



In recent years, Illinois and the Chicago region have prioritized linkages between affordable housing, jobs and transportation as a way of ensuring more sustainable development. Illinois has pursued more efficiently located affordable housing developments through its Statewide Housing Task Force, annual updates to the statewide housing plan and modifications to its Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). CMAP's *Go to 2040* Plan also places a premium on more compact mixed use development within walking distance of transit and easy job accessibility as a means of stimulating the region's economy, reducing the cost of living and producing more livable communities. Most recently, the General Assembly passed PA 96-1255, the Housing + Transportation Affordability Index Act, directing the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) and four other state agencies to adopt the Housing and Transportation (H+T[®]) Affordability Index as a planning tool for funding allocations, distribution of economic incentives and siting of public facilities in urban areas.

In order to assess the impact of new policies, identify strategies for improved performance and facilitate the implementation of PA 96-1255 and *Go to 2040*, the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) performed an analysis of developments funded by IHDA using the H+T Index. The analysis covered 248 developments containing 25,000 affordable housing units approved by the IHDA board from 2001-2008 in the Chicago region. Research focused on the geographic distribution of development, the level of access to jobs and transit in development locations and the variation in average transportation costs among the development neighborhoods. CNT also conducted interviews with affordable housing developers and reviewed policies and best practices in Illinois and across the country. This research formed the basis for recommended policies and actions to better target affordable housing development in locations with affordable transportation costs, access to transit and high employment opportunity.

Key findings include:

- IHDA units are located in places with slightly lower average transportation costs than the Chicago regional average.
- 86 percent of the study units are within walking distance of transit (75 percent for suburban developments).
- Residents of IHDA-financed projects with higher levels of transit access enjoy significantly lower transportation costs; the average annual cost in neighborhoods where developments have access to both bus and rail transit is \$3,000 lower than the average cost where there is no access to transit.
- Despite new policies, proximity to jobs and transit connectivity declined between 2001-2004 and 2005-2008 for both city and suburban units.
- Development of family housing has lagged in parts of the region with high employment growth.

Based on the analysis, CNT shared recommendations with IHDA detailing a number of ways that IHDA's primary policy document, the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), could be edited to more effectively encourage development in places with better access to jobs and transit and more affordable transportation costs. Implementing all of these changes is an essential step towards accomplishing regional and state housing goals. But overcoming barriers to an equitable distribution of affordable housing will also require the help of CMAP, its member municipalities and other regional stakeholders.