



Local Technical Assistance (LTA) Program: 2015 Recommendations for Project Selection

Following the adoption of GO TO 2040, CMAP established the Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program to direct resources to communities to pursue planning work that helps to implement GO TO 2040. During the most recent call for projects, which ended on June 25, CMAP received 72 applications for assistance from 61 different applicants. Further information on applications received is available at: <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/ta/call-for-projects>.

The CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee will be asked to approve the staff recommendations for the LTA program at their joint meeting on October 14. Prior to the Board and MPO Policy Committee meeting, the Local Coordinating Committee will be asked to recommend approval by these groups. The Transportation Committee recommended approval at their meeting on September 18.

The purpose of this memo is to present CMAP staff recommendations for the treatment of each application received. It is divided into four sections:

- Staff recommendations for projects to be undertaken through the LTA program.
- Basic statistics concerning the projects recommended for selection.
- Evaluation process.
- Full lists of projects that are recommended and not recommended.

LTA recommendations

In total, 22 new projects are recommended to be pursued through the LTA program. These projects were selected by applying CMAP's selection criteria: alignment of the project with the recommendations of GO TO 2040; local need for assistance; local support, feasibility, and ability to implement; collaboration with other groups, including neighboring governments and nongovernmental groups; input from relevant Counties and Councils of Government (COGs); and geographic balance.

Additionally, as CMAP has completed LTA projects, the implementation of completed projects is a priority. Several of the applications received help to implement projects that had been previously undertaken through the LTA program; many of these projects are recommended for selection. For organizational purposes, recommended projects are presented below in groups.

Transportation

While transportation is a common element in LTA projects, several applications this year focused explicitly on transportation issues, often focusing on bicycle and pedestrian travel. A joint project submitted by *Palos Park* and *Cook County Forest Preserves* will improve local trail connections at the western end of the Cal-Sag Trail. The *Chicago Department of Transportation*

(CDOT), with significant support from local groups, will lead a multimodal transportation plan in the Riverdale community area on the City's far south side. Finally, *Lisle* requested assistance with a downtown parking study, which is similar to parking studies already completed by CMAP in other communities.

In a new addition in 2015, the Cook County Department of Public Health also partnered with CMAP to use the LTA application to solicit proposals for its Healthy HotSpots initiative. Several bicycle plans in west and south Cook County were selected; more information on these is available through the Active Transportation Alliance, which is administering the bicycle and pedestrian elements of the Healthy HotSpots program.

Water resources

Several applications this year were focused around water: either using rivers as assets, or addressing flooding and stormwater challenges. Many of these are recommended for selection, supported by recent grants received by CMAP to address stormwater and resilience.

Two projects are focused on using rivers as assets. One application, submitted by *McHenry County* with support from numerous partners, seeks assistance with planning along the Fox River, extending north from Algonquin. While the application requested assistance with the entire stretch of river north to the Chain O' Lakes, CMAP will work with the County to divide this long stretch into more manageable segments for study purposes. A second application from the *Metropolitan Planning Council* supports the Great Rivers Chicago program, and will build on CMAP's experience working in Chicago neighborhoods and nearby suburban municipalities.

Four projects are more focused on water quality and stormwater management. *DuPage County*, in partnership with local groups, will lead a watershed plan for Lower Salt Creek, extending from DuPage County into western Cook County. Two municipalities, *Berwyn* and *Richton Park*, will receive assistance with stormwater planning, building on past CMAP work in these areas. Finally, *Midlothian*, in partnership with the Center for Neighborhood Technology, is recommended to receive assistance for corridor planning along 147th Street that addresses both stormwater management and transportation needs.

Planning priorities reports

Planning priorities reports are lighter-touch planning studies that are suited for communities with limited staff. They can be useful in both identifying planning priorities for a community and confirming local commitment to a future full-scale planning process. These reports involve interviews with numerous local stakeholders, review of past planning work, and examination of current demographic, economic, transportation, and other conditions. Based on this information, planning priorities reports then recommend what sort of assistance a community needs. This may be a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance update, corridor plan, or similar planning product; or it may be a training series for elected officials, a shift in departmental responsibilities, a new business development program, or many other options.

Three planning priorities reports are recommended this year, in *Beach Park*, *Hampshire*, and *Richmond*. All of these are small collar county municipalities (in Lake, Kane, and McHenry, respectively) with limited staff. Each of these communities requested a full comprehensive

plan, but CMAP instead recommends a planning priorities report so that the needs and priorities of the community can be better understood before significant resources are devoted to a full-scale plan. These may lead to additional applications next year.

Comprehensive and subarea plans

A number of comprehensive and subarea plans, which are familiar LTA project types, are recommended for selection. Comprehensive plans in two communities – *Des Plaines* and *Romeoville* – are recommended; these demonstrated a high level of local commitment and good consistency with GO TO 2040. Each also includes issues that align with CMAP's priorities; Des Plaines has extreme flooding challenges, and Romeoville is faced with high levels of growth pressure.

Several subarea plans are also recommended. The *North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council* formed an impressive group of local community organizations to submit an application for a community plan, and CMAP recommends devoting significant resources to this project. *Cook County* requested assistance with planning for a large unincorporated area in northern Cook County, and demonstrated support from all of the adjacent municipalities. Finally, a corridor plan along IL 53 in *Wilmington* is recommended, helping this community to build on a recent County-wide study of IL 53.

Zoning improvements

Updates to zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and development review processes are important methods to implement past plans. Two of these are recommended this year. A full unified development ordinance is recommended for *Harvard*, which is now wrapping up a comprehensive plan; and a downtown-focused zoning revision is recommended in *Chicago Heights*, which recently completed a comprehensive plan.

Other projects

Finally, a number of recommended projects do not fit neatly into the classifications above, but align well with CMAP's priorities and also build local capacity. A multi-agency group known as *Impact DuPage* requested assistance with scoping their efforts to improve affordable housing access in DuPage County. *Homer Glen* requested training for their plan commission to help commissioners incorporate GO TO 2040 principles into their development decisions. Last but not least, *Cook County* requested assistance with a comprehensive economic growth plan for the south suburbs. The application requests that CMAP partner with numerous organizations to assist with this high-profile effort, which is meant to address the economic challenges faced by south suburban Cook County.

Projects that are not recommended

Projects were considered lower priority for LTA assistance for a number of reasons, described in general terms below.

- Priority for assistance was given to communities that had lower incomes or were smaller in size, meaning that more prosperous or larger communities were less likely to receive assistance. Lower-need communities generally had to present an innovative project or one that aligned especially well with a specific CMAP priority in order to be recommended.
- CMAP continued its efforts to assess local commitment, including more detailed phone interviews with sponsors of projects that showed initial promise. In the cases of some communities that submitted numerous applications, CMAP's evaluation found that the community had not fully prioritized their needs internally, which is recommended to occur before resubmitting next year.
- Some projects were good concepts but would benefit from further development by the project sponsor. In some cases, additional multijurisdictional partners would give a project a greater chance of success.
- Applicants that already have active, early-stage LTA projects were not recommended (although some that are expected to wrap up in the next few months did have recommended follow-up projects).
- Many bicycle and pedestrian projects in suburban Cook County were considered to be better fits for the Healthy HotSpots program. Several of these were recommended for Healthy HotSpots funding, and others will have the opportunity to resubmit to that program in future years.
- Some projects were simply not a good fit for the LTA program, as they did not demonstrate the full support of affected local governments, or did not demonstrate alignment with the recommendations of GO TO 2040.
- Finally, a number of projects beyond the list of 22 recommended in this memo are positive and viable projects, but were beyond available resources this year. CMAP will encourage communities who submitted projects that were just outside resource constraints to resubmit in future years, in some cases with modifications that will improve their chances of selection.

A full list of applicants that are not recommended to receive assistance is included at the end of this document.

Statistics of recommended projects

In the following section, basic statistics are provided for the distribution of projects by geography and community need.

Geographic distribution

In the design of the LTA program, an effort was made to identify projects to be pursued in many different parts of the region. In the following table, the distribution of recommended projects by geography is summarized. Projects may be reported in multiple geographies, and these are noted below the table.

	Chicago	Cook total	N and NW Cook	W Cook	SW Cook	S Cook	Collar total	DuPage	Kane	Kendall	Lake	McHenry	Will	Total
Selected applicants	3	10	3	3	2	5	11	3	1	0	2	3	3	22
Total applicants	8	32	6	9	5	14	24	6	3	0	6	6	7	60

Notes:

- Several applications submitted in suburban Cook, particularly south and west Cook, were selected by the Active Transportation Alliance as part of the Healthy HotSpots program. These are not shown as selected applicants above; this table only includes those applicants selected by CMAP.
- One regional project submitted by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (which is not recommended) is not shown in this table.

Recommended projects included in multiple geographies are:

- DuPage County Stormwater Management: Lower Salt Creek watershed plan (DuPage and W Cook)
- McHenry County: Fox River corridor study (McHenry and Lake)
- Metropolitan Planning Council: Great Rivers Chicago project (Chicago and all suburban Cook)

As the above table shows, recommended projects are relatively well-distributed throughout the region. No projects were submitted from Kendall County this year, so none are recommended. The most projects are recommended in south Cook County, which also featured the most applicants.

Community need

An important factor in the review process was the need of the community for assistance. The LTA program is meant to prioritize projects in communities that have limited resources and would not have the ability to undertake the project without CMAP's assistance. Communities were divided into four categories based on median income, local tax base, and size, ranging from "very high" to "low" need. As a new element of the program in 2015, a match was required of project sponsors. The match varied by community need, ranging from 5% in "very high" need communities to 20% in "low" need communities. The following table and chart summarize the distribution of recommended projects by community need.

	Very high need (5% match)	High need (10% match)	Moderate need (15% match)	Low need (20% match)	Total
Selected applicants	4	6	4	8	22
Total applicants*	13	13	13	24	63

* Two applicants – CDOT and Cook County – submitted two projects each in different areas, which resulted in different need scores for each project. For the purposes of this table, CDOT and Cook County are each counted as two separate applicants. Therefore, this table shows 63 applicants rather than 61.

Regionwide, approximately half of the region’s municipalities (and Chicago Community Areas) are calculated to have very high, high, or moderate need, resulting in a reduced match requirement. In comparison, about two-thirds of the resources in this year’s program are devoted to these higher-need communities. The structure of the match requirement was designed to continue to permit the participation of higher-need communities. Based on the applications received and distribution of resources, the LTA program is shown to remain a viable option for higher-need communities.

Evaluation process

To evaluate each project, staff reviewed the applications and other background materials and also scheduled phone calls with each applicant to discuss their ideas. Questions were meant to gauge consistency with GO TO 2040, local commitment, internal and external support, and the project’s overall feasibility. Additional follow-up phone calls were also conducted in a number of cases.

Applications were also reviewed with a variety of groups in July and August. Working committees were asked to provide comments on the LTA applications. Special meetings were also held with transit agencies, county planning directors, the City of Chicago, and technical assistance providers. Councils of Government (COGs) and Councils of Mayors (COMs) were encouraged to submit comments via email, and several of them did. Comments and expressions of support from these groups were used in part to determine the recommendations for selection.

Project listing

Recommended:

Sponsor	Project
Chicago Department of Transportation	Riverdale area transportation plan*
City of Berwyn	Stormwater management plan
City of Chicago Heights	Zoning code update
City of Des Plaines	Comprehensive plan
City of Harvard	Unified development ordinance
Cook County Bureau of Economic Development	Comprehensive growth plan
Cook County Planning and Development	Unincorporated areas plan
DuPage County Stormwater Management	Lower Salt Creek watershed plan
Impact DuPage	Affordable housing strategy
McHenry County Planning and Development	Fox River corridor study
Metropolitan Planning Council	Great Rivers Chicago
North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council	Community comprehensive plan
Village of Beach Park	Planning priorities report
Village of Hampshire	Planning priorities report
Village of Homer Glen	Plan Commissioner training
Village of Lisle	Downtown parking plan
Village of Midlothian	147th Street corridor study
Village of Palos Park	Trails plan
Village of Richmond	Planning priorities report
Village of Richton Park	Stormwater management plan
Village of Romeoville	Comprehensive plan
Village of Wilmington	Corridor plan

* This project will also include the elements of an application submitted by the Safety and Transit Action Council.

Not recommended:

Communities that submitted some requests that are recommended and some that are not recommended are noted in the below table.

Sponsor	Project
Chicago Department of Transportation	Bloomington Trail access plan
Chicago Infrastructure Trust	Homes for Changing Region (application withdrawn by sponsor)
City of Batavia and Batavia Park District	Fox River redevelopment plan
City of Calumet City**	Comprehensive lighting plan
City of Crystal Lake	Bicycle and pedestrian plan
City of Evanston	Design guidelines manual
City of Harvey	Comprehensive plan
City of Waukegan	Downtown / lakefront plan
Everyday Edgebrook	Edgebrook downtown plan
Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce	Lincoln Avenue corridor study
Metropolitan Mayors Caucus	Alternative fuel infrastructure plan

Sponsor	Project
Quad Communities Development Corporation	43rd / 47th Street framework plan
Safety and Transit Action Council	130th Street corridor plan (this application will be integrated within the CDOT Riverdale area plan)
South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association	Homes for Changing Region (this is a small request and will be accomplished by CMAP and partners outside of the LTA program)
Triton College**	Complete Streets plan
Village of Berkeley**	Bicycle and pedestrian plan
Village of Broadview**	Bicycle and pedestrian plan
Villages of Brookfield, LaGrange, and Western Springs**	Bicycle and pedestrian plan
Village of Calumet Park**	Active transportation plan
Village of Clarendon Hills	Subarea plan
Village of Crestwood **	Bicycle and pedestrian plan
Village of Fox Lake	Zoning code update
Village of Frankfort	Bicycle plan; comprehensive plan; historic district plan; three additional subarea plans
Village of Franklin Park**	Active transportation plan
Village of Glen Ellyn	Comprehensive plan
Village of Glenwood**	Complete Streets plan
Village of Justice	Archer Road corridor study
Village of Lake Zurich	Comprehensive plan
Village of Lakemoor	Subdivision ordinance update; town center design guidelines; transportation plan
Village of Lynwood**	Complete Streets plan
Village of Melrose Park**	Bicycle and pedestrian plan
Village of Monee	Comprehensive plan
Village of New Lenox	Bicycle and pedestrian plan; comprehensive plan
Village of Richton Park	Economic development plan (a stormwater plan was successful)
Village of Sauk Village	Comprehensive plan
Village of Schaumburg	Bicycle system assessment
Village of Thornton	Comprehensive plan
Village of University Park	Implementation plan
Village of Wayne	Zoning code update
Village of Wheeling	TIF district redevelopment plan
Village of Willow Springs**	Bicycle and pedestrian plan
Village of Wilmette**	Bicycle and pedestrian plan

** The applications submitted by these communities were also evaluated for inclusion in the Healthy HotSpots program, and several were selected to receive assistance.

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