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

The City of Evanston

2. Main Contact for Application

Name:  Johanna N. Leonard
Title:  Community Development Director
Phone number:  847-448-8014
Email:  jleonard@cityofevanston.org

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):
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

___ 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.
- [x] My project involves updating an already existing plan.
- [x] 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.

A description of the location of the project and a map of the location are provided as an attachment to this form.

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.

A description of the project is provided as an attachment to this form.

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.

A description of the actions taken by Evanston to implement previous plans is provided as an attachment to this form.

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.

A list of the project's planning partners is provided as an attachment to this form.
(Please include any additional information that is relevant, preferably by providing links to online documents.)
6. Project Location:
Chicago Avenue is a primary north-south corridor in the southeast quadrant of Evanston. Chicago Ave. connects northern Chicago with the Main-Dempster Mile Special Service Area, Downtown Evanston and Northwestern University. A map of the corridor is provided as Attachment A. The southeast neighborhoods of Evanston—from Lake Michigan to Asbury Avenue, from Howard Street to Dempster Street—are home to about one-third of Evanston's population (20,460 community members), a highly diverse mixture of age groups, economic levels, cultures, and careers living in a broad blend of housing types. Around 19% of southeast Evanston community members are African American, and 9% are Hispanic or Latino (this aligns with Evanston’s citywide demographics). The median age of the community members is 37.7 years, which is slightly higher than the City’s average of 35.2 years. The primary commercial areas for these neighborhoods are Chicago Avenue and its two branch shopping districts along Main Street and Dempster Street. These retail areas comprise a wide variety of basic goods and services, as well as some of Evanston's oldest and most unique businesses, drawing patrons from far beyond Evanston's borders. Chicago Avenue itself is a major multimodal transportation thoroughfare, connecting the City of Chicago to Evanston and neighboring suburbs, and is both a destination and throughway for Evanston residents and visitors.

Chicago Ave. is a key corridor not only for the City of Evanston, but for the entire northern Chicago region. The corridor includes three Chicago Transit Authority

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(CTA) Purple Line stations, two Metra Union Pacific-North stations, two Northwestern University Shuttle Routes, two Divvy Bike Share stations,\(^1\) one CTA bus route, and is home to two commercial corridors which are united under one Special Service Area (SSA). Additionally, the corridor connects on its southern boundary with the Howard St. CTA Red, Purple and Yellow line station, and eight additional CTA and Pace Bus routes.

Since 1990, the Chicago Avenue corridor has seen accelerated changes, including the closing of long-term businesses, transit funding changes, recent investments in CTA Purple Line viaducts, new commercial development, and the emergence as a location for new transit-oriented development (TOD) multi-family residential buildings.

Since 1991, both Metra stations along Chicago Ave. experienced increased ridership. Between 1991 and 2014, the number of boardings increased by 92% at the Davis St. station and 33% at the Main St. station. This ridership increase is significantly higher than the 11% boardings increase that the entire Metra network had over that period of time.\(^2\) Additionally, the CTA’s Purple Line ridership increased. From 2005 to 2015, the three CTA stations along the Chicago Ave. corridor saw the following increases in boardings: 23% at the South Blvd. station, 22% at the Main St. station, and 37% at the Dempster St. station.\(^3\)

The Chicago Ave. project would move forward goals and action steps identified in the: 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update, the 2010 Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan, the 2014 Evanston Main Street TOD plan, and the City of Evanston’s 2000 Chicago Avenue Corridor Plan.

7. Project Description:
The Chicago Ave. project will develop a multi-modal transportation corridor plan. This plan will build upon the recommendations and action steps identified in the 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update and the 2000 Evanston Chicago Ave. Corridor Plan, as well as consider the recommendations provided in the 2010 Northwestern Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan and the 2014 Evanston Main Street TOD Plan. The Chicago Ave. project will link these previous planning efforts to develop roadway geometry recommendations, identify funding mechanisms and project approval processes for improving the adjacent CTA and Union Pacific infrastructure, and demonstrate innovative inclusionary planning.

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\(^1\) The second Divvy station is being placed near the Dempster St. CTA station during the Summer of 2017.

\(^2\) Commuter Rail System Station Boarding/Alighting Count 2014, Division of Strategic Capital Planning, Metra.

\(^3\) Ridership Reports, 2005-2015, Chicago Transit Authority.
techniques to build consensus and identify concerns along the corridor. Evanston is seeking assistance in:

- Identifying the local and regional stakeholders who use the corridor, and mapping their usage behaviors and their corridor geometries and programming preferences
- Creating a corridor asset map with coordinating infrastructure maintenance responsibilities and capital investment plans
- Developing and implementing an inclusionary planning process that updates the corridor goals set forth in the 2000 Evanston Chicago Ave. Corridor Plan
- Updating the preferred corridor right-of-way geometries from the 2014 Bike Plan Update for Chicago Ave. between Howard St. and Dempster St., with consideration given to: Custer Ave., the railroad right-of-way, Hinman Ave., and Judson Ave.
- Establishing best practices for partnering with local transit authorities to maintain and expand services, and maintain and improve transit infrastructure

As identified in the 2000 Evanston Chicago Ave. Corridor Plan, the primary objectives for the Chicago Ave. corridor are to:

- Maintain and improve the overall streetscape to foster a greener, more pedestrian-friendly environment
- Improve traffic management and signalization to improve vehicular, on-street transit, bicycle and pedestrian safety and movement
- Improve mass transit infrastructure and ridership

Since the 2000 plan’s adoption, the City has taken strides in formalizing the City’s Complete and Green Streets Policy approach and recognizing the importance of considering the unique needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and the many bicyclists who travel on Chicago Ave. Between 2001 and 2013, the number of cyclists who passed through Chicago Ave. and South Blvd. in the weekday morning peak increased by 138%; 59% in the weekday afternoon peak; and, 155% in the Saturday mid-day peak. These numbers show a clear increase in bicycling along the corridor by recreational and commuter cyclists alike. In addition to growing ridership, the Illinois Department of Transportation’s (IDOT) Division of Traffic Safety ranked Chicago Ave. as having the fourth highest crash rate within Evanston: a crash rate of 12.5 (total crashes/segment length) from 2008 to 2012. The Evanston Bike Plan Update identified this portion of Chicago Ave. as the top recommended corridor for further analysis based on a combination of the corridor’s safety, comfort and connectivity scoring. As part of this project, Evanston is seeking assistance in structuring and implementing a public engagement process that would foster

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4 Transit infrastructure includes: bus stops and amenities, train stations, rail way embankments, and rail viaducts.
5 The City’s original Complete & Green Streets Policy was adopted in 2014 and updated in 2017.
6 Evanston 2014 Bike Plan Update
dialogue between the corridor’s many users and surrounding neighbors, and bring in mobility experts and urban designers to work with the stakeholders to develop right-of-way plans for a people-friendly corridor.

BACKGROUND
The functionality and appearance of Chicago Avenue has been a subject of concern by neighbors, Aldermen and City staff for over 30 years, due in part to the built environment, but also due to the given physical features of the rail systems (embankments, viaducts, stations, etc.). Numerous features of the corridor impede pedestrian flow and make the area generally uninviting to pedestrians. Relatively narrow sidewalks with a proliferation of curb cuts cause pedestrians to compete for comfortable space with numerous sidewalk and street furnishings (signage, news boxes, storefront planters, lights, tree pits, seating, trash receptacles, etc.). Fragmentation of areas of interest by large surface parking lots, car storage areas, and bulky retail street frontage also detract from pedestrian access and orientation. Overall, these features diminish the potential of the area as a shopping district serving walk-in customers from the surrounding area and from new residential developments, and they disengage pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users from moving through and exploring the corridor.

From the City’s 2000 Corridor Plan, the City identified a need for general beautification measures, including an aggressive landscape maintenance plan for both public and private areas, upgrades to sidewalk material and space, and judicious additions of greening, entryway features, public art and other streetscape elements. The Plan called for strategies to minimize the number of existing curb cuts, widen sidewalk areas, and manage sidewalk furnishings.
Finally, the Plan also highlighted the community’s desire for additional bicycle storage areas, improved on-road bicycle infrastructure, and signage to support the continual growth of cycling and address the marked safety concerns.

The City recognizes that the cyclists who use and move across and through the Chicago Ave. corridor have unique needs and preferences based on their individual level of cycling confidence, purpose of their trip, and exposure to different cycling environments. One of Evanston’s goals for this project is to recognize the variety of bicycling preferences along the corridor, and to encourage thoughtful dialogue to develop a consensus for a recommended corridor geometry that improves the safety and comfort of all roadway users.

In addition, the area presents major physical challenges such as the Calvary Cemetery, which was identified as an existing gap or barrier by several community members. The Cemetery has more than a quarter-mile of its perimeter on Chicago Ave. The corridor also has many unique land use

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7 Evanston 2014 Bike Plan Update

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opportunities including the continuous railroad right-of-way between the CTA and Metra tracks, as well as numerous car dealerships.

Chicago Ave. has several large parking lots that could be developed as new compact residential buildings through Evanston’s TOD ordinance. Many of these parking lots belong to car dealerships with multiple buildings and lots along Chicago Ave. between Lee St. and Greenleaf St. Currently, more than 200,000 square feet of land is currently used by the group of car dealerships along the corridor, representing almost 10% of project’s total area. Based on recent trends in the market and local land purchases, it appears that some of the dealerships’ operations are relocating to other areas of the city.

Finally, from a regional perspective, the Chicago Ave. corridor is an important link between the City of Chicago and Evanston. The 2010 Northwestern Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan identified Chicago Ave. as a primary alignment route for a regional corridor. This project will build upon the “49 Ward Neighborhood Greenway,” which currently terminates at Juneway Terrance and Chicago Ave., and will develop a plan for promoting safe and comfortable connections between the Greenway and Downtown Evanston.

8. Previous Plan Implementation Efforts:
The City of Evanston is fully committed to the creation of people-friendly streets, compact and complete neighborhoods, and the promotion of diverse transportation modes. The City has adopted policies and plans to move the community towards meeting its goal as the Most Livability City.

As part of this grant application, the City is committed to providing a local financial match of 20% if the LTA Grant is approved.

The 2014 Bike Plan Update builds on the City’s efforts to upgrade and expand the bike network to make bicycling safer and attract more riders in Evanston. The plan proposes the creation of bike parking, new bike lanes and bike paths, the promotion of bike sharing programs, such as the installation of Divvy stations, and new wayfinding signs. Today, 10 Divvy stations are located within Evanston. Since the first station was installed in June 2016, more than 15,000 Divvy trips started in Evanston, the system has more than 960 active Evanston annual members, and over 1,430 24-hour passes have been sold. Additionally, following 2014 Bike Plan Update’s adoption, Evanston has installed protected bike lanes on Dodge Ave., and the northern portion of Chicago Ave. and the northern portion of Sheridan Road. The 2014 Plan update identified the need for further review of the southern portion of Chicago Ave., and proposed considering protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and traffic calming design to improve the comfort and safety of the corridor.
In 2010, the City of Evanston participated in the Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan with the goal of integrating the City's bike network with the regional network. The project for Chicago Ave. is part of this plan, and will connect Chicago’s 49th Ward with Evanston, and further northern suburbs.

Finally, the 2014 Main Street TOD Plan was developed to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to and between the CTA and Metra Main Street Station, the Main Street Business District, and the surrounding neighborhoods. Following the adoption of the Main St. TOD Plan, the City secured an Access to Transit grant from the Regional Transit Authority to implement the TOD Plan’s recommendation to improve bicycling parking facilities by the Main St. CTA and Metra stations. This summer, 40 bicycle parking facilities (total of 80 spaces) will be added to the Main St. stations.

In 2011, the City identified the need to focus on and plan for the needs of older adults (OA) and people with disabilities (PWD) within Evanston, and in 2013 the City joined the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. As part of the Global Network, the City launched a three-year city-wide action plan for identifying age-friendly priorities. In December 2013, then Mayor Tisdahl appointed the Age Friendly Task Force to lead community conversations around the eight areas of age-friendliness and develop area specific action plans. From 2013 to 2016, the Task Force worked in partnership with the City to gather feedback, developed the Action Plan, and began implementation. The Task Force was supported with working groups related to each of the WHO areas, and in total more than 50 community members were actively involved. Together these volunteers organized focus groups, roundtable discussions, and two community surveys to gather community and service provider feedback. Insights from the community engagement process were used to formulate the Age Friendly Evanston Action Plan’s recommendations. The Action Plan is now being used as a tool by the Task Force to implement next steps, and by staff to understand the community’s priorities. In 2016, Evanston secured a Transit Planning 4 All planning grant to implement the Action Plan’s call for a comprehensive intra-city transportation network.

9. Additional Strategic Partnerships:
The below strategic partners will be engaged through the grant’s implementation. These partners will assist the City in connecting with the corridor’s many users, understanding the different transportation services provided by the corridor, and developing an unified vision for the corridor. All of these partners were contacted during the grant development process and have provided letters of support.

- Ron Burke: Active Transportation Alliance, Executive Director
- Susan Cherco: Age Friendly Evanston, Chairman

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• Jonathan Nieuwswa: Citizens’ Greener Evanston, President
• Joseph A. Moore: City of Chicago, 49th Ward Alderman
• Barbara Miller: Evanston Bicycle Club, Vice President
• Elliot Greenberger: Motivate International (Divvy), General Manager
• John D’Angelo: Northwestern University, Vice President for Facilities Management
• Victoria Jacobsen: Go Evanston, Co-founder
• Katherine Gotsick: Main-Dempster Mile SSA, Executive Director
• Don Orseno: Metra Rail, Executive Director/CEO
The Chicago Ave. corridor project also aims to improve the surroundings streets, such as Hinman Ave., Judson Ave., Sherman Ave., and Elmwood Ave. These adjacent streets were identified in Evanston’s 2014 Bike Plan Update as possible Comfortable Corridors which bicyclists could use in tandem with Chicago Ave.

Figure 1: The project is located in the southeast part of the City of Evanston, and focuses on Chicago Ave. between Dempster St. and Howard St.
June 20, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of The Active Transportation Alliance, I am writing to support the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program grant proposal submitted by the City of Evanston, Illinois. By encouraging public outreach activities, the grant will allow the City of Evanston to work collaboratively with the pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists who use or would like to use Chicago Avenue for commuting and recreation. Such work will not only move Evanston forward in addressing the goals and corridor-prioritization assessment set forward in the 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update and the Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan, but it will also strengthen the emerging multi-modal Chicago corridor identified in the 2009 Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the 2016-2017 Divvy data sets.

Planning activities for Chicago Avenue from Howard Street to Dempster Street will include bringing together a diverse group of roadway and right-of-way users and with their input, develop a comprehensive corridor design plan to move this key transportation corridor forward to meet the transportation priority goals set forward by CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities. The project will bridge existing bicycle and pedestrian networks and set the necessary ground work for future rapid transit improvements.

The Active Transportation Alliance has many members in Evanston and has worked extensively with the City to support multi-modal options. Active Trans developed the City’s first Bike Plan and served on the steering committee for the 2014 Bike Plan Update. Active Trans provides input on the Plan as a member of the community’s Bike Advisory Committee as well as a founding member of GO Evanston, a citizen bike and pedestrian advocacy group.

As an Evanston community partner, I will work with the City of Evanston to foster dialogue among the unique roadway users along the southern Chicago Avenue Corridor and strive to identify recommended solutions that align with the City’s Complete & Green Streets Policy, and CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities.

Sincerely,

Ron Burke
Executive Director
June 22, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Age Friendly Evanston Task Force, I am writing to express my support for the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program grant proposal submitted by the City of Evanston, Illinois. The grant will allow the City of Evanston to work collaboratively with the pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists who use the Chicago Avenue corridor for commuting and recreational purposes. The study will also address the Main Dempster Mile SSA business district needs and revitalize the commercial activities. Such work will not only move Evanston forward in addressing the goals and corridor-prioritization assessment set forward in the 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update and the Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan, but it will also strengthen the emerging multi-modal Chicago corridor identified in the 2009 Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the 2016-2017 Divvy data sets.

The planning and design work for Chicago Ave. from Howard St. to Dempster St. will leverage inclusionary planning techniques to bring together a diverse group of roadway and right-of-way users; and, develop a comprehensive corridor plan to move the southern Chicago Ave. corridor forward to meet the transportation priority goals set forward by CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities. The project will bridge existing bicycle and pedestrian networks and set the necessary ground work for future rapid transit improvements.

The Age Friendly Evanston Task Force was created by the City Council in 2014 to determine how Evanston can become a more age-friendly community under guidelines set by the World Health Organization. We have created an action plan linked to our city’s livability goals, and are working with community groups, city leaders and staff to implement the plan. Much of our work has focused on transportation, especially transportation needs of older adults. We are excited at the opportunity to incorporate age-friendly features into the City’s plan for the Chicago Avenue corridor. The plan takes a comprehensive and holistic approach to address the needs and interests of the variety of uses and users represented in this corridor.

As an Evanston community partner, Age Friendly Evanston will work with the City to foster dialogue among the unique roadway users along the southern Chicago Avenue Corridor and strive to identify recommended solutions that align with the City’s Complete & Green Streets Policy and the Age Friendly Evanston Action Plan,
as well as CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities.
Sincerely,

Susan Cherco
Chair
Age Friendly Evanston Task Force

Helen C. Gagel
Transportation Committee Chair
Age Friendly Evanston Task Force
June 16, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

As president of Citizens’ Greener Evanston (CGE), I am writing to express our organization’s support for the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMPA Local Technical Assistance Program grant proposal submitted by the City of Evanston, Illinois.

CGE’s mission is to reduce Evanston’s carbon footprint and to make our community more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable—work which is directly related to this grant. We’re particularly interested in the Chicago Avenue corridor in part due to its proximity to our annual Streets Alive festival which promotes cycling and walking as healthy alternatives to driving.

The grant will allow the City of Evanston to work collaboratively with the pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists who use the Chicago Avenue corridor for commuting and recreational purposes. The study will also address the needs of the local business district need. Such work will address the goals and of the 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update and the Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan, and strengthen the emerging multi-modal Chicago corridor identified in the 2009 Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the 2016-2017 Divvy data sets.

The planning and design work will leverage inclusionary planning techniques to bring together a diverse group of roadway and right-of-way users to develop a comprehensive corridor plan which will help the Chicago Avenue corridor forward meet the goals of CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and develop ON TO 2050 planning priorities. The project will bridge existing bicycle and pedestrian networks and establish the necessary ground work for future rapid transit improvements. We expect the solutions identified during this process will complement the City’s Complete & Green Streets Policy and CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and help develop ON TO 2050 planning priorities

With an extensive local membership and an established track record of effective advocacy in local issues, CGE looks forward to working with the City of Evanston under this grant.

Sincerely,

Jonathan

Jonathan Nieuwsma
President
Citizens’ Greener Evanston
www.greenerevanston.org
June 23, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to support the grant proposal submitted by the City of Evanston, Illinois to the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program to study the Chicago Avenue corridor from Howard Street to Dempster Street. I serve as the alderman for the 49th Ward of the City of Chicago. My ward borders Evanston to the south and the corridor of focus leads into two major commercial strips in my district. Additionally, thousands of my constituents commute along Chicago Avenue for work and recreation.

The grant will allow Evanston to work collaboratively with the pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists to improve Chicago Avenue. This work will further progress toward goals identified in several previous planning processes. Most important to me, improvements to this corridor will bring more customers to 49th Ward businesses, better connect 49th Ward residents to Evanston’s offerings, and bring both communities closer together.

Inclusionary planning techniques will solicit input from a diverse group of users to develop a comprehensive corridor plan for the southern Chicago Avenue corridor; aligning with the transportation priority goals set forward by CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities. The process will bridge existing bicycle and pedestrian networks, and lay the necessary groundwork for future rapid transit improvements. Additionally, this work complements the many partnerships I have been involved in to better connect my community with Evanston, including the rebuilding of the Howard Street CTA station and bus terminal, and the soon-to-be built 49th Ward Greenway, which will better guide cyclists travelling north and south in the 49th Ward with Chicago Avenue as the primary connection to Evanston.

As a community partner with Evanston, I look forward to the dialogue among users of the southern Chicago Avenue Corridor and strive to identify recommended solutions that align with the complete streets policies of Chicago and Evanston, and CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Moore
Alderman of the 49th Ward
To Whom It May Concern:

The Evanston Bicycle Club (EBC) fully supports the City of Evanston’s application for a grant under the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program to cover the planning and design work for the Chicago Avenue corridor from Howard Street to Dempster Street.

The Chicago Avenue corridor has long been one of the key connector routes between Evanston and Chicago for all vehicles and one of the very few direct ways to go north-south on a bicycle. Over the years its character has evolved from auto showroom row to a very mixed commercial/residential street. It is an appropriate time to re-think how this important corridor is now used by commuters and others engaged in everyday activities.

EBC's primary concerns are safety on the roadway for all roadway users and connectivity among the neighborhoods and towns on the North Shore and in Chicago. We know the challenges of finding direct, comfortable and reliable biking routes. We are also aware that finding solutions that satisfy all roadway users, residents and businesses is not easy; we understand that thoughtful planning with opportunities for public input is key to a successful outcome.

The Evanston Bicycle Club has been active along the North Shore since 1971; our 500+ members come from Chicago, Evanston, Wilmette, Skokie, Glenview and other North Shore suburbs. About one-third of our members live in Evanston. While most of our organized rides carry us far beyond Evanston in all directions, EBC members have worked for many years with City officials and staff to make our home base community more bicycle friendly and we expect that our members will be enthusiastic participants in the planning and design process contemplated in Evanston’s grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Miller
Vice President
Community Outreach Chair
June 20, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program grant proposal submitted by the City of Evanston, Illinois. The grant will allow the City of Evanston to work collaboratively with the pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists who use the Chicago Avenue corridor for commuting and recreational purposes. The study will also address the Main Dempster Mile SSA business district needs and revitalize the commercial activities. Such work will not only move Evanston forward in addressing the goals and corridor-prioritization assessment set forward in the 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update and the Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan, but it will also strengthen the emerging multi-modal Chicago corridor identified in the 2009 Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the 2016-2017 Divvy data sets.

The planning and design work for Chicago Ave. from Howard St. to Dempster St. will leverage inclusionary planning techniques to bring together a diverse group of roadway and right-of-way users; and, develop a comprehensive corridor plan to move the southern Chicago Ave. corridor forward to meet the transportation priority goals set forward by CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities. The project will bridge existing bicycle and pedestrian networks and set the necessary ground work for future rapid transit improvements.

Since launching Divvy nearly one year ago, Divvy riders have taken nearly 20,000 trips within Evanston, from Evanston to Chicago, or from Chicago to Evanston. We’re committed to helping Evanstonians get from Point A to Point B in a convenient, affordable, and enjoyable way. Because Divvy is designed for short trips and Divvy stations are located to complement other forms of transit, riders will often use Divvy as one leg of a multi-modal trip, connecting to or from buses or trains. As we continue to add
stations and members in Evanston, we hope that our riders will be able to take advantage of the improvements proposed in this project for a faster and safer ride.

As an Evanston community partner, I will work with the City of Evanston to foster dialogue among the unique roadway users along the southern Chicago Avenue Corridor and strive to identify recommended solutions that align with the City’s Complete & Green Streets Policy, and CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities.

Sincerely,

Elliot Greenberger
General Manager, Divvy
Motivate International, Inc.
June 29, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program grant proposal submitted by the City of Evanston, Illinois. This is a critical opportunity to maintain Evanston’s vitality and socio-economic diversity and improve a primary connector between the City of Chicago and the North Shore.

The grant will allow the City of Evanston to work collaboratively with the pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists who use Chicago Avenue for commuting and recreation. The study will also address the Main/Dempster Mile SSA business district needs and revitalize critical commercial activities. Such work will not only move Evanston forward in addressing the goals and corridor-prioritization assessment set forward in the 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update and the Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan, but it will also strengthen the emerging multi-modal Chicago corridor identified in the 2009 Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the 2016-2017 Divvy data sets.

The planning and design work for Chicago Avenue from Howard Street to Dempster Street will leverage inclusionary planning techniques to bring together a diverse group of roadway and right-of-way users and develop a comprehensive corridor plan to ensure this corridor meets the transportation priority goals set forward by CMAP’s “GO TO 2040” Plan and the developing “ON TO 2050” priorities. The project will bridge existing bicycle and pedestrian networks and set the necessary groundwork for future rapid transit improvements.

This corridor is a critical link between Northwestern’s Evanston and Chicago campuses. Not only is it the primary link for shuttle services and for both light and heavy rail transportation, it is where many faculty, students and staff choose to live. Without the support of this grant, this important connector will not reach its potential and will instead become a dangerous choke point that causes motorist frustration in a heavy pedestrian and cyclist zone.

As an Evanston community partner, I will work with the City of Evanston to foster dialogue among the unique roadway users along the southern Chicago Avenue Corridor and strive to identify recommended solutions that fully align with the intent of this grant.
Sincerely,

John D'Angelo, PE, CMVP, CHEP, CHFM
Vice President, Facilities Management
Northwestern University
847.467.5810

2020 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60208
June 22, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

Go Evanston is pleased to support the City of Evanston’s application for a grant under the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program to cover the planning and design work for the Chicago Avenue corridor from Howard Street to Dempster Street.

Go Evanston is dedicated to improving the safety and quality of transportation options for all users, regardless of age, ability or income. Our focus is to educate the general population on these issues, encourage the use of active transportation and to advocate for those who cannot or choose not to drive. Chicago Avenue is a critical component of our multimodal vision for the City of Evanston.

Chicago Avenue is a key corridor for all modes of travel in and through Evanston. Adjacent to the CTA’s Purple Line, the Metra’s UP-North line and a bus transit corridor itself, Chicago Avenue must prioritize access to these transit lines with top-tier pedestrian design including safe intersections, direct connections to transit stations and accessible bus stops. Chicago Avenue is also an active bicycle corridor, despite the current lack of dedicated bike lanes. We will support the City’s efforts to promote bicycle travel to and through this corridor as it likely considers both dedicated bicycle facilities as well as traffic management strategies to improve the safety of cyclists, such as speed-reducing tactics and carefully-designed turning movements. The function and livability of this Corridor will rely on balancing the needs of all these modes, with the needs of those who live along the corridor, and those in vehicles.

We are a recently-formed grassroots transportation-focused group of citizens that emerged out of a public controversy regarding protected bicycle lanes on Dodge Ave. As a result, Go Evanston is committed to a community-based planning approach that fully engages and educates the public on the issues. Our membership base of over 200, would welcome the opportunity to assist in developing a multimodal plan for Chicago Avenue that supports all users. The City of Evanston can rely on Go Evanston for active, thorough participation and outreach in the Chicago Avenue Corridor planning process.

Sincerely,

Victoria Jacobsen
Co-founder
Go Evanston
http://goevanston.org/
June 21, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the 2017 RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program grant proposal submitted by the City of Evanston, Illinois. The grant will allow the City of Evanston to work collaboratively with the pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists who use the Chicago Avenue corridor for commuting and recreational purposes. The study will also address the Main Dempster Mile SSA business district needs and revitalize the commercial activities. Such work will not only move Evanston forward in addressing the goals and corridor-prioritization assessment set forward in the 2014 Evanston Bike Plan Update and the Northwest Municipal Conference Bicycle Plan, but it will also strengthen the emerging multi-modal Chicago corridor identified in the 2009 Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the 2016-2017 Divvy data sets.

The planning and design work for Chicago Ave. from Howard St. to Dempster St. will leverage inclusionary planning techniques to bring together a diverse group of roadway and right-of-way users; and, develop a comprehensive corridor plan to move the southern Chicago Ave. corridor forward to meet the transportation priority goals set forward by CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities. The project will bridge existing bicycle and pedestrian networks and set the necessary groundwork for future rapid transit improvements.

The Main-Dempster Mile’s work supports a thriving small business district, where over 90% of our 250+ shops, businesses and restaurants are locally, independently owned. As such, ease of access is critical to the retention of these businesses.

As an Evanston community partner, I will work with the City of Evanston to foster dialogue among the unique roadway users along the southern Chicago Avenue Corridor and strive to identify recommended solutions that align with the City’s Complete & Green Streets Policy, and CMAP’s GO TO 2040 Plan and developing ON TO 2050 planning priorities.

Sincerely,

Katherine Gotsick
Executive Director
Main-Dempster Mile
June 15, 2017

Katherine Knapp
Transportation and Mobility Coordinator
City of Evanston
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201

Dear Ms. Knapp:

This letter is to express Metra’s support for the City of Evanston’s 2017 application to the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Community Planning and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Local Technical Assistance grant programs. The City is requesting funding for assistance with developing a Transportation Corridor Plan for the southern portion of Chicago Avenue from Dempster Street to Howard Street.

As we understand it, the project is intended to encourage increased use of transit and other active modes of transportation as an important component of previous planning efforts by the City of Evanston including the City’s 2009 Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and the City’s Complete and Green Streets Policy. The project is also intended to address the local business district’s needs in an effort to help revitalize commercial activity in the corridor.

Metra is generally supportive of transit-oriented development opportunities and initiatives throughout our service area and we anticipate that this project would result in benefits for existing Metra riders by improving pedestrian access and encouraging increased utilization of the Evanston – Main Street Metra station which lies just west of the corridor in question. Therefore, we agree that this project should be considered for Community Planning/Local Technical Assistance Program funding. If this project is selected for funding as part of this grant application, we look forward to working with the City of Evanston on this project; however, we are not able to commit to financial support for this study. If you have any questions concerning Metra’s support for this application, please contact David Kralik, Department Head of Long Range Planning, at (312) 322-8035 or dkralik@metrarail.com.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Don Orsenu
Executive Director/CEO

cc: Lynne Corrao, Metra Government Affairs
David Kralik, Metra Long Range Planning
Heather Tabbert Mullins, RTA