June 24, 2014

Local Technical Assistance Program
CMAP (Attn: Daniel Olson)
233 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

RE: GO TO 2040 Local Technical Assistance Program – McHenry County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Application

Dear Grant Review Committee,

On behalf of McHenry County and our project supporters I am pleased to submit this application for Local Technical Assistance for development of a Multi-County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Included with this application are original letters of support from the McHenry County Board, McHenry County Economic Development Corporation, McHenry County Workforce Network Board, and McHenry County College. The McHenry County Council of Government is sending a letter of support directly to CMAP addressed to Mr. Randy Blankenhorn.

The Department of Planning and Development looks forward to participating in the development of the Multi-County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with our project partners and the CMAP Local Technical Assistance team.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dennis Sandquist
Director, McHenry County Department of Planning and Development
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: County of McHenry

2. Main Contact for Application (please include name, phone number and email):

Dennis Sandquist, Director of Planning and Development  815-334-4548

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):

• McHenry County Board
• McHenry County Economic Development Corporation
• McHenry County Workforce Network Board
• McHenry County Council of Government
• McHenry County College

____ 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.)

___ 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.
___ 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.

McHenry County - countywide.

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.)

McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan:


McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan:

https://www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-j-z/transportation/transportation-plans/long-range-transportation-plan

McHenry County Board 2013-1015 Strategic Plan:

https://www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-a-i-county-board/mchenry-county-strategic-plan
REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

McHenry County and its partners are requesting CMAP assistance with the development of a Multi-County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Rockford Regional Economic Development District (RREDD) has applied for Federal Economic Development Agency (USED) funds to develop the CEDS. CMAP technical assistance is required to identify McHenry County projects, prioritize them and evaluate the economic impact of those projects for the McHenry County portion of the CEDS.

In order for the region to achieve sustainable prosperity and future growth, we must adapt to the changing economy and plan for continued economic growth. The CEDS will align our stakeholders behind a common vision and implementation plan. The plan will address: industry sectors, cluster and supply chain development, employment opportunities, workforce housing needs, increased educational opportunities and quality of life issues. By creating a common vision and path embraced by all stakeholders, the CEDS will guide stakeholders within our region to target investments, building on existing regional assets to create a supportive regional economic system for business investment and innovation, increased international trade and exports, the creation of good jobs, and improved quality of life.

The CEDS Plan will be submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. This will help qualify the region for Federal economic development funds. The CEDS will align with Federal initiatives for developing our future workforce (Dept. of Labor), enhancing Foreign Direct Investment (Dept of Commerce) and the recently awarded Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnership (Dept of Commerce). The CEDS will also help the County meet its requirements under the Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The main priority is to develop a skilled workforce that helps local and regional businesses compete in the global economy. Congress and the Department of Labor encourage local and regional planning to develop strategies that will attract and retain employers and skilled workers. In order to do this, the region requires a system that allows for worker’s ease of mobility as well as efficient and effective transportation options for businesses.

This project will build on and directly implement the goals of the CMAP GO TO 2040 Plan, McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, and McHenry County Board 2013-1015 Strategic Plan.

CMAP GO TO 2040 Plan

According to the GO TO 2040 Plan, “The metropolitan Chicago region is among the nation’s few global economic centers. GO TO 2040 seeks to maintain and strengthen this position.” (p.36) The Plan continues by stating “The region’s infrastructure is extensive, but aging, and problems such as traffic congestions damage our economy every day. Our economy is historical diverse and strong, but we have had limited job growth in the past decade and incomes have stagnated.” (p. 36) In order to support the goal for Economic Innovation, the GO TO 2040 Plan includes implementation actions to form coalitions around the region’s vital industry clusters to organize regional strategies and obtain public and/or private funding. “The region should use its various clusters of regional specialization as an overarching organizing framework for future coordination, collaboration, and proactive initiatives, including organizing around potential funding opportunities...” (p.187)

The GO TO 2040 Plan also recommends performing a “drill down” analysis into specific established industry clusters, including freight/logistics, advanced manufacturing, and biotech/biomed, as well as emerging clusters such as green technology and energy to identify infrastructure, workforce and financing needs, present strategies for coordination and communication, and make policy recommendations (p.187).
McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan

The McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan includes a goal to “Develop and undertake a bold new program directed at substantially increasing the number and type of primary jobs in the County.” In includes the following specific objectives:

- Reduce the proportion of McHenry County residents travelling outside the County for employment.
- Identify areas for office/research/industrial areas and business parks with access to regional transportation infrastructure.
- Improve quality of education and workforce development programs.
- Work with municipalities, townships, and quasi-governmental entities to help retain existing businesses and industries and attract new industries.

McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

Goal 6 of the McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan is to Link Transportation and Land Use. “The Plan prioritizes economic development by supporting existing development and industry. The Plan seeks to leverage transportation infrastructure to promote job creation and link residents to jobs. An objective to this goal is to identify ways transportation investments could either benefit areas of lower employment levels or strengthen areas with high unemployment levels.”

McHenry County has some of the highest commuting times in the region and in the nation. A plan to bring appropriate economic development to McHenry County would help reduce the labor/jobs imbalance. Providing employment opportunities within the County will reduce commute times, and from a transportation management perspective, reduce travel demand on our congested roadway network.

McHenry County Board 2013-2015 Strategic Plan

The McHenry County Board 2013-2015 Strategic Plan identifies four key strategic issues. Issue four is Economic and Workforce Development. According to the Plan, “Economic and workforce development efforts promote the creation of new jobs and ensure that the human resources in the county are adequate to meet the needs of both new and existing businesses.” To help address this Key Strategic Issue, the McHenry County Board 2013-2015 Strategic Plan includes a detailed Action Task to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for McHenry County.

Conclusion

The proposed Multi-County CEDS directly supports implementation of the GO TO 2040 Plan, McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, and the McHenry County Board 2013-2015 Strategic Plan. CMAP’s technical assistance will provide the type of economic planning and sector analysis recommended in the GO TO 2040 Plan. CMAP’s assistance will also support the goals of fostering economic development, linking land use and transportation, promoting housing, and reducing traffic congestion as expressed in the McHenry County 2030 Comprehensive Plan and McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan and will directly contribute to achievement of the McHenry County Board’s Strategic Plan Action Task to Action Task to develop a comprehensive economic development strategy for McHenry County.
June 20, 2014

Randy Blankenhorn
CMAP
233 S Wacker Drive
Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606

Re: Support for the Technical Assistance Request from the County of McHenry

Mr. Blankenhorn:

The McHenry County Board’s Strategic Plan calls for the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Now, with the convergence of the strategic planning efforts of the partner organizations outlined in the County of McHenry’s application for Local Technical Assistance, this is the perfect time for McHenry County to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The partner organizations in McHenry County collaborate regularly on economic development, workforce for today and into the future, as well as other foundation building effort. The development of a CEDS will create a formal plan on which to execute on the strategies outlined in CMAP’s Go To 2040 plan as well as strategies specific to McHenry County.

CMAP’s planning and technical expertise will help ensure McHenry County’s successful completion of its CEDS. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Tina R. Hill, Chairwoman
McHenry County Board
June 20, 2014

Randy Blankenhorn
CMAP
233 S Wacker Drive
Suite 800
Chicago, IL  60606

Re: Support for the Technical Assistance Request from the County of McHenry

Mr. Blankenhorn:

With the convergence of the strategic planning efforts of the partner organizations outlined in the County of McHenry’s application for technical assistance, this is the optimal time for McHenry County to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

These partner organizations collaborate regularly on economic development, workforce for today and into the future as well as other foundation building projects. The development of a CEDS will create a formal plan on which to execute on the strategies outlined in CMAP’s Go To 2040 plan as well as strategies specific to McHenry County.

CMAP’s planning and technical expertise will help ensure the successful completion of McHenry County’s CEDS.

Best Regards,

Pam Cumpata, President
pcumpata@mcedc.com
Cell 847.682.3555
June 23, 2014

Mr. Randy Blankenhorn  
CMAP  
233 South Wacker Drive  
Suite 800  
Chicago, IL 60606  

RE: Support for the Technical Assistance Request from the County of McHenry

Dear Mr. Blankenhorn:

McHenry County College (MCC) supports the application from the County of McHenry for Technical Assistance from CMAP for the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the County of McHenry.

As the only public institution of higher education in McHenry County, MCC works closely with the partner organizations outlined in the County of McHenry’s application to insure the educational opportunities necessary for continuing economic growth and workforce enhancements occur. McHenry County College sees the value in the County developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that would include the College and would help inform the College as to the needed new educational opportunities that would serve our district.

CMAP’s planning and technical expertise will help the County and all of the partners successfully complete the County of McHenry’s CEDS.

Sincerely,

Vicky Smith, Ed.D.  
President
June 20, 2014

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

Re: Support for the Technical Assistance Request from the County of McHenry

Mr. Blankenhorn:

I write on behalf of the McHenry County Workforce Network and Workforce Network Board. We support McHenry County’s application for technical assistance for the development of a Multi-County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The strategic planning efforts of the partner agencies and organizations are described in McHenry County’s application for technical assistance. There is no better time to bring together these partners resources as one through a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The McHenry County Workforce Network serves job-seekers with career direction and skills attainment, along with employers seeking suitably trained employees, and partner organizations. Together, we are an excellent resource for McHenry County and the surrounding communities. We understand and that Workforce Development is Economic Development and builds a strong, growing community.

Our partner organizations work together regularly on economic development, workforce issues, and other foundation building projects. The development of a CEDS will formalize the plan on which to execute on the strategies outlined in CMAP’s Go To 2040 plan as well as strategies specific to McHenry County.

CMAP’s planning and technical expertise will help ensure the successful completion of McHenry County’s CEDS.

Best Regards,

Jeffery Poynter
Director, McHenry County Workforce Network Board

David Niehus, Chairman
Jeffery Poynter, Director