

CMAP'S 2012 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

Using GO TO 2040 as a guide, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has developed a set of principles to inform federal legislators and other national policy makers about CMAP's positions on national policy issues. This agenda focuses on principles that will help direct CMAP support or opposition to specific pieces of legislation over the course of the federal legislative calendar.

In this day and age, many public policy issues transcend local jurisdictions or can be too large an undertaking for any one unit of government. Issues such as economic development, transportation, and environment require regional cooperation. Regional planning helps coordinate efforts and resources within a metropolitan area, providing state and federal governments with a unified vision for a region's future. As the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) was mandated by state statute to develop and guide the implementation of the region's first comprehensive regional plan, GO TO 2040. The plan builds on the region's assets, identifies shortcomings, and recommends actions that will help sustain the region's economic vitality and global competitiveness over the next thirty years.

PURSUE COORDINATED INVESTMENTS

Metropolitan regions drive the U.S. economy, and this should be reflected in federal policy and programs. An increasingly "regional approach" to investment decisions, which would both invest more in metropolitan areas as well as devolve more appropriate authority for funding decisions to the regional level, harnesses the economic power of regions. Comprehensive regional plans, like GO TO 2040, should guide federal investment decisions since the plan identifies regional priorities by linking transportation, land use, the natural environment, economic prosperity, housing, and human and community development. The federal government has demonstrated great promise in helping to implement plans like GO TO 2040 by creating a set of guiding livability principles through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a joint collaboration among the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Housing and Urban Development, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Legislative Principles:

- CMAP supports legislative initiatives that take a regional approach and foster inter-jurisdictional collaboration. A more robust investment by federal agencies in regional comprehensive planning is central to this goal.
- CMAP supports initiatives and programs that are competitive and based on comprehensive evaluation criteria considering the interconnected focus areas of transportation, land use, housing, the environment, and economic development. Recent examples include the DOT, HUD, and EPA joint Partnership for Sustainable Communities, and TIGER, a competitive performance-based transportation funding program offered through ARRA.

ACHIEVE GREATER LIVABILITY THROUGH LAND USE AND HOUSING

The federal government has an important leadership role to play in helping communities strive toward the principles of livability – healthy, safe, walkable communities which offer transportation choices for access to schools, jobs, services, and basic needs. The Federal government has recently taken steps to evaluate one aspect of the interrelated nature of these issues through HUD’s initiative to create a national Housing and Transportation Affordability Index. As noted under “Pursue Coordinated Investments”, the federal government has increased its support for livable communities and addressed the need to link planning across disciplines through programs like the Sustainable Communities Initiative (which funds CMAP’s Local Technical Assistance Program). These agencies can also prioritize funding to communities engaging in intergovernmental planning, particularly those addressing the interconnected relationship between transportation, land use, and housing. Funding incentives from the federal government to encourage local governments to plan collaboratively for the future will help move northeastern Illinois toward the goal of greater livability.

Legislative Principles:

- CMAP supports continued implementation and expansion of the Sustainable Communities initiative program.
- CMAP supports the prioritization of federal funding to communities engaged in intergovernmental planning.
- CMAP supports targeting housing programs to the rehabilitation of existing housing stock in areas with transit access.

INVEST STRATEGICALLY IN TRANSPORTATION

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the vital importance of strategic transportation investments. Given the transportation system’s importance to the regional economy, this recommendation is especially pertinent in difficult economic times. *GO TO 2040* recommends using existing revenue sources more wisely by implementing performance based criteria rather than historical formulas for funding apportionments and project selection. The plan also recommends increasing user fees, as current revenues are insufficient to maintain, modernize, and expand the regional transportation system. The existing motor fuel tax should be brought up to date with today’s actual costs of maintaining and operating the system. Additionally, the implementation of new more innovative structures including congestion pricing will better reflect the broader social costs of transportation, such as congestion.

See [here](#) for CMAP’s full transportation legislation reauthorization priorities.

Legislative Principles:

- CMAP will support legislative initiatives that increase and index the existing motor fuel tax to support the repair and modernization of the transportation system. Additionally, CMAP will support legislation to permit and encourage innovative transportation finance measures predicated on user fees.
- CMAP will support implementing congestion pricing and managed lane strategies.

- CMAP will support legislative initiatives that empower metropolitan planning organizations to help make strategic transportation investment decisions.
- CMAP will support efforts to improve project selection based upon performance criteria.

CREATE A MORE EFFICIENT FREIGHT NETWORK

Metropolitan Chicago is the nation’s freight hub. An efficient freight system enables a global supply chain to provide goods at lower costs and gives businesses an advantage in today’s global economy. A federal intermodal freight policy can address the efficient movement of goods, and federal resources can be directed to the projects where freight has the greatest national benefit. An overarching federal policy concerning freight would provide valuable guidance as regions attempt to confront freight challenges, many of which are national in their scope.

Legislative Principle:

- CMAP will support a national freight policy with dedicated funding and corridors of national significance.
- CMAP supports securing funding to complete the CREATE Program.

INCREASE COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC TRANSIT

Federal funding for the maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of our region’s public transit remains of vital importance. Public transit is highly valued by northeastern Illinois residents, and modernization of the system is a key recommendation of GO TO 2040. Capital needs continue to outpace available capital revenues, and the system faces a large backlog of deferred maintenance, which impacts service across the region. The use of federal funds for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and improvement projects — rather than just new capacity — is critically important to a region with major supplies of older transit infrastructure, as ours has. GO TO 2040 recommends specifically that the federal government should reform the New Starts funding source in line with these priorities. Additionally, we encourage our federal partners to support transit-oriented development through its transportation, housing, and economic development investments.

Legislative Principle:

- CMAP will support legislative initiatives that provide more resources for the maintenance and modernization of our transit system, that encourage innovative transit finance, and that provide for reasonable expansion of the transit system as described in GO TO 2040.
- CMAP supports revising the federal “New Starts” program to support reinvestment in existing infrastructure rather than solely new expansions.

MANAGE AND CONSERVE WATER & ENERGY RESOURCES

The conservation of water and energy is a top priority for GO TO 2040. Like other places in the country, the region has historically suffered under-investment in drinking water infrastructure, leading to unnecessary leakage and reliability problems. Wastewater infrastructure funding has

also been inadequate to meet identified needs. One of CMAP's major goals is to promote the investment in water and wastewater infrastructure necessary to maintain and improve service for residents, use water efficiently, and protect the environment. In addition, the Great Lakes are beset by numerous threats including invasive species, water level declines and ongoing and legacy pollution. The federal government can support the restoration of the Great Lakes through cleanup of legacy contamination, reduction of non-point contamination sources, and promotion of green infrastructure, and full implementation of the Great Lakes Compact, which will ensure a cooperative, performance-based investment process that balances ecological and economic goals.

The federal government can provide local and regional funding assistance for communities to reduce energy consumption in buildings through retrofits. It can also redouble efforts to transition away from centralized electricity generation with inefficient long-distance transmission and toward smaller-scale, decentralized generation, and the "smart grid." This will enable better demand management, and more intelligent utilization of capacity. The federal government can also invest in and provide incentives for research, production, and transmission of clean energy technologies and alternative fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Lastly, national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions would be an important step for combating climate change.

Legislative Principles:

- CMAP supports federal initiatives that encourage water efficiency, that take a "green infrastructure" approach to water resources management, and protect the Great Lakes, including implementation of the Great Lake Compact.
- CMAP supports regional funding assistance for communities to reduce energy consumption in buildings through retrofits as well as federal investment in smart grid applications.
- CMAP supports additional federal investment in water/sewer infrastructure and encourages the use of pricing to manage demand and recover the full cost of infrastructure through rates.
- CMAP supports national targets for reducing greenhouse gas reductions and federal support for strategies for achieving those goals. In conjunction CMAP encourages the federal government to allow regions latitude to implement the most relevant local strategies to attain the targets.

IMPROVE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Researchers, business leaders, and elected officials agree that the quality of our workforce is one of the most important factors — if not the most important — in strengthening the region's economy. Not just in the region but across the U.S., student achievement has been declining compared to other industrialized nations. In order to reverse this trend and grow a high quality workforce, the federal government can strengthen and expand strategies that link employers, educators, and other workforce development entities. The federal government should increase flexibility and funding for workforce development programs and better coordinate them with

education and economic development efforts. The federal government should also play a role in monitoring impacts and communicating outcomes.

Legislative Principles:

- CMAP supports legislative initiatives that align workforce development, education, and economic development initiatives to measure outcomes, and efforts that improve data-driven decision making.
- CMAP supports federal financing for education and training that is aligned with businesses' needs and is coordinated with other related systems, including economic development.

SUPPORT ECONOMIC INNOVATION

Economic innovation, the development and commercialization of new products and processes, is a key driver of economic performance. Recent federal programs and policies have recognized the fact that regions are the drivers of our nation's economy. Investing in regional economic innovation is gaining importance in federal policy as a way to support economic growth. Federal financing can harness the power of regional industry clusters and help transition start-up firms from incubator programs into the business world. The federal government can help create innovation through a robust national policy agenda, which includes incentives for regional collaboration across stakeholder groups and developing regional clusters of innovation.

Legislative Principle:

- CMAP supports funding for the America Competes Act which invests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and fosters innovative research and commercialization. This bill has been signed into law. Now, Congress must appropriate the adequate funding. Of significant regional interest is that the legislation authorizes the creation of a "regional innovation program" to "encourage and support the development of regional innovation strategies, including regional innovation clusters". A new competitive grant program would make awards available to regional cluster initiatives on a matching basis.
- CMAP will support legislative initiatives that improve data-driven decision making and target investments towards industry clusters.

EXPAND AND IMPROVE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Much of the park or open space issues are governed by state or local jurisdiction, but the federal government can play a central role. Less than half of the residents of the CMAP region have access to adequate park and recreation areas near their homes, even though numerous studies have shown that such areas have a beneficial effect on both physical and mental health. The federal government should support direct investment in open space, particularly to preserve large "macrosites." This can happen through formation of national wildlife refuges, or the transfer of surplus federal property to open space uses, as occurred at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Fort Sheridan.

Legislative Principles:

- CMAP supports direct federal investment in open space preservation. This could include additional grant funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Urban Park Recreation Recovery programs, the formation of national wildlife refuges or the transfer of surplus federal property to open space.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOODS

There is growing concern about the environmental impacts, safety, and quality of our food. Also gaining widespread attention are the disparities of access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable foods and the health implications of “food deserts” (areas without nearby retail outlets that have fresh, nutritious, and affordable food). The federal government can support local food production by providing the tools and resources necessary to ensure that its farmland preservation investments and general agricultural subsidies promote viable local food systems. The federal government can support a variety of demonstration programs to evaluate different means of providing better food access in food deserts, including funding these efforts and communicating best practices.

Legislative Principle:

- CMAP supports legislative initiatives that facilitate sustainable local food production, increase access to safe fresh and affordable and healthy foods, and that improve data, research, training, and information sharing.

CONTACTS:

Laura Wilkison
Consultant for Federal Affairs
773-454-3897
laura.wilkison@sbcglobal.net

Jill Leary
Chief of Staff
312-386-8662
jleary@cmap.illinois.gov

ABOUT CMAP

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP developed and now leads the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. To address anticipated population growth of more than 2 million new residents, GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.