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Public Participation Plan

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The CMAP Board's vision is to provide the framework that will help our region connect its land use to the transportation systems, preserve its environment, and sustain its economic prosperity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is responsible for comprehensive planning for a seven-county region with more than eight million inhabitants.

CMAP was created by merging the staffs and functions of the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), which were responsible for transportation and land-use planning, respectively, in northeastern Illinois. CMAP serves the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will.

CMAP recognizes that public participation is a key component in effective planning. If northeastern Illinois is to realize its growth potential in the 21st Century, it is essential that the residents of the region have a voice in how the region's plans are formulated.

The purpose of this *Public Participation Plan* is to increase public awareness and participation while widening the range of voices and views in the planning process. The plan explains how CMAP operates, establishes core values for public participation and outlines strategies for increasing public information and participation in the planning process.

A Citizens' Advisory Committee that will monitor the implementation of this plan meets regularly and invites anyone with an interest in regional planning to participate in their meetings and activities.

1.1 Purpose of Plan

This plan seeks to develop a proactive public participation process in northeastern Illinois that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing regional plans and capital programs.

1.2 Summary of Federal Regulations

Federal law requires all metropolitan areas with populations greater than 50,000 people to designate a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to develop transportation plans for the region. It also requires that a Public Participation Plan be created that affords the public a reasonable opportunity to participate in and comment on transportation plans. This plan is intended to fulfill those requirements.

However, transportation planning is just one component of CMAP's mission. As CMAP integrates transportation and land use planning into a broader overall process, the agency intends to conform not only to federal transportation guidelines, but also to guidelines from other local, state and federal agencies whose interests coincide with any of the seven CMAP focus areas described in Section 2.3.

This type of public participation is unprecedented in our region and will require CMAP to create tailor-made programs that are unique to each task we undertake. CMAP will, in effect, be creating an over-arching plan that responds to federal requirements across disciplines (transportation, housing, environment, etc.) and elevates the promise CMAP makes to our residents to partner with them throughout the process.

1.3 New Standards in SAFETEA-LU

Prior to the 2005 passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), CATS followed public participation guidelines contained in earlier iterations of federal transportation law. SAFETEA-LU expanded those guidelines to include the following:

- The definition of “interested parties” to be engaged in statewide and metropolitan transportation planning has been expanded.
- A Participation Plan (required for MPOs)
 - Shall be developed in consultation with “interested parties.”
 - Publish or make available for public view transportation plans, State Transportation Improvement Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs.
 - Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible times and locations.
- Make information available in electronically accessible formats (e.g., the Internet) to the maximum extent practicable.
- Employ visualization techniques to depict statewide and metropolitan transportation plans.

CMAP intends to use the standards set forth in SAFETEA-LU as the basis for its public participation program, expanding on them where necessary to conform to the regulations of other agencies and to better meet the needs of the residents of northeastern Illinois.

Excerpts from the SAFETEA-LU planning regulations can be found in Appendix A.



Chapter 2: Overview of the Chicago Metropolitan Region

2.1 Our Region

The Chicago region faces many challenges as the 21st Century unfolds. Despite having one of the world's most advanced transportation systems, the metropolitan area experiences the third worst traffic delays in the nation, with congestion projected to worsen as the region adds nearly 2 million people and 1.2 million jobs over the next 25 years. Each year, residents spend 253 million hours and 151 million gallons of fuel sitting in traffic jams, at a cost to the region of \$4 billion.

Chicago's economy benefits from having the world's third busiest "port" – handling 37,500 freight cars per day and moving one-third of the rail freight in the country – but it is in danger of becoming a bottleneck. The U.S. Department of Transportation has estimated that freight movements will double nationally over the next 20 years, further exacerbating the problem.

Northeastern Illinois possesses the nation's second largest public transit system, but resources are lagging as costs increase for both capital improvements and operations. While over \$60 billion is expected to be available to maintain and improve the region's transportation system over the next 25 years, over three-quarters of those dollars are needed just to maintain the existing system.

The local economy has also felt the effects — positive and otherwise — of soaring home values. Housing prices for owner-occupied units increased 35 percent in the Chicago area from 2000 to 2004. But during the same period, household incomes increased only 5 percent and the percentage of households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing increased from 29 percent to 38 percent. One result is that people are living farther from where they work, with ever-increasing transportation costs. The shortage of affordable housing near major employment centers contributes to traffic congestion, among other negative economic and social effects.

The region's diversity is an asset, with constantly shifting demographics that merit careful, coordinated analysis. Northeastern Illinois has an aging population, with persons 65 years or older projected to nearly double by 2030. Between 1990 and 2000, new foreign-born residents accounted for 65 percent of the region's total population growth, and that pace continues to accelerate. In 2030, the Latino population will constitute one-third of the region's residents. The U.S. Census "non-Latino white/other" group, which includes the Asian population, is expected to constitute less than half the region's people by 2030.

Natural resources are abundant but under increasing pressure. According to Chicago Wilderness, the rapid development of land for urban uses is the primary threat to the region's unprotected natural lands, and in some cases it is even causing serious degradation of protected lands. Four of the seven counties still have significant percentages of their land in agricultural production: Kane County (60 percent), Kendall (86 percent), McHenry (61 percent), and Will (50 percent). In 2002, the market value of agricultural products from these four counties was well over \$300 million. But increasing development threatens prime farmland and our region's role as a world leader in agricultural production.

The region's eastern border is Lake Michigan, one of the world's largest fresh-water resources, serving the majority of the region's water needs. However, the 2030 population forecasts indicate as many as 23 townships may suffer water deficits of varying severity over the next 25 years; recognition of this growing problem helped prompt a statewide water supply study that was announced in Spring 2006.

As a major center of the global economy, metropolitan Chicago has strengths in technology, freight, manufacturing and tourism. The region is home to headquarters of 30 U.S. Fortune 500 companies and 12 Fortune Global 500 companies. According to World Business Chicago, the region features 98 corporate headquarters, second nationally to New York. Twenty-five percent of the largest 100 employers in the region are in electronics, computers or telecommunications. In 2002, Chicago welcomed 32 million visitors who spent an estimated \$8.5 billion. Yet many business leaders recognize the need for coordination of economic development efforts at the regional level to keep northeastern Illinois globally competitive. More than ever, as communities compete to attract investment in this new economic environment, urban and suburban communities must be on the same team because their futures and fortunes are intertwined.

The region is now at a crossroads, as continued growth is clearly ahead. Yet to be determined is whether that growth will constitute progress rather than an erosion of residents' quality of life. Together, through collaborative planning, decision-makers must shape these trends regionally instead of passively letting them shape our individual communities. Nor are these challenges confined to the geographic boundaries of the seven counties that comprise CMAP; in fact, they impact the entire state of Illinois and cross state boundaries.

2.2 The CMAP Area

The CMAP and MPO Planning Areas both encompass the seven counties in northeastern Illinois: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will. The MPO area also includes Aux Sable Township in Grundy County, which as a result of the last census, is part of the federally-designated urbanized area.



2.3 Description of CMAP

The Regional Planning Act of 2005 created a regional planning board that is now called CMAP. Board members are appointed by the mayor of the City of Chicago and the county chairmen and mayors of each of the seven counties in the region.

General responsibilities of the Regional Planning Board:

- Develop a regional comprehensive plan that integrates land use and transportation every four years;
- Identify regional priorities and coordinate advocacy on behalf of these priorities;
- Develop and maintain a process of public participation to ensure all interests are part of the regional planning process;
- Plan for the most efficient public and private investments in the northeastern Illinois region.

The CMAP Board's vision is to provide the framework that will help our region connect its land use to the transportation systems, preserve its environment, and sustain its economic prosperity. The agency must be responsive to the region's residents, working cooperatively with municipalities and counties that maintain authority for local land-use decisions. To accomplish this, CMAP will:

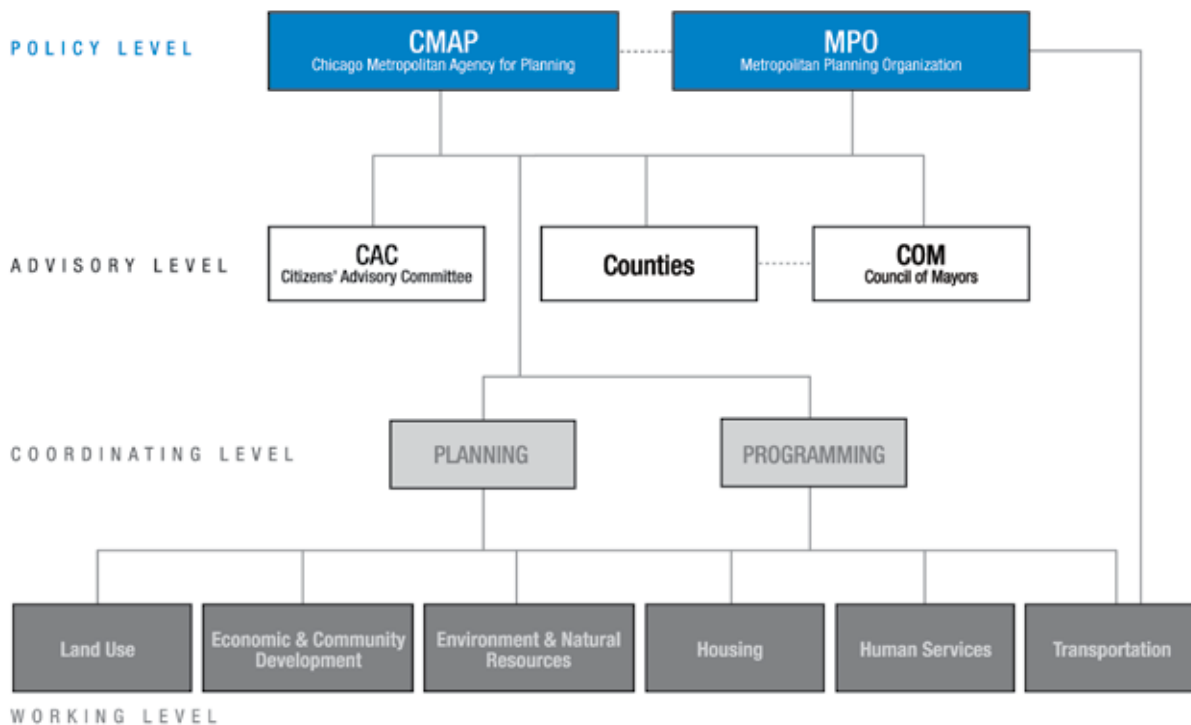
- Develop a comprehensive framework for the region's future through long-range regional plans and strategies.
- Provide high-quality information and analysis through coordinated technical assistance to facilitate regional decision-making.
- Build consensus to identify and advocate for regional priorities.

CMAP's emphasis on comprehensive planning recognizes the interrelationships between various factors, including the impacts they have on each other and collectively on the region. For that reason, the Board and staff have outlined a mission and strategic direction within seven focus areas that include:

- **Research and Analysis** — Be the authoritative source for regional data collection, exchange, dissemination, analysis, evaluation and modeling.
- **Land Use** — Promote coordinated and sustainable development, redevelopment and preservation within the region through collaborative local, county and regional land use planning.
- **Transportation** — Promote a regional transportation system that is safe, efficient and accessible, while sustaining the region's vision related to the natural environment, economic and community development, social equity and public health.
- **Economic and Community Development** — Enhance economic development and a healthy, balanced regional economy integrated into the global economy through regional coordination, planning and outreach.
- **Environment and Natural Resources** — Protect and enhance the region's environmental and ecological health through regional collaboration that actively promotes the adoption of best practices.

- **Housing** — Create a comprehensive regional housing plan as part of an overall comprehensive plan and provide support tools so that projects adhere to the regional framework.
- **Human Services** — Enhance the regional quality of life by being the objective source of information, expertise and policy perspectives for human services issues (e.g., health care, aging, disability, safety) with a regional scope.

2.4 CMAP's Organization



2.5 The MPO and CMAP

Both CATS and NIPC had policy boards made up of local elected officials, state and federal officials, implementing agencies, and impacted interest groups. NIPC was created by state statute, while CATS was created by an intergovernmental agreement between local elected officials and the governor.

In 1974, the governor and local elected officials designated the CATS Policy Committee as the MPO for the northeastern Illinois region, which now includes all of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties, and a portion of Grundy County (Section 2.2).

A shared process between the MPO and the CMAP Board will allow for transportation decision-making that is accomplished through a comprehensive approach that is consistent with the region's vision. Additionally, each of the two boards has representation on the other board to ensure communication exists at the policy level. This relationship was formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix E) between CMAP and the MPO. This plan is intended to guide the public participation process for both entities.

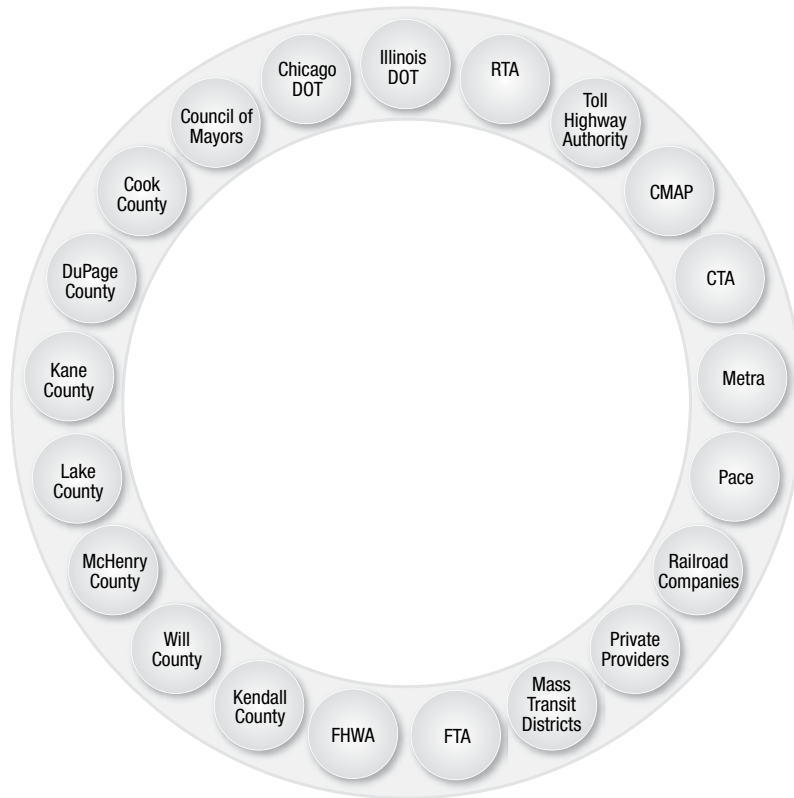
MPO members (Section 2.6) represent 21 organizations: the Illinois Department of Transportation; the Regional Transportation Authority; the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; the Council of Mayors; the City of Chicago Department of Transportation; county governments (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will); the Chicago Transit Authority; Class 1 Railroads; Metra; Pace; the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority; mass transit districts; private transportation providers; the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. The MPO meets four times a year.

The MPO receives direct input from the Council of Mayors Executive Committee, the Transportation Committee, other CMAP committees and the staff.

The Council of Mayors was originally formed as a liaison between CATS and local elected officials throughout the region. The Council is an important transportation decision-making body that, in addition to prioritizing projects for federal transportation funds, plays a key role in ensuring that the long-range plan and multi-year program reflect the needs and concerns of citizens throughout the region.

The Council of Mayors encompasses 282 municipalities organized into 11 suburban regional councils plus the City of Chicago. The subregional councils appoint two mayors each to serve on the Council of Mayors Executive Committee, whose chairman serves on the MPO.

2.6 MPO Members



Chapter 3: Public Involvement

3.1 Foundation for the Practice of Public Participation

To demonstrate its commitment to informing, educating and involving the public, CMAP first reviewed public participation guidelines developed by the International Association for Public Participation, other federal, state and regional agencies, and CATS' Partners in Progress and NIPC's Common Ground Planning processes. Using those as a foundation, CMAP designed and developed its own guidelines for northeastern Illinois. The guidelines are defined below.

- The public should have input in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will be considered in the decision-making process.
- The public participation process communicates the interests and considers the needs of all participants.
- The public participation process seeks out and facilitates involvement of those potentially affected by local and regional plans.
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input influenced the decision.

3.2 CMAP's Strategic Direction for Public Participation

Acknowledging its mission to promote comprehensive planning, CMAP will actively engage the public and the agency's planning partners. The CMAP Citizens' Advisory Committee, the Council of Mayors structure, a committee comprised of county officials, and general agency staff outreach activities will be used to obtain input from the public and our partners.

The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) is asked to:

- Provide advisory input to the CMAP Board on proposed regional plans and policies.
- Provide the CMAP Board with guidance that conveys residents' perspectives.
- Make recommendations regarding the CMAP Public Participation Plan.
- Provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of CMAP outreach and engagement strategies.
- Promote public awareness of CMAP plans and programs, encouraging participation by citizens and other interested parties.
- Assist in dissemination of public information and related materials.

3.3 Public Participation Goals

CMAP has established a set of goals around three areas of Public Participation:

Outreach — the task of identifying and providing notice to participants across multiple demographic sectors;

Engagement — the task of informing, educating, listening and sharing in the planning process;

Sustainability — maintaining the relationships with residents to keep them interested in participating.

Following are the basic steps for effective public participation:

3.3A Outreach

Goal 1: Design and implement outreach activities to facilitate public participation.

Objective: Facilitate effective public participation processes through early notification of upcoming planning cycles, providing for adequate time and resources for outreach activities and evaluation of those activities.

Goal 2: Develop outreach strategies to identify the interested and affected public.

Objective: Increase the number and diversity of people involved in the planning process both regionally and locally by identifying members of the public who have expressed an interest in or may be affected by upcoming activities.

3.3B Engagement

Goal 1: Provide information for the public.

Objective: Provide access to accurate, understandable, pertinent and timely policy, program and technical information to facilitate effective public participation in CMAP decision-making processes.

Goal 2: Provide venues and tools to engage the public in planning dialogue.

Objective: Utilize a variety of activities, events and other public engagement tools so the public can provide meaningful input throughout the decision-making process.

Goal 3: Design and develop materials to increase the underserved public's understanding of regional and local planning, including translating those materials into languages other than English whenever possible.

Objective: To accommodate the needs of traditionally underserved populations, such as low-income, minority, disabled, non-English-speaking and other groups who have not participated in the planning process.

3.3C Sustainability

Goal 1: Review and use input and provide feedback to the public.

Objective: Evaluate and assimilate public viewpoints and preferences into final decisions, where appropriate and possible, and communicate to the public the decisions made and how the public input affected those decisions.

Goal 2: Evaluate public participation activities.

Objective: Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of this *Public Participation Plan* and of all CMAP public participation activities.

3.4 Public Participation Process and Methods

To achieve the aforementioned goals, CMAP has established the following strategies and initiatives to engage the public.

3.4A Outreach

Building on the public participation efforts of CATS and NIPC, CMAP already has in place several specific outreach programs for the northeastern Illinois region. These programs allow CMAP to reach the public through elected officials, community leaders, civic and faith-based groups and other organizations to which they may belong. In-place programs include:

CMAP Board and Committees

CMAP Committees make certain that public participation is considered at the policy, advisory, coordinating, working and staff levels.

Elected Officials Initiative

Includes municipal governments, local and county planning commissions, councils of government, municipal associations and county boards.

Planning Professionals Initiative

Collaborates with public and private sector planning professionals across all disciplines (housing, transportation, economic development, etc.).

Civic Initiative

Continues ongoing contact with community leaders and residents who have been participating in meetings across the seven counties.

Community Initiative

Collaborates with organizations to invite participation from groups and communities of interest and identify those who are traditionally uninvolved or under-involved in the planning process.

Youth Initiative

Collaborates with schools and youth-service organizations to increase the current participation and develop ongoing networks involving youth in planning.

Online Web Initiative ►

Developing an interactive web environment to reach out to the residents of northeastern Illinois and engage them in the CMAP planning process. The web initiative allows and encourages participation in online surveys and other forms of interactive dialogues and responses.



Special Groups Initiative

Reaches out to professional, educational or other groups that have expressed interest in participating in regional planning.

When developing initiatives where outreach is appropriate, agency officials will provide: resources and staff time dedicated to public participation activities; time for conducting and evaluating those activities; and staff and resources to provide technical assistance to the involved public where appropriate.

For each new initiative where outreach is appropriate, CMAP will develop a contact list and add to the list any members of the public who request to be added. CMAP will update each list frequently and strive to ensure lists include the full range of interested and affected parties. CMAP will protect the privacy of individuals on the lists to encourage the broadest possible participation.

Staff can construct these lists of contacts using various methods, including but not limited to, the following:

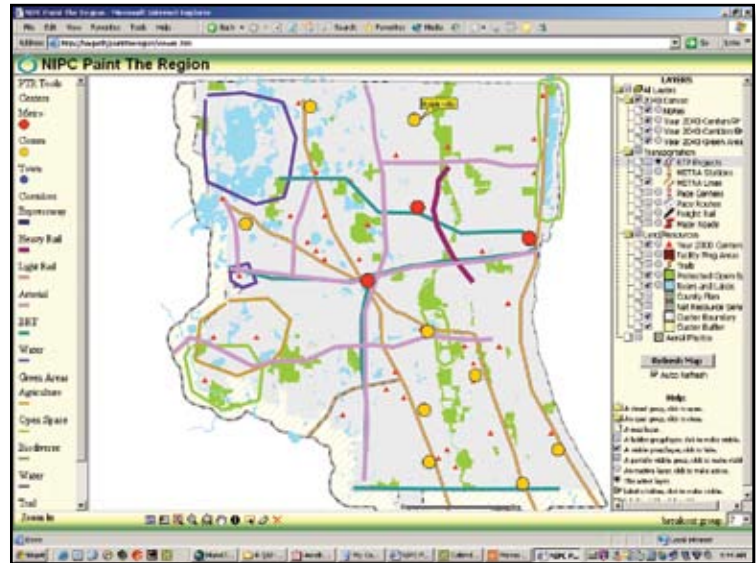
- By providing a mailing list sign-up sheet at workshops, community meetings, hearings and other public events.
- By asking those who attend events which, if any, interest groups are missing.
- By asking our partner agencies and CMAP committee members to provide contact information for other interested parties.
- By using other comprehensive or creative means that consider the community structure, languages spoken, local communications preferences and the locations (such as libraries, churches, schools and other centers) where the community regularly congregates.

3.4B Engagement

Information programs require the use of appropriate communication tools and will be tailored to accommodate the public's familiarity with the subject and means of access. These can include publications, fact sheets, technical summaries, bibliographies, resource guides and electronic materials.

Information Resources & Visualization Tools ►

CMAQ utilizes a variety of printed and electronic tools to inform the public about its mission and programs. Printed materials include pamphlets, brochures, reports, fact sheets, press releases and media advisories, plans, working papers, mailers, working papers and newsletters. Electronic tools include the website, list serves, compact discs, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and CMAQ's "suite" of visualization tools ("Paint the Town," "INDEX PlanBuilder" and "INDEX Insight"), which are GIS-based interactive computer programs that allow participants to create various growth scenarios and compare them to their vision and goals.



Education

CMAQ hosts workshops, seminars, open houses, public meetings and forums, focus groups, press briefings and other meetings to educate the public at places easily accessible to interested and affected persons and organizations. For each meeting, a customized set of tools are employed to both localize the planning process and to place local plans into context within the broader regional planning effort.

Involvement

Feedback from the public is essential to creating plans the public will support. Feedback is obtained through surveys and comment forms distributed on-line and through the U.S. Postal Service; at public meetings, workshops, forums and open houses; from focus groups and advisory committees; and from other organizations that partner with CMAQ in the planning process.

3.4C Sustainability

CMAP strives to continually inform, educate and involve the public in the planning process. In measuring our work, CMAP also intends to continually evaluate what we have done and share those evaluations with the public.

Why CMAP measures:

To ensure resident's concerns and issues are directly considered in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how the public influenced the decision.

What CMAP measures:

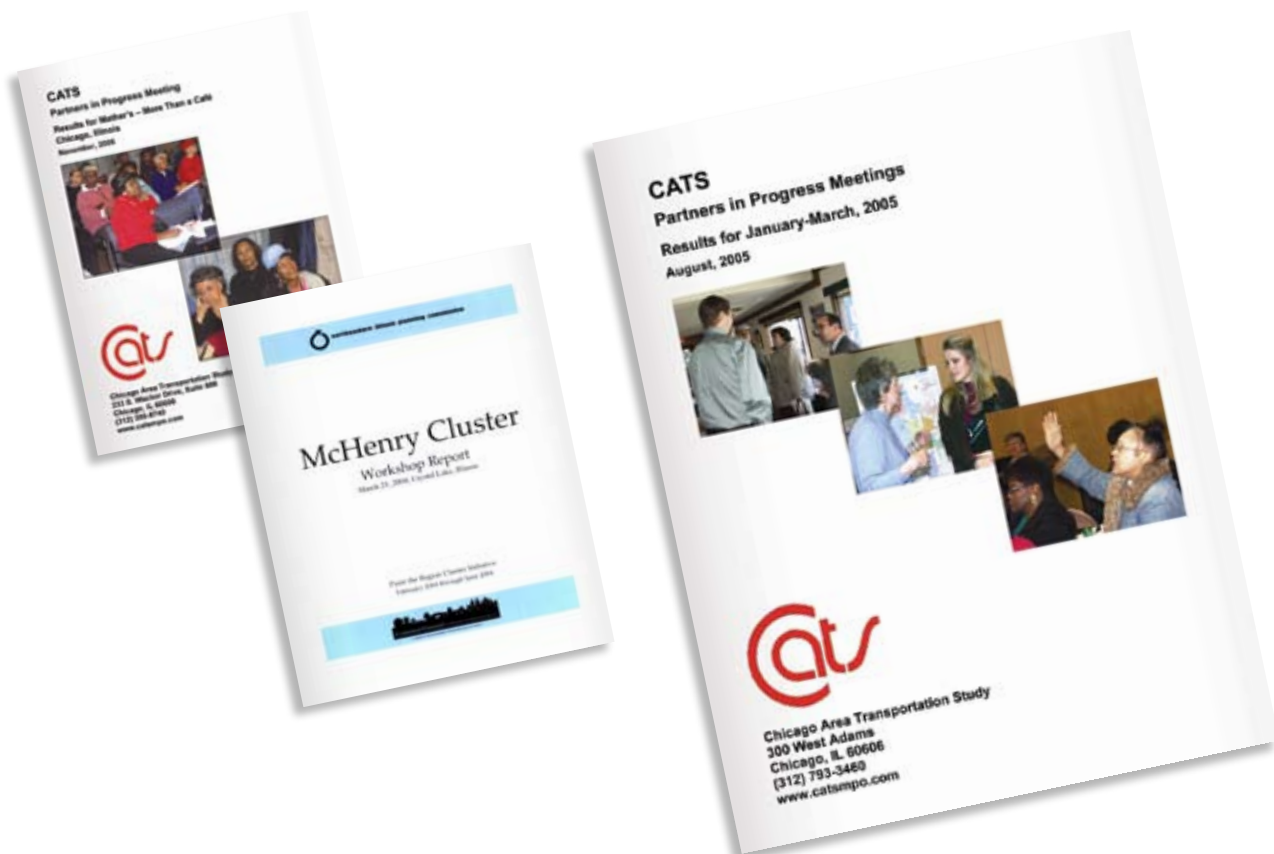
The number of meetings conducted, demographics of attendees, media coverage, the type and quantity of materials presented, translation of materials, website hits, the number of public comments, how those comments changed the plans, how public concerns and preferences were addressed and whether the public understood the information

When CMAP measures:

Following every public outreach event, at the end of every planning cycle, at the end of each calendar year.

Feedback CMAP provides:

Meeting reports, public comment and response reports, analyses on the impact of public response and an Internet-based public comment database.



Chapter 4: Conclusion

Northeastern Illinois is a highly diverse region featuring large urban, suburban, ex-urban and rural areas, numerous socio-economic layers and a multitude of language and ethnic minorities. While diversity gives the region its unique flavor, the interests of the various publics are often competing. CMAP's job is to engage those competing interests in a dialog that results in comprehensive plans that promote the overall well-being of the entire region.

CMAP is committed to a public participation process that involves residents in every step of the planning process — from concept to final construction. Along the way, CMAP will provide the information the public needs to make enlightened decisions, afford opportunities for the public to evaluate and respond to that information, and take the public's response into consideration before finalizing any plans.

There are opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process. This plan is meant to articulate how those opportunities can be facilitated.





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