

APPLICATION FORM

RTA Community Planning Program and CMAP Local Technical Assistance Program

Deadline: Noon on Friday, October 26, 2018

This application form is online at www.rtachicago.org/applications. You may submit the form by email to applications@rtachicago.org. Please submit one application per project as a PDF package. Please avoid submitting multiple PDFs for the same application.

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

Name: Will County

Applicant

Name: Nick Palmer

Main Contact of Application

Title: Chief of Staff - Office of the County Executive

Phone: 815-774-7488

Email: npalmer@willcountyillinois.com

TYPE OF APPLICANT

(please check all that apply)

- Local Government**
- Multijurisdictional group***
- Nongovernmental organization***

*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.

1. 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.

STUDY AREA

- * INTERSTATE 80 TO WILMINGTON [N-S]
- * INTERSTATE 55 TO ROUTE 52 [W-E]
- * INCLUDES WILMINGTON CLUSTER (RIDGEPORT)
- * INCLUDES NEW LENOX CLUSTER IN INTERSTATE 80 - GOUGAR ROAD AREA

The proposed comprehensive planning initiative originated as a recommendation in the Will County Community Friendly Freight Mobility Plan (WCCFFMP), which was adopted by the Will County Board, and sponsored by the Illinois Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Will County Center for Economic Development, and others. The final report can be found at: www.willcountyfreight.org.

The WCCFFMP recommends that a comprehensive transportation and land use plan be conducted in areas with freight clusters, such as the Elwood/Joliet location. See page 181 of the plan. It advises that “investment priorities should emerge from a coordinated planning process.” See page 137. The WCCFFMP Executive Summary cautioned that “continued growth without planning and new transportation investments may impact Will County's economic competitiveness and quality of life,” stating that:

Actions need to be taken to avoid and address potential community and environmental impacts of freight on both the human and natural environments. The County land use plan could also identify zones to protect agricultural areas. See page 23.

The Will County Executive expressed that the county needs “a robust plan to understand what this industry means to our residents and our economy while also planning for projected future growth to be sure improvements are compatible for our local communities.” See page 3.

The proposed comprehensive plan would utilize information from other planning initiatives to give greater context to how land use and transportation solutions complement and will utilize research from the Joliet Intermodal Transportation Master Plan, which was recently awarded an IDOT State Planning and Research grant to identify transportation needs for current and projected levels of commerce identified in the WCCFFMP. The Joliet Intermodal Transportation Master Plan will include a tool for local stakeholders to evaluate transportation impacts and needs under different development scenarios. The final product will include a transportation improvement plan aimed at balancing the livability of the region with freight mobility. Will County is in the RFP development stage of the plan with the goal of having the selected consultant begin work in early 2019. A comprehensive plan would pair information from this transportation piece with the diversity of land use goals and priorities in the area.

2. 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. (Please limit your responses to 6000 characters including spaces).

A Comprehensive Transportation and Land Use Plan for the Elwood/Joliet Freight Supercluster (“ Comprehensive Plan”), would be the culmination of a series of plans that focus on individual facets, such as transportation infrastructure viability, freight, and water supply. The Comprehensive Plan would bring stability and conscious integration of emerging and historic industries, from freight to agriculture, yielding numerous benefits: municipalities including Manhattan, Elwood, Wilmington and Joliet share clear common goals; businesses complement rather than cannibalize one another; land use and transportation solutions maintain a high quality of life, protecting globally significant natural resources; development results in sustainable use of transportation infrastructure and natural resources, such as water supply; and diverse interests are united behind resilient infrastructure improvements that accommodate the grand vision for this area. A Comprehensive Plan has gained traction throughout communities in the area, due to increasing pressure and finite resources.

The Comprehensive Plan will achieve the following high-level objectives:

1. Implement WCCFFMP recommendations to collectively address safety, freight mobility, congestion management, impacts on adjacent land uses and environmental, cultural and agriculture resources, noise, congestion, vibration, emergency access, light pollution, aesthetics, air quality, water quality and water management.
2. Create a cluster-wide land-use and development strategy with and for all communities located within or near the Elwood/Joliet Freight Supercluster. The strategy will recognize the sovereign authority of local jurisdictions in land-use planning and development decisions, and the process will facilitate dialogue among diverse interests, including local, state and federal agencies that manage natural, cultural and agricultural resources, as well as industries and non-profits in the study area.
3. Coordinate transportation and land use policies and strategies to align goals and investment opportunities in communities in the project area.
4. Balance performance criteria regarding safety, environmental and agricultural values, economic competitiveness, cost effectiveness, enhanced mobility and quality of life.
5. Provide growth principles that recognize that local governments and community members need to collaborate to support all needs in the project area. Guiding principles in the Comprehensive Plan would provide essential local and regional context that empowers local decision-makers to negotiate future development with clear understanding of associated transportation and land use impacts and all regional costs.
6. Action 6 in the WCCFFMP calls for increased access between population centers and TDL employment centers. (p. 6 Exec. Summary) Identifying land use principles that provide for transit and active transportation options for the workforce required by changing land uses in the study area will be incorporated into the study and final recommendations.

2. Project Description (continued)

The objectives of the proposed study align with all three On To 2050 principles of inclusive growth, resilience and prioritized investment. The Comprehensive Plan will develop model policies and land use planning principles to implement the economic competitiveness and livability goals outlined in the WCCFFMP, preparing the County and its communities for changes in the global marketplace.

The plan will crystalize performance-based criteria to prioritize transportation projects, which will reflect WCCFFMP goals of safety, system preservation and enhancement, economic competitiveness, mobility and healthy, vibrant communities. The Comprehensive Plan process will continue to ensure transparency and full public participation to advise the outcomes. This robust approach will maximize investments and resources, resulting in timelier and more efficient project development and implementation.

The stated goal in On To 2050 to create and implement development practices that recognize and protect valuable and sensitive environmental resources is reflected in the Comprehensive Plan objective to preserve and enhance rich natural, agricultural and cultural resources in the project area. For instance, during the planning process, communities will explore approving an agricultural zone in generational farming areas. In addition, sound development policies and land use planning goals can result in improved mobility and provide additional transportation choices that will reduce GHG emissions and make the system more resilient to stresses caused by climate change.

The Comprehensive Plan will recognize and address critical infrastructure needs in a freight hub integral to the CMAP region, Illinois and the Midwest, providing critical links to the global marketplace. The policies developed through the proposed planning process will provide the basis for communities in Will County to focus on strategic and sustainable development.

In addition, the proposed study reflects Governance chapter goals to meaningfully engage all stakeholders. The planning process will connect all levels of government, County, State, municipalities, federal land owning, regulatory and development agencies and other stakeholders such as industry and environmental NGOs. The outcome with model policies and support for local land use planning is critical to local governments lacking resources to address the growing demand for development.

The WCCFFMP outlined 3 freight superclusters and 2 emerging freight clusters in Will County. The proposed study is focused on the largest supercluster with significant economic and environmental resources. The results of the study will be scalable to the remaining freight clusters in Will County and ideally provide a blueprint for others in the CMAP region and across the nation to help balance economic vitality and community livability, protecting our natural, cultural and human resources.

3. Additional Strategic Partnerships. Please list any additional partners you may want to include in this planning project, and specify if you have made contact with them in advance of submitting this application. (Please limit your response to 1400 characters).

Will County will be the lead agency.

Stakeholders that have been contacted about the study include:

CMAP
Openlands
Sierra Club
Manhattan
Midewin Tall Grass Prairie
IDOT

Study area stakeholders that participated in developing the WCCFFMP, its goals and recommendations that this study implements, but have not yet been specifically contacted about this study, include:

Joliet
Elwood
Wilmington
Will County Governmental League
Will County Center for Economic Development

PLAN CHARACTERISTICS

My project involves:

- The preparation of a plan.
- Updating an existing plan.
- Implementation of a previous plan.
- 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 addresses ON TO 2050 and/or Invest In Transit in other ways.

ON TO 2050 ALIGNMENT

(Please check all that apply)

- Inclusive Growth
- Prioritized Investment
- Resilience

RTA INVEST IN TRANSIT ALIGNMENT

(please check all that apply)

- Deliver Value on our transit investments
- Build on the strengths of the transit network
- Keep transit competitive