

Wheels In Motion

By TOM ROBB Journal & Topics Reporter | Posted: Wednesday, May 22, 2013 12:11 pm

Niles village officials are beginning the process of making the village more bike and pedestrian friendly.

The Niles Multi-Modal Transportation Plan Steering Committee held their first meeting on Thursday, Apr. 25 to create a pedestrian and bicycle transportation plan for the village.

Part of the Niles 2030 Comprehensive Plan includes creating improved pedestrian and transportation corridors.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is paying the entire cost for Sam Schwartz Engineering to be the village's consultant on the project, Village Planner Bruce Sylvester said.

Schwartz will need to produce a plan that includes an implementation plan, timeline and budget within the next 12 to 18 months.

Sylvester said if the project can be completed in less than 12 months, there is the possibility it would be included in the village's fiscal year 2014 budget.

Immediate plans are to begin interviewing stakeholder groups that would identify areas where there are gaps in pedestrian and cyclist access and where good bike and pedestrian routes could go.

Sylvester said public input sessions would also be held similar to the Niles 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

In 2010, the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC) adopted a long-term bicycle plan. Active Transportation Alliance Planner Marissa Dolin said the NWMC plan includes regional routes designed to connect popular destinations between municipalities.

Included in the NWMC plan are bike routes through Niles, the Golf Road corridor and Howard Street-Sibley corridor.

Other neighboring communities with bike or transportation plans include Glenview, Des Plaines, Park Ridge, Chicago, Wheeling, Mt. Prospect and Palatine.

Dolin said some of those transportation plans are long-range ventures that have not all been fully articulated.

Most bike plans will articulate an achievable vision for bikes and identify short and long term goals to see those achieved.