

CMAP



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Federal Agenda

2015





# Introduction

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP's Board continues to reflect and build upon the regional consensus that led to the agency's creation. It is governed with balanced membership from the City of Chicago, suburban Cook County, and the collar counties.

CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan, first adopted in 2010 and updated in 2014. GO TO 2040 builds on the region's assets, identifies shortcomings, and recommends actions to help sustain the region's economic vitality and global competitiveness over the next 25 years. To promote regional mobility, it calls on the region to invest strategically in transportation, increase its commitment to public transportation, and create a more efficient freight network.

This document first presents CMAP's adopted transportation reauthorization principles. It then describes CMAP's broader principles to inform potential federal legislation across a wide range of topics.

# Legislative Agenda for Transportation Reauthorization

With the expiration of MAP-21 approaching, CMAP calls on the federal government to:

- Provide sustainable, robust funding for surface transportation, including both highways and transit.
- Implement performance-based funding.
- Provide regions the appropriate tools to support the transportation system.
- Support a robust freight program.
- Continue to streamline the project review process.

CMAP seeks **robust, sustainable funding** commensurate with a strong federal role in transportation. CMAP has long advanced the user-fee approach to transportation funding, and also supports the greater participation of private capital and other innovative approaches to project financing.

CMAP is concerned not only with how funds are raised, but also how they are spent. The next long-term transportation reauthorization bill is an opportunity to ensure that both the formula (i.e., the core programs) and discretionary (i.e., the competitive programs) components of the federal program are based on strong **performance measures**, better acknowledging the nation's capital needs and bringing the federal program to a greater emphasis on meaningful outcomes. Additionally, CMAP recognizes the need to continue **streamlining the project review process without sacrificing its integrity**.

Given metropolitan regions' importance as transportation hubs and centers of economic activity, the next reauthorization bill should build upon the federal-state-local partnership by providing appropriate tools to **strengthen the roles of metropolitan areas**. For example, the federal restriction on tolling the Interstate system should be removed, and the decision to pursue tolling should be left to local and state leaders. Allowing local and state decision-makers to toll the Interstate system provides them with the tools to effectively fund and manage the most critical component of the National Highway System. Additionally, the next reauthorization bill can strengthen the federal partnership by further empowering MPOs to make strategic investment decisions and allocate resources directly, given their greater knowledge of local needs.

Lastly, metropolitan regions must play a key role in a **national freight program**. Metropolitan Chicago is a strategic hub in national and global supply chains, and yet—like other regions with considerable freight traffic—it also bears the brunt of congestion, pollution, capital expense, and community disruption caused by goods movement. The next reauthorization bill should build on MAP-21's freight emphasis by providing dedicated funding for freight improvements and integrating metropolitan regions into the freight investment decision-making process. These views have been echoed by other major MPOs across the country.

For more information on CMAP's adopted policy positions, please see <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/about/legislative-policy-statements>.

# Legislative Principles for Resilient Metropolitan Regions

One of the nation's few global economic centers, metropolitan Chicago is home to a diverse mix of industries, vast physical infrastructure and open space, and preeminent educational, cultural, and arts institutions. To support its long-term prosperity, as well as that of the state and nation, the region requires prudent federal investment and policy. Using GO TO 2040 as a guide, CMAP has developed a set of principles to inform federal legislators and other decision-makers on national policy issues that can strengthen metropolitan regions. The following discusses GO TO 2040's principles, which will direct CMAP's support or opposition to specific pieces of legislation over the course of the federal legislative calendar.



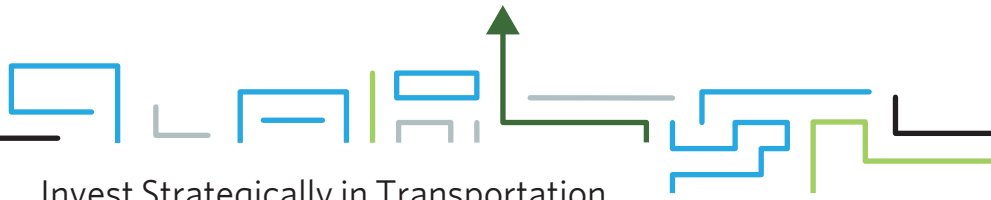
## Pursue Coordinated Investments

Metropolitan regions drive the U.S. economy, and many of their policy issues transcend local boundaries. An increasingly regional approach would invest more in metropolitan areas as well as devolve more appropriate authority for funding decisions to the regional level, tackling many issues at the right scale and harnessing the economic power of regions. Federal investment decisions should be guided by comprehensive regional plans like GO TO 2040 that identify regional priorities by linking transportation, land use, the natural environment, economic prosperity, housing, and human and community development.

### **Legislative Principles**

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives that take a regional approach and foster inter-jurisdictional collaboration. A more robust investment by federal agencies such as the U.S. DOT, HUD, and EPA 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 topics of transportation, land use, housing, the environment, and economic development. Past examples include the former Sustainable Communities Initiative and the TIGER transportation funding program.*



## Invest Strategically in Transportation

GO TO 2040 recommends using existing revenue sources more wisely by implementing performance-based criteria for both funding apportionments and project selection. These metrics should include broader elements of livability along with traditional engineering criteria and should be the hallmark of a more transparent decision-making process.

As current revenues are insufficient to maintain, modernize, and expand the regional transportation system, GO TO 2040 also recommends raising additional revenues, specifically through user fees. Further, the existing motor fuel tax should be indexed to inflation to increase with changes in construction costs over time. However, GO TO 2040 recognizes that changes in travel behavior and vehicle technologies will require a replacement to the motor fuel tax in the long term, and encourages continued analysis, pilot projects, and implementation of options such as a vehicle-miles traveled fee.

The implementation of new approaches to transportation funding such as congestion pricing will better manage the transportation system by reflecting the broader costs of transportation. To that end, the federal government can empower states and regions to provide adequate, sustainable funding for transportation by allowing tolls on the existing Interstate system.

### **Legislative Principles**

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives that increase the existing motor fuel tax and index it to inflation to maintain and modernize the transportation system. Additionally, CMAP supports legislation to permit and encourage innovative transportation funding measures predicated on user fees.*

*CMAP supports implementing congestion pricing on new and existing infrastructure and removing federal restrictions on tolling the Interstate system.*

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives that empower metropolitan planning organizations to make strategic transportation investment decisions and allocate resources accordingly. CMAP supports efforts to improve project selection based upon performance criteria, including those that reflect livable communities.*



## Create a More Efficient Freight Network

While MAP-21 advances national freight policy, the next reauthorization bill should make that policy stronger by providing a dedicated source of revenue and incentives to promote greater investment in freight mobility. It should also include a truly multimodal vision and a strong role for regional agencies in setting freight priorities.

Metropolitan Chicago is the nation's freight hub. Federal policy should recognize the importance of critical hubs and chokepoints in the national freight system, directing funds to the projects with the greatest national benefit. An overarching federal policy for freight would provide valuable guidance as regions attempt to confront freight challenges, many of which have national impacts.

### **Legislative Principles**

*CMAP supports a national freight policy with dedicated funding and a focus on freight projects and multimodal corridors of national significance.*

*CMAP supports an analysis of the future capacity of the national freight system to support the efficient, balanced movement of goods across modes.*

*CMAP supports securing federal funding to complete the CREATE Program, a collection of 70 rail projects aimed at improving freight and passenger mobility in the Chicago region.*





## Increase Commitment to Public Transit

Public transportation is essential to the future economic prosperity of our region, but after decades of underinvestment, substantial funding is needed just to reach a good state of repair, and even more funding will be needed to modernize the system to world-class standards. Federal funding for public transit remains of vital importance. The New Starts program is the primary federal funding source for large transit projects. While MAP-21 expanded the eligibility of New Starts funding to allow rehabilitation, reconstruction, and improvement projects—rather than just new capacity—it did not make other reforms to level the playing field between transit and highway for large expansion projects. For transit, the New Starts program requires a substantial local match, and engineering work cannot begin without a Full Funding Grant Agreement. In contrast, a large highway expansion project is subject to the lower, standard local match and has more flexibility in using federal funds for engineering work. Additionally, federal agencies should support transit-oriented development through their transportation, housing, and economic development investments. Moreover, the federal income tax code should encourage transit ridership by ensuring that tax benefits for commuters provide parity for transit and parking.

### **Legislative Principles**

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives that provide more resources for the maintenance and modernization of transit systems, transit-oriented development, and reasonable expansion of transit systems.*

*CMAP supports revising federal requirements to eliminate the funding disadvantage between transit projects and highway projects.*

*CMAP supports reinstituting fairness between parking and transit tax benefit programs.*



## 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 that offer transportation choices for access to schools, jobs, services, and basic needs. While the federal government had taken steps in the past to support livable communities, in recent years it has failed to provide funding for collaborative planning and grant programs like the Sustainable Communities Initiative or the proposed Office of Economic Resilience. Federal agencies can prioritize funding to communities engaging in intergovernmental planning, particularly those addressing the interconnected relationship between transportation, land use, and housing. For example, federal housing programs can be targeted in areas that provide multiple transportation options.

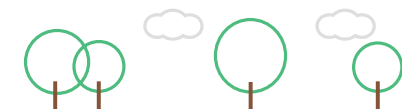
### **Legislative Principles**

*CMAP supports adequate and reliable funding for comprehensive metropolitan planning.*

*CMAP supports funding for the implementation and expansion of programs like the Sustainable Communities Initiative that link planning and investment decisions across disciplines.*

*CMAP supports prioritizing federal funding to support communities engaged in intergovernmental planning.*

*CMAP supports targeting housing programs toward the rehabilitation of existing housing stock in areas with transit access.*



## Manage and Conserve Water and Energy Resources

One of CMAP's major goals is to promote investment in water supply, stormwater management, and wastewater infrastructure necessary to maintain and improve service for residents, use water efficiently, and protect the environment. The federal government is a key player in providing funding assistance to states and local governments and should use these programs to encourage best practices such as green stormwater infrastructure and full-cost pricing for water service.

The Great Lakes are of unique interest to northeastern Illinois, but they face numerous threats including invasive species, water level fluctuations, and pollution. The federal government can support restoration of the Great Lakes through cleanup of pollution, reduction of nonpoint-source contamination, promotion of green infrastructure, and full implementation of the Great Lakes Compact.

GO TO 2040 supports energy conservation efforts. The federal government can provide funding for communities to reduce energy consumption in buildings through retrofits. It can also redouble efforts through programs like the Smart Grid Investment Program that encourage a transition away from centralized electricity generation toward decentralized generation and the "smart grid." Doing so will enable more effective use of existing 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, climate change is a critical issue at all levels. Comprehensive climate legislation at the federal level that addresses greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors would be the most efficient and effective way to combat the risks associated with a changing climate. Additionally, assistance is needed to help communities adapt to climate change effects that are already occurring. Rules governing planning and design for federally funded projects may need to be reviewed to ensure the nation's infrastructure is more resilient to climate change.

### **Legislative Principles**

*CMAP supports additional federal investment in water and sewer infrastructure and encourages the use of pricing to manage demand and recover the full cost of service through water rates.*

*CMAP supports protecting the Great Lakes through a green infrastructure approach to stormwater management, mitigating the spread of invasive species, and implementing the Great Lakes Compact.*

*CMAP supports federal initiatives that encourage water efficiency through a congressionally endorsed WaterSense program.*

*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 national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and federal involvement in strategies to achieve these goals, as well as funding and technical assistance for local efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change. CMAP encourages the federal government to allow regions latitude to implement the most relevant local strategies to attain these targets.*



## Expand and Improve Parks and Open Space

Fewer than half of the residents of the CMAP region have access to adequate park and recreation areas near their homes. Although most park and open space is provided by state or local jurisdictions, the federal government can still play a central role. The federal government should support direct investment in open space, particularly to preserve large sites. This can happen through formation of national wildlife refuges, as has begun at the newly established Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, or the transfer of surplus federal property to open space uses, as occurred at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Fort Sheridan.

### **Legislative Principle**

*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 food, as well as the need for equitable access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable foods. Federal policy should recognize the importance of local food production and support demonstration programs to improve food access to disadvantaged communities.

### **Legislative Principle**

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives that facilitate sustainable local food production and increase access to safe, fresh, affordable, and healthy foods.*



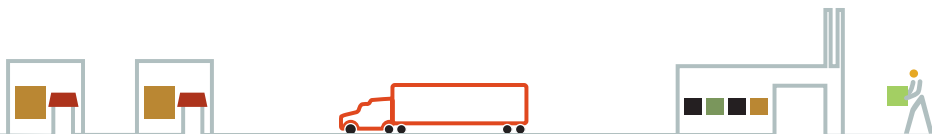
## Improve Education and Workforce Development

The quality of the workforce is one of the most important factors in strengthening the region's economy, yet numerous employers in particular industries have difficulty finding trained workers. In order to reverse these trends, the federal government can strengthen and expand strategies that link employers, educators, and workforce development entities together. The passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) represents a significant step forward in reforming and streamlining federal workforce policies. It also emphasizes the development of regional priorities and strengthens regions' abilities to coordinate and align workforce programs to support metropolitan economies. The federal government should continue to increase flexibility and funding for workforce development programs, improving their coordination with education and economic development efforts. It should also play a continued role in monitoring impacts, communicating outcomes, and targeting resources toward effective strategies and regional industry clusters.

### **Legislative Principle**

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives that increase flexibility and streamline delivery of workforce development services, as well as measure outcomes and improve data-driven decision making.*





## Support Economic Innovation

Innovation is a key driver of economic growth and disproportionately occurs within metropolitan regions. The federal government can help spur innovation through a robust national policy agenda, including incentives for regional collaboration across stakeholder groups, investment in research, and support for regional clusters of innovation. Several federal initiatives to promote innovation have emerged recently and involve significant coordination between federal agencies and local applicants. Technical assistance would help regions organize and successfully implement the federal government's vision.

### **Legislative Principle**

*CMAP supports reauthorizing and funding the America COMPETES Act, which invests in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, supports basic research, and fosters the development of new technologies.*



## Tax Policy

CMAP's specific interest in tax policy is how the types and rates of taxation, which are determined primarily at the state level, influence the overall economic well-being of the region. Beyond this, larger economic trends in consumer behavior may require joint action by the states and federal government. For example, an eroding sales tax base that is out of step with the Internet economy imperils the fiscal well-being of communities. Under current law, the State of Illinois cannot require out-of-state sellers to collect sales taxes on in-state purchases, nor does it have the authority to provide a national solution. Only the federal government has the ability to enact the policy changes necessary to help ensure the sustainability of the region's sales tax revenues.

### **Legislative Principle**

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives such as the Marketplace Fairness Act that ensure the sustainability of the region's tax base and allow states to require collection of sales taxes by all sellers.*



## Improve Access to Information

Most federal agencies control large amounts of data and information, and the federal government can make data transparency a requirement of states receiving federal funds. Policy challenges cannot be solved without comprehensive, current, and accurate data resources. Further, residents benefit from transparent data about the performance of government and expenditure of public resources.

### **Legislative Principles**

*CMAP supports the collection of comprehensive data by federal and state agencies as well as initiatives that facilitate open exchange of data by applying best practices and technological improvements.*

*CMAP supports legislative initiatives that improve transparency and data-driven decision making.*

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