Application form:  
Community Planning Program and  
Local Technical Assistance Program  

DEADLINE: Noon on Thursday, June 25, 2015

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: Chicago Department of Transportation

2. Main Contact for Application:

Name: Luann Hamilton

Title: Deputy Commissioner Division of Project Development

Phone number: 312-742-1987

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

___x___ Local government

___ Multijurisdictional group* Please list the members of the group (including government and nongovernmental organizations):

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

___ 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, RTA, or CCDPH 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, RTA, or CCDPH.)

__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.
__x__ My project has direct relevance to public transit and supports the use of the existing transit system.
____ My project is a bicycle, pedestrian, or active transportation plan in suburban Cook County.
____ My project is not directly related to transportation or land use, but implements GO TO 2040 in other ways.

5. Local Match Requirement (please initial to indicate you are aware of the local match requirements):

I am aware that a local match will be required for most projects, and understand that if my project is selected it is up to the project applicant to contribute a local match. (See the program guide for further details on local match requirements.)

__x__ Yes, I understand that applicants will be required to contribute a local match.

6. 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.

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will develop a local access plan to enhance east-west transportation access between the neighborhoods along the newly constructed Bloomingdale Trail to neighborhoods, job centers, and active transportation corridors to the east using innovative implementation projects. These enhancements will provide connections across major barriers that currently separate the two areas of the City, including Interstates 90/94, the Metra UP-N and UP-NW viaducts, and the Chicago River (see attached map).

7. 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. Program 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.)

East-West Access to the North Branch Industrial Corridor

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) will develop a local access plan to enhance transportation access between the neighborhoods along the newly constructed Bloomingdale Trail to neighborhoods, job centers, and active transportation corridors to the east using innovative implementation projects. These enhancements will provide connections across major barriers that currently separate the two areas of the City, including Interstates 90/94, the Metra UP-N and UP-NW viaducts, and the Chicago River. The confluence of these major barriers creates challenges for people walking, riding their bikes, or accessing transit to travel east-west in the area. The viaducts are narrow,
poorly lit, and not ADA-compliant, while the bike network consists solely of painted bike lanes or marked shared lanes and may be considered high-stress for many potential users. There are opportunities, however, as Metra’s Clybourn Station is located less than one half-mile north of the Bloomingdale Trail’s eastern trail head, the potential Ashland Avenue bus rapid transit line runs north-south through the project area, and the historic Cortland Street Bridge will be reconstructed in kind in the coming years.

These enhancements are needed for two primary reasons: 1) to provide improved transportation options for residents within the study areas to and within the emerging job centers located in the north-half of the North Branch Industrial Corridor, including the Clybourn Corridor Planned Manufacturing District (PMD), the Elston Corridor PMD, and the Goose Island PMD, and 2) to connect residents to popular commuting and recreational trails located on either side of the major barriers referenced above; the newly constructed Bloomingdale Trail on the west and the Lakefront Trail on the east.

The plan’s recommendations will improve access to existing transit and will include improvements to the existing walking, biking, transit and roadway networks by following the City of Chicago’s Complete Streets Policy and Pedestrian First Modal Hierarchy.

Of note, the plan will connect low-income and minority residents who live along the west end of the Bloomingdale Trail to the job centers and recreation opportunities to the east. The Bloomingdale Trail runs directly through the West Town, Logan Square, and Humboldt Park community areas. Roughly one-quarter of the households in these communities do not have access to a car, 30% of residents commute to work via transit, and 9% of residents commute to work via walking or biking. All three community areas have substantial Hispanic populations and Humboldt Park has a sizable African-American population. Humboldt Park residents have a median household income of $30,580, which is below the citywide median household income of $47,270. Improved non-motorized transportation connections to points east will improve mobility for these residents currently walking, biking, or taking transit to work.

Providing better and more reliable access to recreational opportunities could strengthen ongoing efforts to boost the health indicators for all residents, and specifically the low-income and minority residents living nearby the Bloomingdale Trail. For example, several studies referenced in a Northwestern University School of Medicine report indicate that African-American (23%) and Hispanic (22%) high school students in Chicago have higher overweight prevalence rates than White students (12%), while the childhood obesity rate is high in both Humboldt Park and West Town.

Providing better and more reliable non-motorized access to existing and emerging job opportunities in the north half of the North Branch Industrial Corridor could also strengthen ongoing efforts to lower the unemployment rates in these communities. The current unemployment rate in the three community areas is 8.6%, which is higher than the City of Chicago rate (6.9%). Meanwhile, the recent emergence of high tech offices and businesses (such as UI Labs and Amazon) in the Goose Island PMD has increased the diversity and number of jobs located between the two study areas. Additionally, ongoing efforts to repurpose properties in the Clybourn Corridor and Elston PMDs along the Chicago River have increased interest in redevelopment opportunities in this area. In December 2013, North Branch Works and the Delta Institute were awarded an EPA grant to develop a plan for this 40-acre site with a goal of maintaining the industrial land use and having new uses be consistent with the PMD. Regardless of

2 https://data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/Public-Health-Statistics-Selected-public-health-in/iqnk-2tcu
future land uses, these redevelopment and employment opportunities will likely attract residents both east and west of the Industrial Corridor.

One of the plan’s major components will be working with neighborhood groups to advance existing community based efforts to improve transportation access and equity. CDOT will work with various community partners, including the East Humboldt Park Neighborhood Association, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, West Bucktown Neighborhood Association, Bucktown Community Organization, Wicker Park Committee, and other groups within one-mile of the Bloomingdale Trail. CDOT will also work with economic development groups in the Industrial Corridor and the PMDs, major employers, and community groups in Lincoln Park to improve transportation access from the east as well.

Ultimately, the plan will identify short-, mid-, and long-term recommendations for safer and more comfortable transportation access with an emphasis on improved walking, biking, and transit accommodations. CDOT will partner with several public sector stakeholders responsible for transportation improvements to identify opportunities for collaboration and to prioritize capital improvement projects. These stakeholders and agencies may include, but are not limited to, the local Aldermen and State Representatives/Senators, the Chicago Transit Authority, the Regional Transportation Authority, Metra, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Chicago Park District. Additionally, CDOT will engage public sector agencies responsible for land use and development decisions to ensure future development supports and encourages safe and comfortable active transportation options. In particular, CDOT will work with the Chicago Department of Planning and Development (CDPD), which recently completed a PMD analysis to identify additional land uses that are compatible within the existing PMDs in efforts to promote further job growth in these areas.

CDOT recommends this plan be the first of two phases prioritizing access to and within the North Branch Industrial Corridor. CDOT and CDPD will initiate a similar plan in 2017 for access to the southern-half of the North Branch Industrial Corridor, including the southern portion of the Goose Island PMD and the Chicago/Halsted Corridor PMD.