

Priority Development Areas

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Background: In February 2012 CNT released *Prospering in Place* (<http://www.cnt.org/repository/Prospering-in-Place.pdf>), which builds on the policy agenda of CMAP's *Go to 2040* Plan. It is a blueprint for reinvigorating the regional economy through a renewed focus on:

- Compact and walkable existing neighborhoods served by transit,
- Freight infrastructure with connections all over the world, and
- Job centers that host Fortune 500 companies and employ a talented and diverse workforce.

CNT calls for formation of Priority Development Areas, which represent communities with these assets or the planning in place to become them. Those investments could include new housing at all price points near transit in suburban downtowns, land assembly and environmental remediation at key rail-served sites, and/or new transit connections to suburban job hubs.

What Are Priority Development Areas? PDAs are geographic areas that stakeholders identify as top opportunities for development and the investment of limited resources. They can be transit-served neighborhoods and suburban downtowns, industrial districts anchored by important freight assets, or job centers. PDAs are communities that either meet a benchmark of housing, jobs, freight service, or transit service right now, or have planning in place and need the resources to get there in the future.

Who Establishes PDAs? Communities with the assets or planning in place volunteer themselves to become PDAs in exchange for commitment of resources to implement their plans. They are not mandated from the "top down". Authority to maintain a list of PDAs could belong to CMAP, which in turn could delegate that responsibility to the COGs that know their member communities best.

Who Commits Resources to PDAs? For this strategy to succeed, a broad cross-section of state, regional, county, and local agencies will need to commit a fixed funding set-aside of transportation, housing, and economic investments towards PDAs. Some of those resources could include allocations from MAP-21 controlled by IDOT and COGs, Community Development Block Grants and HOME funds controlled by Counties and other participating jurisdictions, or the portfolio of economic development programs managed by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.