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. Upon receipt of application, you will receive an e-mail verifying that your application has been received.

1. **Name of Applicant:** Cook County Department of Planning and Development and Maine Township

2. **Main Contact for Application (please include name, phone number and email):**
   Elaine Romas, Special Assistant – Legal Affairs, (312)603-1016, elaine.romas@cookcountyil.gov

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

   ____ Local government

   ____ Multijurisdictional group*  
   Please list the members of the group (including government and nongovernmental organizations):  
   Cook County Dept of Planning and Development  
   Maine Township

   ____ Nongovernmental organization*  
   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.)

_X___ My project involves preparation of a plan.
____ My project helps to implement a past plan.
_X___ 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.
__X__ 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.

This project is located in portions of unincorporated Cook County within Maine and Northfield Townships. The area includes approximately 40,000 residents. Maps are attached.

and

The unincorporated areas are the white areas. They are mostly in the south (middle) of Northfield Township and in the northern portions of Maine Township.

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 Cook County Department of Planning Development and Maine Township (the Applicants) seek assistance to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the Unincorporated Areas of Cook County within Maine and Northfield Townships. The Applicants seek assistance to engage affected residents and property owners, as well as neighboring municipalities, residents and property owners, in the development of such a Plan.

The Applicants seek to develop a strategy to bring the unincorporated areas into conformance with the codes and regulations of surrounding municipalities. Those municipalities support this application since conformance will better the area.

By way of background, the April 2012 Cook County Unincorporated Task Force Report determined that the County’s long-term goal should be the elimination of all unincorporated land by moving to an environment where all areas of Cook County are contained within a municipality. Before an
consideration can be given to such a goal, there needs to be more information about the area and the effect such incorporation might have. While it is supposed that there are benefits to incorporation, there are also negative impacts and the County and Maine Township wish to understand what issues are facing the areas and what the effect of incorporation might have on an area that is providing a valuable resource. Issues to be researched are infrastructure issues (storm sewers, access to transportation, condition of housing in the area, and general demographics.)

To make progress towards this goal, the Task Force recommended the standardization of service provisions, including codes and regulations. CMAP supported the Task Force recommendations. The Task Force included leaders from CMAP, the Civic Federation, the Metropolitan Planning Council, and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

While Glenview and Northfield Townships have not sent letters or support, they are in conversation with the County and Maine Township and are interested in how this study moves forward.

The link to the Report is http://blog.cookcountygov.com/2012/04/30/task-force-recommends-eventual-elimination-of-unincorporated-cook/
June 23, 2014

Randy Blankenhorn
Executive Director
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

Re: Cook County, Maine and Northfield Townships’ Comprehensive Plan for Unincorporated Areas
RTA / CMAP 2015 Call for Projects

Dear Mr. Blankenhorn:

On behalf of the Cook County Department of Planning and Development, I am pleased to submit this request for Local Technical Assistance. The County and co-applicants Maine and Northfield Townships seek assistance to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the Unincorporated Areas within these townships.

By way of background, the April 2012 Cook County Unincorporated Task Force Report recommended the standardization of service provisions, codes and regulations. CMAP supported this effort to enhance public service provision. We look forward to the opportunity to working with CMAP to engage affected residents and properties both within the unincorporated areas and neighboring municipalities. If you need further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact Elaine Romas, Special Assistant – Legal Affairs, at (312) 603-1601 or elaine.romas@cookcountyil.gov

Sincerely,

Michael Jasso
Director
Department of Planning and Development
June 23, 2014

Mr. Randy Blankenhorn
Executive Director
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

Re: Cook County, Maine and Northfield Townships’ Comprehensive Plan for Unincorporated Areas
RTA / CMAP 2015 Call for Projects

Dear Mr. Blankenhorn:

On behalf of Maine Township, I am pleased to submit this request for Local Technical Assistance. The County and co-applicants Maine and Northfield Townships seek assistance to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the Unincorporated Areas within these Townships.

By way of background, the April 2012 Cook County Unincorporated Task Force Report recommended the standardization of service provisions, codes and regulations. CMAP supported this effort to enhance public service provision.

We look forward to the opportunity to working with CMAP to engage affected residents and properties both within the unincorporated areas and neighboring municipalities. If you need further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact Elaine Romas, Special Assistant – Legal Affairs, at (312) 603-1601 or elaine.romas@cookcountyil.gov

Sincerely,

Carol A. Teschky,
Supervisor
June 26, 2014

Randy Blakenhorn
Executive Director
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

Re: Cook County, Maine and Northfield Townships’ Comprehensive Plan for Unincorporated Areas
RTA / CMAP 2015 Call for Projects

Dear Mr. Blakenhorn:

On behalf of the City of Des Plaines, I am pleased to submit the request for Local Technical Assistance submitted by the Cook County Department of Planning and Development, Maine and Northfield Townships to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the Unincorporated Areas within these townships.

The standardization of codes and regulations in unincorporated areas will greatly enhance the quality of life of residents in our community. We look forward working with all affected parties to engage affected residents and property owners both within the unincorporated areas and our neighboring municipalities.

If you need further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact George Sakas, Community & Economic Development Director at 847-391-5306 or gsakas@desplaines.org.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Matthew J. Bogusz
Mayor
June 24, 2014

Randy Blankenhorn
Executive Director
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

Re: Cook County, Maine and Northfield Townships’ Comprehensive Plan for Unincorporated Areas RTA / CMAP 2015 Call for Projects

Dear Mr. Blankenhorn:

On behalf of the Village of Niles, I am pleased to support the request for Local Technical Assistance submitted by the Cook County Department of Planning and Development, Maine and Northfield Townships to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the Unincorporated Areas within these townships.

The standardization of codes and regulations in unincorporated areas will greatly enhance the quality of life of residents. We look forward working with all affected parties to engage affected residents and property owners both within the unincorporated areas and our neighboring municipalities.

If you need further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact Village Manager Steven Vinezeano at 847-588-8007 or scv@vniles.com.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Andrew Przybylo
Mayor
April 30, 2012

The Honorable Toni Preckwinkle
President
Cook County Board
118 North Clark Street, Room 537
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear President Preckwinkle:

Thank you for the opportunity to examine the issue of service provision to unincorporated areas of Cook County. During the last five months, members of the Task Force have had conversations with the relevant County departments, including the Sheriff’s Office, the Cook County Highway Department, the Department of Building and Zoning, and the Cook County Forest Preserve District, as well as impacted municipalities. Enclosed you will find our initial analysis and recommendations, which have the aspirational, long-term goal of the ultimate elimination of unincorporated areas within Cook County.

To make progress towards that goal, it is imperative that the County work in a collaborative fashion with municipalities and residents. While some of these conversations have begun, in many cases there is much more to learn about the unique characteristics of each unincorporated parcel. To that effect, the Task Force would like to request that our work be extended for an additional six months to continue those discussions, facilitate additional public engagement, and assist with creating an implementation effort. The Task Force would utilize the additional time to reorganize into two subcommittees focused on the largest components of this report: policing services and infrastructure/housing issues.

In the course of our work, the Task Force came across important issues that did not fall strictly within our scope but that the Task Force believed warrant specific attention and additional investigation. These issues are raised here for your information and possible future action:

- Several sub-regions in the County have moved to a more metro-style policing system by coordinating or consolidating selective policing functions. Sheriff Tom Dart also pointed out to us that major urban areas like Los Angeles have successfully consolidated police services and experienced service improvements and efficiencies in the process. The Sheriff’s Office should explore whether it is feasible for the Sheriff’s Police to contract with local municipalities, particularly those facing challenging budget situations, to provide police services in place of those provided by the current municipal police, subject to a municipality’s interest and approval. Any new contracts negotiated with municipalities must ensure that the municipality fully pays the costs of any service provision by the Sheriff.
• Certain communities within Cook County are relying on the Sheriff’s Police to provide many services which most communities pay for out of their own municipal police budgets. A noteworthy example of this reliance is the provision of police patrol services in the Village of Ford Heights by the Sheriff’s Police at the Village’s request. The County receives a nominal payment from Ford Heights, but otherwise the costs of these services are not reimbursed. We believe that the County should be reimbursed by incorporated communities (or the State – see below) for the full cost of any police patrol services provided by the Sheriff’s Police at the request of a municipality or determined to be necessary by the Sheriff’s statutory obligation to serve as the “conservator of peace” in Cook County. Ultimately, the inability of municipal governments to provide an adequate level of services – including specifically public safety services -- is a State responsibility, not the County’s. Accordingly, the County should pursue reimbursement for any of these foundational patrol expenses from the State or, alternatively, seek to have the State Police assume these responsibilities.

• During our review of policing services, we became aware of the existence of separate police forces - the Stroger Hospital Police, the Oak Forest Hospital Police, and within the State’s Attorney’s office. The County should review the operations of all police departments within the County with an eye towards consolidation.

Finally, the Task Force discussed the potential consolidation of the Sheriff’s Police and the Cook County Forest Preserve District Police. Sheriff Tom Dart suggested that his department could take over all police-related activities within the Forest Preserve District and that the remaining Forest Preserve responsibilities could be turned over to a reduced force of Forest Preserve Rangers. However, Cook County Forest Preserve Superintendent Arnold Randall told our Task Force that reducing staffing within the Forest Preserve District would harm service levels, particularly since the overlap of responsibility related to response to any criminal activity is minor. According to the Forest Preserve District, more than 90% of the work of the Forest Preserve District Police is "self-initiated" and includes actions that are not typically performed by traditional police departments, including: Enforcing State fishing laws, responding to theft of endangered and other species, monitoring locked access points, and participation in prescribed prairie burns. We reached no consensus on this possible consolidation, but encourage the County to consider potential consolidation opportunities in the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to examine the provision of services in unincorporated Cook County. We believe that many constructive improvements can be made in service provision in the future and look forward to the opportunity to provide additional input.

Sincerely,

Members of the Unincorporated Cook County Task Force
Background
Approximately 62 square miles of the total area of Cook County is unincorporated land that is not part of the Cook County Forest Preserve District. This represents 6.5% of the 945 square miles within the entire county. As of the 2010 Census, unincorporated Cook County had 98,200 residents, or roughly 2% of the 5.2 million people living within the entire county.

In addition to standard, county-wide services, Cook County government provides “municipal”-type services to unincorporated residents, most notably building/zoning and police patrol services. While the County receives some general revenues from unincorporated areas, these revenues, in addition to fees from individual unincorporated property owners such as building permit fees, do not fully cover the cost of providing these services.

The financial gap that remains in the unincorporated areas between costs and revenues is covered by general County revenues, which are paid by incorporated and unincorporated residents alike.

Furthermore, any resources that are allocated to continue the provision of municipal-type services by Cook County are not available to fund the County’s three primary functions – the hospital system, the jail, and the court system. As the County continues to face budgetary pressures, now is the time to consider what changes, if any, to current service delivery models are the most sustainable over the long term.

For these reasons, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle convened this Task Force in December 2011 and asked us to investigate the provision of services to unincorporated Cook County. President Preckwinkle also asked us to provide a list of recommendations regarding how the County could address this disparity without detrimentally impacting services to unincorporated residents.

Analysis and Conclusions
First and foremost, this Task Force recommends that the County’s aspirational, long-term goal should be the elimination of all unincorporated land such that every resident of Cook County is also a resident of a municipality. All the strategies and other actions that follow are designed to help make progress towards that objective. Accomplishing this goal, or even making progress towards it, will lead to a number of benefits for the County and residents alike. These include shifting to more localized service delivery models, partially alleviating the budget pressures facing the County, allowing the County to prioritize its primary functions, and facilitating infrastructure improvements.

The Task Force recognizes that there are many challenges to the short-term attainment of this goal and, in fact, it could continue to be a challenge over many years. However, based on our initial review of the current services provided to unincorporated residents and the associated impediments to immediate annexation of all unincorporated parcels, the County should undertake the following strategies to move closer to the desired outcome. It is important to note that the recommendations put forth here are not directed
at or designed to impact any other unit of local government without the involvement and consent of that governmental entity. Furthermore, these strategies should only be implemented to the extent that they lead to long-term cost reductions for the County.

The recommended courses of action are broken down into three categories:

1) Those that are possible to undertake immediately and could be incorporated into the County’s FY2013 budget.
2) More complex initiatives that will take time to implement but should be attainable in the near-term (before or as part of the County’s FY2014 budget process).
3) Longer-term actions that require additional study.

Broadly speaking, the Task Force found two key items of significance. First, public safety costs make up the vast majority of expenses incurred by the continued provision of “municipal”-type services by the County. The other is that the state of infrastructure in unincorporated Cook County often does not correspond with the standards of nearby communities. These circumstances go beyond streets, sidewalks, and sewers; many parts of unincorporated Cook County also contain large, multi-family rental housing developments that bring additional challenges.

Moving towards an environment where all residents of Cook County also reside in a municipality will ensure there is local control over local decisions, which is desirable from a public policy perspective. Local control is inherently more accountable than the County trying to centrally administer “municipal”-type services in disparate geographic areas. Achieving this goal will require the support and cooperation of communities throughout Cook County.

Of the roughly 98,000 residents of unincorporated Cook County, more than 86,000 live in 25 distinct parcels or areas (see attachment 1). By successfully applying the following strategies to these more heavily populated parcels in addition to the many less populated parcels, the County can significantly decrease the need for the County to provide “municipal”-type services and the associated costs.

**Immediate Recommendations**

- Encourage municipalities to annex small unincorporated parcels with less than 100 residents. There are more than 400 individual parcels that fit this description, with a total aggregate population of roughly 3,600 residents. This effort should focus on parcels that are 60 acres or less, which can be voluntarily annexed by a willing municipality using a simplified procedure set forth in State Law. Due to the disparate layout and the variety of the built environments within such pockets of land, annexation should lead to efficiencies in the delivery of services.
  - This effort will involve identifying municipalities willing to consider the annexation of small parcels and then working with them individually to overcome existing challenges on a parcel-by-parcel basis.
o Any annexation process, regardless of the size or population of the parcel in question, should engage the affected residents and property owners.

o It should be possible to spur the annexation of many of these kinds of parcels without a significant expenditure of resources.

o To the extent that annexation occurs, all affected County departments should be required to analyze and quantify as much as feasible how the reduction in the unincorporated parcels to be serviced could lead to efficiencies or cost reductions in each department’s operations.

- Improve and increase code enforcement in highly populated areas of unincorporated Cook County to increase the future attractiveness of these areas for municipal annexation.
  
  o Special focus should be given to older multi-family housing developments. Every effort should be made to bring these developments up to current code standards and to maintain them at that level on a year-to-year basis.
  
  o The County should also consider expanding current code enforcement activities to include one-to-three family rental properties. An increasing number of smaller units are being rented and neighborhood viability (not to mention increased attractiveness for future annexation) depends on keeping them in good condition.
  
  o Additional staffing will be required to achieve these objectives. Inspection fees and increased fines for non-compliance should cover the added manpower and other costs involved.

- Require that plans for any new development in unincorporated Cook County must be submitted to the closest contiguous municipality for advisory reviews. The review will inform the County whether a proposed development meets the standards of the nearby municipality or not. While current procedures allow for municipalities to object to zoning variations, that step does not occur until the end of the application process. Taking this additional step will make future annexation of new development more likely. This requirement should be implemented in a way that aligns with the goal of encouraging near-term or eventual annexation while avoiding an undue burden for the developer, property owner, or nearby municipality.

- Properly categorize and streamline police services provided by Cook County.
  
  o Review the allocation and categorization of Sheriff’s Police expenses between incorporated and unincorporated Cook County. The Sheriff’s Police provide a variety of services to both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. Clearly understanding, from a budget point of view, which services are provided only to unincorporated Cook County and which services are provided County-wide is important. Even if it is possible to eventually eliminate all unincorporated areas, there will still be a need for the Sheriff’s Police
Department and its budget should better represent which functions are specifically tied to unincorporated services and which are required regardless of the amount of unincorporated land in Cook County.

- Focus on the delivery of essential services while shifting select, non-central functions to more appropriate offices, agencies, or organizations.

- Analyze infrastructure needs in key populated areas of unincorporated Cook County and prepare in rough form (including projected costs) a prioritized infrastructure needs list.
  - Creating this list will better position the County to pursue future federal funding opportunities and should also be considered during the allocation of County resources, such as CDBG funding.
  - By performing necessary infrastructure upgrades, the County can increase the likelihood that certain areas, including those that are currently the most problematic, can be considered for annexation in the future.
  - The County should explore the feasibility of a program whereby it could commit to front-fund a specified percentage of infrastructure improvement in exchange for a corresponding agreement from property owners and/or an annexing municipality to pay the remaining share (a special service area or a special assessment funding mechanism could be utilized as part of a cost-sharing arrangement).

- Seek funding for an implementation team to support the actions outlined above and below.
  - The civic organizations involved in this effort commit to assist the County with obtaining funding from local foundations. However, it will be important to the County to also contribute an equitable amount to this effort to reflect its commitment to and investment in the work.
  - The implementation effort will require qualified and experienced staff to engage in negotiations with municipalities and residents to determine what actions are necessary to facilitate annexation of a particular unincorporated area.
  - The implementation staff must be knowledgeable in the two key areas identified above: public safety service provision and infrastructure improvement.
  - Once the implementation effort is fully operational, we recommend that the County establish a steering committee to oversee this work on a longer-term basis and report back to the President and the members of the County Board of Commissioners.
Near-Term Recommendations

- Focus on spurring the annexation of unincorporated parcels with more than 100 residents and/or larger than 60 acres.
  - This will involve a more robust and individualized analysis of the existing challenges and, potentially, greater expense than the small parcels recommended for immediate annexation.
  - Each larger unincorporated area is unique and will require inducements and other considerations specific to its circumstances. The role of the implementation team will be critical in terms of identifying and articulating with specifics those circumstances and conditions.
  - In order for large-scale annexation to be possible, all sides must be willing to make concessions and/or offer incentives. Municipalities must be willing to “grandfather” existing infrastructure conditions, and create clear, feasible rules for unincorporated residents as to when non-conforming buildings, developments, or infrastructure are required to be upgraded. Such rules need to appropriately balance public health and safety needs against individual property rights so as to avoid discouraging purchases and new investment in such properties. Uneasy residents in such areas could, perhaps, be offered limited-term property tax abatements which are phased out over a year or two (similar to the phase-out period for the County’s commercial and industrial property tax incentives) to help these residents adjust to the higher property tax burden within a municipality.
  - To the extent that annexation occurs, all affected County departments should be required to analyze and quantify as much as feasible how the reduction in the unincorporated parcels to be serviced could lead to efficiencies or cost reductions in each Departmental operation.

- In order to encourage residents in unincorporated areas to agree to the actions recommended above, where such agreement is necessary, and to cover the cost of providing services in the interim, the County should consider creating fee-for-service models where appropriate and otherwise adjusting current revenue models to fully cover the related costs. Other than a tax on property, the County's unincorporated areas have no other robust tax base sufficient for covering existing costs.
  - If the County revisits the concept of Special Service Areas and/or special assessments to provide broad-based support for these services and necessary infrastructure upgrades through additional property tax levies, such additional levies must be approved by a majority of the both the registered voters and property owners within the affected area.
**Long-Term Recommendations**

- Where annexation does not prove to be possible, the County should explore entering into intergovernmental agreements with adjoining municipalities for police patrol, code enforcement, and other services.
  - As envisioned, municipalities would be fully reimbursed for providing services at levels that are equal or better to those provided currently, but only if the reimbursement requested is lower than the current cost to the County of providing the service. If those conditions cannot be met, the County should not proceed with these types of agreements.

- Ensure that no new major construction occurs in unincorporated areas that does not meet common municipal standards and, at a minimum, involve a prior advisory review from adjacent municipalities as described earlier in these recommendations.
  - This will involve upgrading existing County building, zoning, property maintenance and fire codes to require that future subdivisions and other major developments be fully urbanized and include sanitary/storm sewers, a non-well water supply system, streets with curbs and sidewalks, etc.
    - Of these areas, a particular opportunity would be the adoption of the International Building Code published by the International Code Council. The IBC is more closely aligned to suburban building codes than the current County code, which is based on the City of Chicago Building Code.
  - This should be implemented in such a manner that it does not unduly hamper or otherwise preclude development opportunities, particularly of large parcels, in the future, provided that those developments obtain an advisory review from the adjacent municipality.

**Task Force Membership**

Adrienne Archia*
Dave Bennett, Executive Director, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
Randy Blankenhorn, Executive Director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Philip “Flip” Corboy*
Woods Bowman*
King Harris, Chair, Metropolitan Planning Council
Laurence Msall, President, The Civic Federation
Barry Nekritz*
Scott Saef*
Timothy Schneider, Cook County Commissioner
Deborah Sims, Cook County Commissioner
Carol Teschky, Supervisor, Maine Township
Jeffrey Tobolski, Cook County Commissioner
Henderson Yarbrough, Mayor, Village of Maywood

*Serving as a private citizen
**ATTACHMENT 1**

**Sizeable Population Parcels in Unincorporated Cook County**

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<th>Parcel</th>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<td>North Lake, Franklin Park</td>
<td>16, 17</td>
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Total 86,457