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: Village of Wilmette

2. Main Contact for Application:

   Name: Brigitte Ann Berger, P.E.
   Title: Director of Engineering Services
   Phone number: 847.853.7627
   Email: bergerb@wilmette.com

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.
- X 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.)

- ___ 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 location is the entire Village of Wilmette as we are seeking a grant to prepare a Village-wide bike and pedestrian plan.

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.)

Wilmette’s Request

The Village of Wilmette is seeking $65,000 in grant funds to prepare a comprehensive bike and pedestrian plan that will further efforts to become a role model community for multi-modal transit. As this application will demonstrate, the Village has all of the core components to achieve this goal, but lacks an up-to-date and innovative plan to help shape Wilmette’s future.
**Existing Bike System**

In 1998, the Village hired a consultant to prepare a bike plan for the Village. The plan identified a few select bike routes identified with signage. The plan is outdated, however, and the culture surrounding transportation issues has changed dramatically since the late 1990’s. An updated bike and pedestrian plan will bring Wilmette into the 21st century and allow us to take full advantage of the modern technology, new standards and funding resources that are available today.

Some of the targeted goals the Village hopes to achieve from an updated bike and pedestrian plan are:

- Community workshops to further explore the needs of our residents
- Recommendations to improve transportation system challenges (high volume streets, mature existing conditions, on-street parking, intersections, railroad crossings, etc.)
- Preparation of a Village-wide bike network and long and short term goals for implementation
- Review of existing programs and development of future programs
- Recommendations regarding existing policies concerning bike and pedestrian
- Identification of funding resources

**Why Wilmette?**

The Village of Wilmette is located approximately 16 miles north of downtown Chicago. The Village extends approximately five miles west from Lake Michigan and is approximately one mile wide. Its municipal neighbors include Evanston and Skokie to the south, Glenview to the west and Kenilworth and Northfield to the north.

Wilmette has connectivity with several existing regional bike trails including the Green Bay Trail (which runs through the center of the Village), the North Branch Trail and the proposed Skokie Valley Trail. It also has the Sheridan Road bike lanes which were built in 2008 as part of a major reconstruction project. Despite the close vicinity of these popular biking destinations, some in the community have expressed concern accessing them because east-west bicycle travel in Wilmette is difficult.

In addition to connectivity with existing popular bike routes, Wilmette is fortunate to have both CTA and Metra Stations in the Village. Other popular destinations include Gillson Beach, Linden Square, Edens Plaza, the Village Center and dozens of schools and park district facilities. One of the primary goals of the bike and pedestrian plan is to strengthen the connections between Wilmette’s neighborhoods and these well-travelled destinations.

In 2014, Wilmette’s Village Board showed a strong commitment to active transportation by adopting a Complete Streets Ordinance. In addition, staff supported community efforts to apply for Bicycle Friendly Community status through the League of American Bicyclists.

In an effort to learn more about residents’ views of biking in Wilmette, the Village co-sponsored a Village-wide bike survey earlier this year and received over 700 respondents. The park district, schools and other local stakeholders like “Go Green Wilmette” promoted the survey to their respective constituents. The results indicate that there is definite room for improvement. As an example 24% of the respondents indicated “feeling safe on the roadway” prevents them from more frequent riding. Staff also learned that the destination many riders have difficulty riding to is Edens Plaza. This goes hand in hand with a general sentiment that east – west travel in Wilmette is a challenge for many riders. If successful receiving the grant, the survey will provide valuable data to the consultant.
What makes Wilmette “Special?”

Wilmette is unique in that it has an extremely strong and active bike community. There are Village-associated committees like the former bicycle task force and the current Energy and Environment Commission and Transportation Commission that support pedestrian and bicycle friendly initiatives. In addition, the afore-mentioned Go Green Wilmette and Wilmette Citizens for Active Transportation are at the forefront of promoting active transportation in Wilmette. Finally, Wilmette works closely with the schools to educate students at an early age about safety and benefits of riding. If successful receiving the grant, all of these all of these groups will be involved with shaping Wilmette’s future.

In closing, Wilmette has demonstrated responsible and efficient execution of CMAP-administered grant funds in the past, including the Sheridan Road Reconstruction Project (STP funded in 2008/09) and the Green Bay Road Traffic Signal Reconfiguration Project (CMAQ funded in 2009.) CMAP and RTA can rely on the same level of commitment to this project if successful receiving the grant. The Village of Wilmette thanks the selection committee for taking time to review this application and is hopeful that the committee will find Wilmette a worthy recipient of LTAP funds.