving funding by demonstrating that there is a demand for this kind of planning assistance.

21. I am a nongovernmental organization and would like to submit an application. You require support from the relevant local government – can you explain what that means?
First, please note that nongovernmental applicants are only considered for inclusion in CMAP’s program. The RTA does not provide funding to nongovernmental groups – if you are specifically interested in RTA funding, please work with a relevant local government to have them submit an application on your behalf.

CMAP does work with nongovernmental applicants, but only with the explicit support of any local government affected by the project. If you are a nongovernmental group proposing a project in a suburban municipality, please provide a letter of support for your project from the municipality. If your project affects more than one municipality, please provide letters from each of them.

If your project is in the City of Chicago, we require a letter of support from any Alderman whose ward is affected by the project. We also require that you contact the City of Chicago’s Department of Planning and Development (DPD) or the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) to inform them of your application and to discuss how your proposal would interact with other ongoing planning initiatives in the City. You do not need to procure a letter of support from DPD or CDOT, but they will assist CMAP in selecting projects in the City of Chicago. Please contact Bob McKenna, Assistant Commissioner of DPD, Robert.McKenna@cityofchicago.org and Susan Mea, Assistant Director of Transportation Planning at CDOT, Susan.Mea@cityofchicago.org.

22. How is local match calculated?
This is assessed on a sliding scale: many communities will have a required match of 20%, but communities that are smaller or have lower tax bases or incomes will have a lower match requirement. Approximately half of the region’s communities will have a reduced match requirement, which will vary from 5% to 15% based on the community’s circumstances.

For large municipalities and Counties, projects that affect only one part of the jurisdiction will calculate their match rates based on the demographic and economic conditions of the affected area. In general, match rates are calculated based on the best available data for the area affected by the project. Please contact Tony Manno (tmanno@cmap.illinois.gov or 312.386.8696) at CMAP for more information about your community’s match rate.
23. Will applicants need to have the local match in-hand at the time of the application?

No – CMAP and the RTA expect applicants to have the local match available at the time that the project starts, but they are not required to have it immediately available upon submittal of an application. The funding agencies are flexible with project start dates, and can work around local budget cycles. The RTA will invoice for local match payments once a project completes.