Application form:  
RTA Community Planning Program and  
CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program

DEADLINE: Noon on Thursday, June 29, 2017

This application form is online at www.rtachicago.org/applications. You may submit the form by email to applications@rtachicago.org.  
Upon receipt of application, you will receive an e-mail verifying that your application has been received.

1. Name of Applicant

Village of Calumet Park

2. Main Contact for Application

Name: Mary Ryan
Title: Village Administrator
Phone number: 708-926-7402
Email: mryan@calumetparkvillage.org

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 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.

- [X] My project involves preparation of a plan.
- [ ] My project involves updating an already existing 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 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.

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. For plan updates please tell us how you will be building upon (or replacing) the previous work. Program staff will follow-up with you if we need any additional information to fully understand your proposed project.

8. Previous Plan Implementation Efforts

Please describe actions you have taken to implement previous plans in your community—whether your efforts were successful or not—to achieve infrastructure improvements, development investment, policy changes, advocacy, volunteer involvement, or other actions. If you do not have experience implementing previous planning work, please describe what you will do to make sure that your plan is implemented. Illustrating a commitment to implement plan recommendations is very important to both agencies as we consider new planning projects.

9. Additional Strategic Partnerships

Please list any additional partners you may want to include in this planning project. Please specify if you have made contact with them in advance of submitting this application.
(Please include any additional information that is relevant, preferably by providing links to online documents.)
Project Location
The Village of Calumet Park is in south central Cook County. The Village is south and west of the City of Chicago, east of the City of Blue Island, and north of the Village of Riverdale. Calumet Park is approximately 18 miles from the Chicago Loop. The Village is located along major transportation routes and includes two exits along I-57. Metra Electric serves the Village with a station at Ashland on its Blue Island branch. The Village is located along the Cal-Sag Channel. The extension of the Cal-Sag Trail, once completed, will connect to the Village across the Channel by way of Ashland Avenue.

Project Description
The Village requests a Local Technical Assistance Grant to complete a Comprehensive Plan. The Village of Calumet Park enjoys many assets, including well-preserved brick residential bungalows, a walkable street grid, multimodal transportation access, proximity to downtown Chicago, and community pride. However, the Village has sometimes been slow to fully capitalize on these assets. With a population of 7,903, median income of $48,413, and a tax base dependent on property tax revenue, the Village sometimes lacks the resources of its larger neighbors to strategically plan and implement capital improvements. However, over the last year, the Village has enjoyed partnerships with several public and private entities, including CMAP, that have given it the capacity to address several infrastructural and economic development issues.

This Comprehensive Plan is the next step to take these individual plans and shape them into a community-wide strategy for the direction of the Village. It will build on the findings of a Planning Priorities report developed by CMAP and completed in November 2016. That report identified several key challenges in the community:

- **Flooding:** The combined water and sewer systems in the Village cannot handle major storms and some neighborhoods periodically flood. This is particularly true west of I-57 and around Veteran’s Park. According to a resident survey conducted by CNT, a Village resident spends an average of $6,435 on stormwater repairs. In the Westside, where these flooding challenges are particularly acute, 51% of households are low to moderate income, so damages can significantly affect household savings, property values, or both.

- **Economic Development:** 127th Street serves as the commercial spine for the corridor, but it is in need of additional development and revitalization. A second street, Ashland Avenue, also has some commercial properties and connects 127th Street and the Metra station. The intersection of these streets form the commercial heart of Calumet Park, but long-term strategies are needed to develop it and better leverage its transportation access. The Village
is sometimes assumed to be part of Chicago, which obscures its “brand” and can deter investment.

- **Housing**: The Village enjoys a housing stock of sturdy brick bungalows with strong homeowner pride, but a disproportionate number of homes in the Village are vacant or foreclosed, according to CMAP. The Village also seeks new residential investment around its assets, such as transit-oriented development, with a 90 unit mixed-use development planned at the Metra station.

- **Transportation**: The Village lacks bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, which limits walkability, access to the Ashland Metra station, and connectivity with the future Cal-Sag Trail. The Village must balance these upgrades with the needs of the significant truck traffic upon which the local economy depends. For example, 127th Street needs restriping, better signage, signal alignment, and turning lanes.

In tandem with the Planning Priorities report, and with the assistance of many regional partners, the Village has made considerable progress on each of these issues individually. Just over the last year, the Village has passed or completed:

- **An Active Transportation Complete Streets Policy**, developed by the Active Transportation Alliance and funded by the Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) through the CDC. Following an 8 step process, Calumet Park adopted its policy in March and is now working with ATA to adopt a community wide plan. This award would be the first transportation improvement in Calumet Park under this adopted policy.

- **CNT’s RainReady Plan** addressed flooding and stormwater issues in the Village. The Plan recommends a network of green and complete streets, rain gardens, roadside wales, bicycle lanes and better sidewalks; green schools and parks that manage stormwater and create active spaces; and an in-depth Action Plan for the Westside neighborhood.

- **A Capital Improvement Priorities Workshop**, hosted by the Antero Group in January, identified and prioritized capital and equipment needs across the 8 City Departments: Police, Fire, Building, Parks, Economic Development and the Treasurer. Following the workshop, the Village has applied for resources to engineer and implement several key long range capital improvements identified at the workshop (see below).

The Village has also made strides in securing the resources to implement these individual planning efforts, including: an **Invest in Cook** application that will retrofit Ashland Avenue as a Complete Street and leverage development around the Metra station; a Cook County Community Development Block Grant application to resurface Paulina and Marshfield Streets along I-57 and reduce flooding; and a Chicago Community Trust **Our Great Rivers** application for an action plan to install green infrastructure to prevent flooding on the Village’s west side. All of these awards would represent an opportunity to begin implementation of recently conducted planning and address the issues identified in the Planning Priorities report last winter.

Despite this considerable progress in pursuing long-term solutions to the issues identified in CMAP’s Planning Priorities report, the Village nonetheless lacks a current Comprehensive Plan that outlines strategic goals and investments linking these four priority areas and the additional capital needs of the Village. The Village is not requesting a Comprehensive Plan to duplicate these plans and the
considerable community engagement already conducted. Rather, the Village seeks a document that builds on these recent planning activities and that:

- Organizes and strategizes actions across all existing plans;
- Identifies additional recommendations for long range planning not addressed in these documents;
- Identifies resources for implementation attainable for the Village.

With an updated Comprehensive Plan, the Village can build on its momentum with recent planning and implementation activities and translate them into a community goals for long term planning.

**Previous Plan Implementation Efforts**

As described in the previous section, the Village has just recently completed a number of community-wide plans and has made early strides in pursuing capital resources to move immediately into implementation. Because these plans are new, implementation actions are still in the early phases.

The Village has additionally demonstrated the ability to plan and execute major construction projects. In late 2013, the Village began the design and development phases to build a 7,500 sq. ft. one story building for purposes of providing a regional communication center for 9-1-1 dispatch services. Construction began in 2014 and completed in 2015, under budget, at a cost of 4.2 million dollars. The Center currently provides dispatch services to the communities of Sauk Village, Posen and Midlothian. Other grants obtained through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, which the Village received and managed, funded the design, development and construction phases included sidewalks and roadways, salt dome, street lighting and recreation center improvements.

**Additional Strategic Partnerships**

Strategic partnerships have been instrumental to the success of planning and implementation in the Village of Calumet Park:

The **Antero Group** serves as Village Engineer and provides planning and economic development guidance to the Village. Antero led a prioritization workshop this winter. In follow up to that workshop, Antero has helped the Village pursue and secure resources to implement its plans. Antero will be a

The **Active Transportation Alliance** developed a Complete Streets Policy and is now working on an Active Transportation Plan with the Village and a planning Steering Committee. That Plan will make recommendations for capital improvements along several transportation corridors.

Both entities are aware of this application. Antero Group provided assistance writing it on behalf of the Village.