



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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The Economic and Community Development Committee began a discussion about quality of life in the CMAP region and concurred that it was important to begin a process whereby we can track aspects of quality of life similar to reports and projects of other regions like Jacksonville, Houston, and Portland. As planning for the regional comprehensive plan moved forward the committee identified five major themes that were considered their priority going into the visioning event. The five major themes identified were Balanced Economy and Land, Education/Workforce Development and Job Training, Economic Development, Transportation, and Capacity Building. It was determined that these five major themes would become a beta study for a working draft of quality of life indicators.

Within each theme several indices were mentioned that would help quantify that particular theme. For example, under the theme economic development some indicators included net employment growth, venture capital investment, trade flows. Under the theme education/workforce development and job training some indicators were high school graduation rates, participation in workforce development programs. The lists are not exclusive nor are they exhaustive. The working committee chose five indicators that would serve as the first hit. These included vacancy rates, average rental rate per square foot, net employment growth, number of community organizations, and number of research and development organizations. The sources of these primary indicators came from state and federal sources. This will facilitate comparisons with other regions and cities in the future. It also guarantees uniformity in data collection and we can compare oranges to oranges.

The initial grab of data was quite simple as most data came from the Census Bureau, Illinois Department of Employment Security, and CoStar – a real estate information database. As the beta-group proceeds there are ways forward to help shape the report and the type of data we collect. The first item would be to create target goals or quality goals based on the major themes approved by the committee. These themes have also been fed into the comprehensive plan. When target goals are created indicators can be established that best quantify and track our progress towards the goals established from our major themes. The second item is to establish indicator selection guidelines similar to the Jacksonville, Florida report. Several have been adapted from their report to assist in indicator collection for the beta study. Such a selection process has been suggested below.

### Indicator Selection Guidelines

Indicators will be selected and maintained based on the following criteria:

**Purpose:** The indicator is both meaningful (it provides information valuable for people to understand important aspects of their quality of life) and useful (it offers a sense of direction for additional research, planning, and action toward positive regional changes and a means of assessing progress toward these desired changes).

**Importance:** The indicator measures an aspect of the quality of life which a diverse group of people in the region would agree is important in relation to the priorities in the regions vision and comprehensive plan.

**Validity and accuracy:** If the indicator trend line moves upward or downward, a diverse group of people in the region would agree on whether the quality of life is improving or declining.

**Relevance:** The indicator measures an aspect of the regions quality of life that the can be improved through public decision making and action at the local and regional level.

**Understandability:** The indicator measures an aspect of the regions quality of life in a way that most people can easily understand and interpret in relation to their own lives.

**Availability and timeliness:** Data for the indicator are readily available and affordably accessible on an annual basis from a credible public or private source.

**Stability and reliability:** Data for the indicator can be collected, compiled, and calculated in the same way each year.

**Scale:** The indicator is reported for a geographic area that is most meaningful for the regions understanding and most helpful for improvement. For many indicators, both regional and single-county trend lines are reported.

**Clarity:** The indicator uses measures that filter out extraneous factors. Per-person rates filter out the effect of population growth, and constant dollars eliminate the effect of inflation. Raw numbers are used where magnitudes are important.

Indicator: Per Capita personal income<sup>i</sup>

Per capita personal income (dollars)	AreaName	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	United States	29,843	30,562	30,795	31,466	33,090	34,471
	Illinois	32,182	32,516	32,847	33,746	34,794	36,264
	Cook	33,915	34,517	35,192	35,728	37,414	39,423
	DuPage	46,216	45,096	44,666	45,677	46,560	48,472
	Kane	30,670	30,819	30,186	30,398	31,324	32,515
	Kendall	31,154	31,674	31,157	30,703	30,690	30,972
	Lake	46,198	45,757	45,567	46,086	47,415	48,906
	McHenry	33,358	33,374	33,251	33,520	34,105	35,265
	Will	29,945	29,932	29,597	29,800	30,440	31,520
	NE IL	35,812	36,051	36,348	36,851	38,219	39,985

**Purpose:** Per capita personal income measures financial wealth and estimates income of individuals in the region. It is meaningful because it allows us to know on average how much people are earning in the county. It is useful as a baseline in understanding financial stability and if the personal income levels are on par with the cost of living.

**Importance:** The measure is important and measures an aspect of life everyone can relate to: how much am I earning and what is the average earning potential for where I live? As the region plans comprehensively income factors into quality of life, the notion of equity, and an income that is competitive with other U.S. regions.

**Validity and Accuracy:** If the trend line moves upward or downward, people in the region would agree whether the quality of life is improving or declining.

**Relevance:** The indicator measures an aspect of quality of life that can be improved by public decision making especially when compared with wage data, employment information, etc.

**Understandability:** The indicator is easily understood by a diverse group in the region because it relates directly to their bank accounts and ability to live.

**Availability and Timeliness:** The data for the indicator comes from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and is ready on an annual basis. It covers the United States.

**Stability and Reliability:** Data for the indicator can be collected, compiled, and calculated in the same way each year by access to the BEA's website.

**Scale:** Single cross-county trend lines are reported as well as a proxy for the northeastern Illinois region.

**Clarity:** Raw numbers are used according to the methodology of the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Indicator: Employment:<sup>ii</sup>

Employed	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cook	2,596,408	2,550,146	2,454,658	2,428,004	2,426,520	2,420,303	2,506,715
DuPage	511,994	507,406	492,775	490,744	494,408	495,852	513,555
Kane	212,203	217,176	218,226	224,291	232,143	237,175	245,642
Kendall	31,290	32,332	33,179	35,737	38,887	42,608	44,129
Lake	325,926	323,596	321,999	323,855	330,152	342,977	354,304
McHenry	145,929	147,904	147,426	151,274	155,858	160,222	165,942
Will	267,410	275,457	278,816	289,601	306,446	319,603	331,014
Region	4,091,160	4,054,017	3,947,079	3,943,506	3,984,414	4,018,740	4,161,301
Illinois	6,176,800	6,113,500	5,969,400	5,942,700	6,012,300	6,113,000	6,315,700

**Purpose:** Employment is a meaningful indicator for it allows people to see how many people have jobs in the region as well as in there particular county. It is useful because it allows us to see employment trends and know if employment is growing or declining. This can inform additional research to see why it is growing or declining and what might be the factors affecting it.

**Importance:** Employment is important in relation to the priorities in the regions vision and comprehensive plan.

**Validity and Accuracy:** When this trend line moves people listen and action is taken by diverse stakeholders to improve the indicator.

**Relevance:** The indicator is relevant to an aspect of the quality of life and can be improved through public decision making and action at the local and regional level.

**Understandability:** A diverse set of people can understand the measure and interpret in relation to their own lives. When compared to population totals people can understand what percent of the county population is employed and how employable are the people in the region.

**Availability and Timeliness:** The data is available annually through the Illinois Department of Employment Security's (IDES) Local Area Unemployment Service.

**Stability and Reliability:** The data can be collected, compiled, and calculated the same way each year via access to IDES web page or contacts.

**Scale:** The indicator is reported at a county level, regional level and can be compared to the state and the nation. This will aid county improvement as well as regional understanding of employment trends.

**Clarity:** The indicator uses raw numbers according to IDES methodology and is clear.

Indicator: Vacancy rates:<sup>iii</sup>  
 (# bldgs)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Industrial/Flex							
NE Region	7.2%(15,881)	9.3%(16,009)	10.0%(16,121)	9.8%(16,227)	10.2%(16,333)	10.2%(16,450)	9.9%(16,530)
IL	7.1%(16,141)	9.1%(16,271)	9.8%(16,386)	9.6%(16,495)	10.0%(16,607)	10.2%(16,731)	10.2%(16,815)
Office Space							
NE Region	10.6%(7,663)	14.3%(7,783)	15.1%(7,855)	15.8%(7,927)	15.9%(8,011)	14.6%(8,110)	13.8%(8,201)
IL	10.6%(7,853)	14.2%(7,975)	15.1%(8,051)	15.7%(8,126)	15.8%(8,212)	14.5%(8,317)	13.8%(8,412)

**Purpose:** The indicator is meaningful because it provides data on use of office and industrial space. This information is useful to business and companies to understand availability of space and offers a sense of direction for further research to understand the trends in space related to industry in the region.

**Importance:** The indicator measures an aspect of the quality of life which the business community and economic and community developers in the region is important in relation to the priorities in the regions vision and comprehensive plan. The data can also be provided on a county level and can indicate the type of space predominately used and if it is being used.

**Validity and Accuracy:** If the trend line moves a diverse group of people would agree whether the quality of life is improving or declining. It would indicate the business activity in terms office or industrial space being used in the county and region.

**Relevance:** It measures an aspect that can be improved through decision making and action at the local and regional levels. It can inform decision makers of market trends with up to date information in their county and in the region.

**Understandability:** This is an indicator that might be anecdotal to the common person but understandable to those who work in industry, business, and development.

**Availability and Timeliness:** Data for the indicator is available through CoStar a real estate database. CMAP has a license to use the data. As long as the agency retains that license the data will be available. They are a credible source of local real estate market information.

**Stability and Timeliness:** Data for the indicator can be collected, compiled, and calculated in the same way each year by a dedicated staff person with access to the CoStar database. The data is only available for the Midwest real estate market and not for the nation or coastal areas.

**Scale:** The indicator is reported for the region as well as individual counties.

**Clarity:** The indicator uses a percentage based on total available buildings classified as industrial, office, and flex. When the total number is given the percentage, based out of 100, is an indicator of vacancy. A raw number could possibly be used. The absorption rate might also be a substitute for vacancy rate.

Indicator: Number of Farms:<sup>iv</sup>

	NE REGION			Illinois		
	1992	1997	2002	1992	1997	2002
Number of Farms	3,971	3,587	3,358	77,610	79,112	73,027
AC of Land in Farms	1,088,544	1,020,851	935,636	27,250,340	27,673,285	27,310,833

**Purpose:** The indicator is meaningful as it provides information on the agricultural aspect of the northeastern Illinois region. It is useful for additional research on farm production, farm land and land-use for future planning.

**Importance:** It measures an aspect deemed important to the regions vision and comprehensive planning as agriculture, especially as it relates to sustainability, will factor in to the future of the region.

**Validity and Accuracy:** If the trend line moves upward or downward, stakeholders would agree whether the quality of life is improving or declining as it relates to open space, production, and markets.

**Relevance:** It measures an aspect that can be improved by public decision and action at local and regional level based on the vision and strategy as it relates to agriculture.

**Understandability:** It is an indicator that many people can understand in relation to their surroundings and the county they live in.

**Availability and Timeliness:** Data is readily available through the USDA agriculture census that occurs every five years.

**Stability and Reliability:** Data can be collected, compiled, and calculated in the same way as data becomes available through the USDA census materials.

**Scale:** The indicator is reported for the region, state, and nation. It is also reported by county. Other geographic locations may also be gathered for comparisons.

**Clarity:** The indicator uses whole numbers as tabulated by USDA methodology for their census.

Indicator: Capacity building/Social capital:<sup>v</sup>

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 Services

	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Cook, IL	314	305	298	312	321	310
Du Page, IL	41	43	42	35	38	38
Kane, IL	18	16	15	13	14	12
Kendall, IL	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake, IL	24	22	20	21	13	14
McHenry, IL	5	4	2	3	3	2
Will, IL	21	13	11	8	10	7
NE Region	423	403	388	392	399	383
Illinois	606	573	544	562	553	527

**Purpose:** The indicator is meaningful because it tells the region how many such organizations are in the region providing a common good. It is useful for future research and planning when seeking out those services that provide in-kind services and money to organizations and individuals.

**Importance:** It measures an important aspect of the region namely social capital and the means for growing a base of organizations that build capacity for services to many agencies.

**Validity and Accuracy:** If the trend line moves upward or downward a diverse group of people would agree that the quality of life is improving or declining.

**Relevance:** By knowing how many organizations exist further studies and assistance can improve that base and expand its abilities to provide services in the region.

**Understandability:** It measures an aspect many people can understand and appreciate in relation to their lives, their communities and their regions.

**Availability and Timeliness:** Data for the indicator is available through the US Census Bureau's County Business Patterns and is available every other year.

**Stability and Reliability:** The information can be collected, compiled, and calculated the same way each year through the Census web page.

**Scale:** The indicator is reported for the region, state, and by county.

**Clarity:** The data is in whole numbers as tabulated through the methodology of the Census Bureau.

## Conclusion and Future Steps

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the usefulness of the Indicator Selection Guidelines and to report on five basic indicators selected as the beta-test group. In the coming months new indicators will be added to the list subject to this criteria.

Next steps in the process of building a quality of life report include:

- Create target goals for each theme or each indicator selected for the report. A potential question to ask is where would the region like to see itself in coming years in regards to this indicator?
- Develop criteria for cities and regions of comparison. Where data is available at a national level we can compare the northeastern Illinois region to other areas.

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>i</sup> Personal income is the income that is received by persons from all sources. It is calculated as the sum of wage and salary disbursements, supplements to wages and salaries, proprietors' income with inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustments, rental income of persons with capital consumption adjustment, personal dividend income, personal interest income, and personal current transfer receipts, less contributions for government social insurance. This measure of income is calculated as the personal income of the residents of a given area divided by the resident population of the area. In computing per capita personal income, BEA uses the Census Bureau's annual midyear population estimates.

<sup>ii</sup> The data comes from the Illinois Department of Employment Security Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). The employed are those who, during the reference week (the week including the twelfth day of the month), (a) did any work as paid employees, worked in their own business or profession or on their own farm, or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in an enterprise operated by a member of their family, or (b) were not working but who had jobs from which they were temporarily absent. Each employed person is counted only once, even if he or she holds more than one job.

<sup>iii</sup> The data is provided through CoStar Real Estate database analytical reports. Data indicates vacancy as of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of every year. Not yet reported are the total number of properties in that year. This data will be added accordingly.

<sup>iv</sup> Census of Agriculture Illinois by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture – 1992, 1997, 2002.  
[http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Illinois/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Illinois/index.asp)

<sup>v</sup> Data comes from County Business Patterns by the US Census Bureau.