Key Recommendation:
Achieve Greater Livability Through Land Use and Housing
DRAFT – 4/5/10

Overview

One of the *GO TO 2040* plan's central goals is to create livable communities. Livability is primarily created at the local level, through planning and development decisions made by communities, developers, and individuals. While CMAP can help local governments address issues of livability in their communities, development decisions will continue to be made locally. Yet because those actions can have significant cumulative effects, it is also important for local decision makers to consider the regional implications of their choices.

Therefore, the purpose of this recommendation area is to help and encourage local governments to apply principles of livability when they make development decisions in their communities. CMAP supports reinvesting in development focused on existing communities, pursuing opportunities for more compact, walkable, and mixed-use development, and providing a range of housing options. The implementation of these principles will vary across the region, requiring sensitivity to the unique context of each community.

The building blocks of local planning are comprehensive plans, consistent ordinances and other regulations, and trained decision-makers. To strengthen those areas, this section of the *GO TO 2040* plan includes the following recommendations:

- Funding from several existing sources should be targeted to support local planning, with particular emphasis on updating ordinances and other development regulations, and on incorporating transportation, land use, and housing. A new, dedicated source of funding that can be used for infrastructure investments that help to implement local plans should also be created, building on models from other parts of the country.
- CMAP and its partners should offer technical assistance to communities that seek to implement principles of livability.
- Communities should collaborate with one another to build on lessons learned and to develop solutions for common problems. Counties and Councils of Governments (COGs) should play a significant role in encouraging and facilitating collaboration between municipalities.

- Local land use decisions should focus on the interrelationship of transportation, land use, and housing, with an emphasis on development patterns that support the use of public transit.

Among the many benefits of pursuing livable communities, compact development can significantly reduce the cost of local roads and other infrastructure. Growth that emphasizes access to transit and other transportation alternatives can reduce reliance on automobiles, helping to reduce congestion and household transportation costs. Regionally balanced housing options can help residents to live near where they work, which also reduces travel costs and congestion.

Improved livability also helps the region to compete economically with other global centers for businesses and workers. And environmental benefits include increased preservation of agriculturally productive and undeveloped land, less degradation of streams and wetlands, reduced water and energy consumption, improved air quality, and decreased greenhouse gas emissions.

But beyond these, improved quality of life is the overriding benefit of implementing these recommendations. Some of the most important benefits are not easily quantified, including the resulting sense of community that leads to civic involvement, helps to reduce crime, and unites residents to care for their most vulnerable members.

The goal of *GO TO 2040* is not to increase density for its own sake, and the plan does not seek to have all future development occur only in high-density areas. Rather its overall intent is to create communities that are livable, and increasing densities moderately is a means to this end. CMAP recommends that land use decisions continue to be a municipal prerogative. With local authority comes the responsibility to carefully assess broader impacts on neighboring communities and on the region as a whole. Implementing the *GO TO 2040* recommendations for achieving greater livability will help to balance the need for local autonomy and the benefits of regional cooperation.

This section begins with a definition of "livability," followed by detailed descriptions of the benefits, current conditions, indicators, and recommendations, with tables describing specific implementation areas and the organizations responsible for implementation.

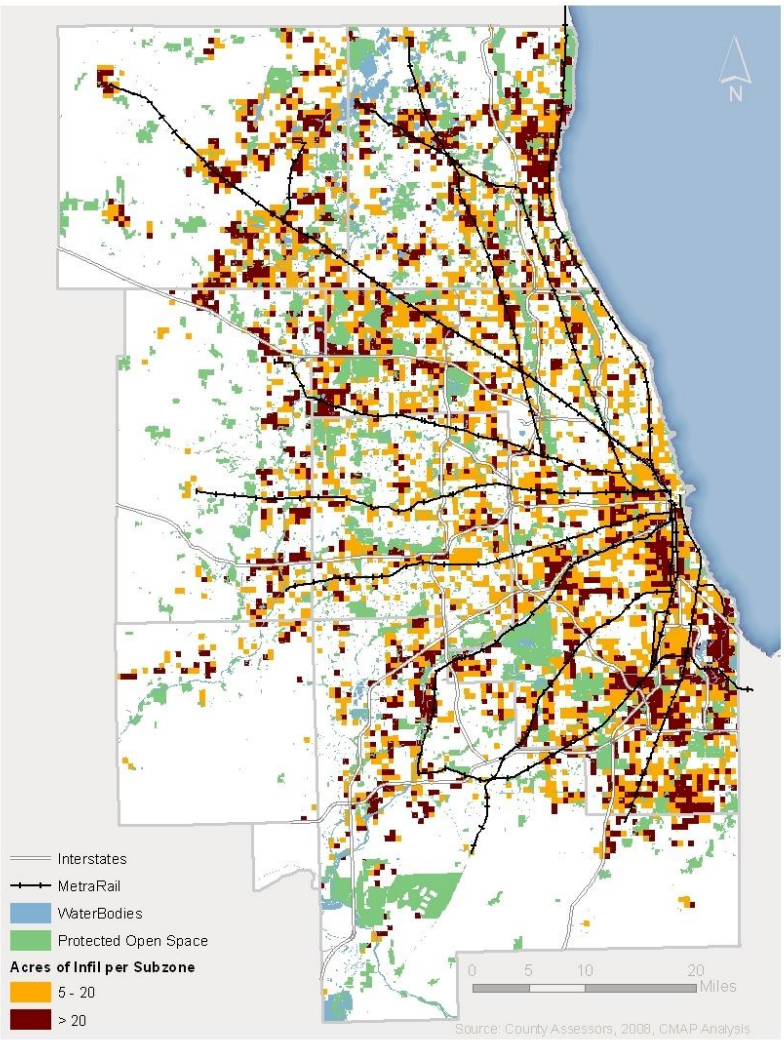
Defining "Livability"

This section and the *GO TO 2040* plan as a whole will refer frequently to the important concept of "livability." Though the word is subject to various interpretations, CMAP defines it in terms consistent with those proposed by the federal Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).[i]

As used in *GO TO 2040*, "livability" emphasizes: a focus on reinvestment; denser, mixed-use development; walkability and support for transit; a range of housing options; environmental protection; design and aesthetics; and the context or "fit" of development with the local community. Each of these elements is described further below.

Reinvestment

CMAP recommends that much of the region's growth should occur as reinvestment across the seven counties, in existing communities that are already served by infrastructure. There are significant opportunities to accommodate future growth by reinvesting within the borders of our municipalities, as Map X demonstrates. This map shows parts of the region with significant vacant land, or with industrial or commercial parcels that are defined as "underutilized" (meaning that the value of the actual land is greater than the value of the improvement on the land).



The viability of development in these places can be increased by remediating brownfields, reconsidering parking policies, reusing current building stock, and locating public buildings (e.g., schools) in areas where redevelopment is sought. Reinvestment projects should be implemented in a way

that respects local character and historic context, increases access to parks, green spaces, and adjacent recreational waterways, and addresses other local priorities.

To support expected growth, not all development will occur within existing communities. Some development in currently undeveloped areas will also be necessary, but even such new "greenfield" development should include features that support livability. Just as with redevelopment, new developments should assure environmental sensitivity, provide housing options for all income ranges, permit compact and dense development, and to the greatest extent possible utilize existing transportation networks.

Denser, Mixed-use Development

The *GO TO 2040* plan supports denser, mixed-use development as an important component of livability. While recognizing that the interpretation and application of these concepts will vary by community, CMAP recommends that local governments pursue opportunities for compact development. The definition of "denser" development differs widely between communities, but it generally means densities that are somewhat higher than prevailing patterns of development in that area. The use of high-quality design principles to guide denser development is critically important to ensure a proper fit within communities. The definition of "mixed use" also varies, sometimes referring to a combination of land uses (e.g., residential, office, or retail) within a single structure or on the same block, while at other times referring to simply connections between residential and commercial areas of a community.

The goal of *GO TO 2040* is not to increase density for its own sake, and the plan does not seek to have all future development occur only in high-density areas. Its recommendations are not extreme; it does not attempt to channel all or even most new growth into multifamily buildings. Rather its overall intent is to create communities that are livable, and increasing densities moderately is a means to this end. Many of the other elements of livability – such as accommodating growth through reinvestment, or providing an environment which supports walkability and the use of public transit – rely on density to some degree. And it is recognized that developing at densities that are even moderately higher than surrounding areas can be a considerable challenge for communities, so it is important for the plan to explicitly support these efforts.

Walkability and Transit Support

Livable communities should be supportive of walking, biking, and using public transportation. They should be broadly accessible and allow travel by any transportation mode, allowing older residents to "age in place," improving mobility for disabled residents, and leading to a healthier region overall. Supportive land use and walkability are also critically important to support the expansion of public transit, another of the plan's key recommendations.

Housing Affordability

GO TO 2040 treats housing as a critical part of the region's infrastructure. The plan's main direction is to pursue a balanced supply of owner occupied and rental housing distributed throughout the region, ensuring that each household has access to the region's assets. Among various housing policy options, each works best to promote livability when targeted to specific situations. For example, housing preservation, inclusionary zoning, removal of regulatory barriers, creation of community land trusts, or strategies to address foreclosures of vacant properties are appropriate solutions in certain areas, depending on a community's unique challenges. These should be investigated and applied in locally appropriate ways to provide a mix of housing, which is an important component of livability.

Environmental Protection

Conservation design and similar low-impact development techniques can be applied in both new development and reinvestment, mitigating the environmental impacts of development or even providing environmental enhancements. An important element of livability is adequate open space, and providing open space as part of reinvestment projects is one of the most effective ways to provide new parks in denser urban settings. Conservation of energy and water, and reduction of flooding, can also be accomplished by the use of conservation design principles within a development. In general, providing conservation design as a by-right use – rather than requiring special review – provides more certainty to developers, and encourages conservation design proposals. These environmental elements of livability are also reflected in the plan's key recommendations on resource conservation and open space.

Design and Aesthetics

Although it is quite difficult to define, high-quality design is critical for creating livable communities. Attractive streetscapes and buildings, public spaces for civic life, and overall appearance of an area are important elements but may not be quantifiable – and certainly are not appropriate to address at the regional level. CMAP recognizes the importance of design and aesthetics, but the *GO TO 2040* plan leaves decisions of this nature up to local communities, the development community, and individual property owners.

Local Context

The region's development pattern is extremely diverse, reflecting the unique characters of its many communities; growth between now and 2040 will be equally diverse. The regional principles described above have no usefulness until they are applied and implemented at the local level. Interpretations of these principles must consider local character when determining appropriate densities, types of mixed-use development, specific methods for affordable housing provision, and so on. Even within a municipality, desired levels of density can vary considerably between neighborhoods. In other words, there is no "one size fits all," and community-level assessments are needed to understand how these principles can be applied locally.

Importance, Public Support, and Benefits

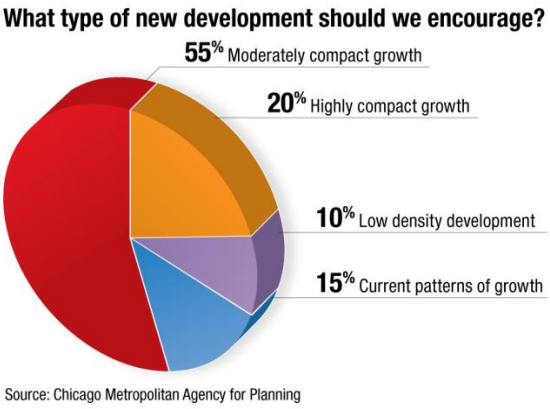
The *GO TO 2040* Regional Vision states that the region should "maximize the competitive advantage of existing physical infrastructure by encouraging reinvestment in our communities through mixed-use, compact development and redevelopment" and also should support "a range of housing options, broadly distributed throughout the region." After a brief summary of related public opinion, this subsection describes numerous benefits that result from development that supports livability.

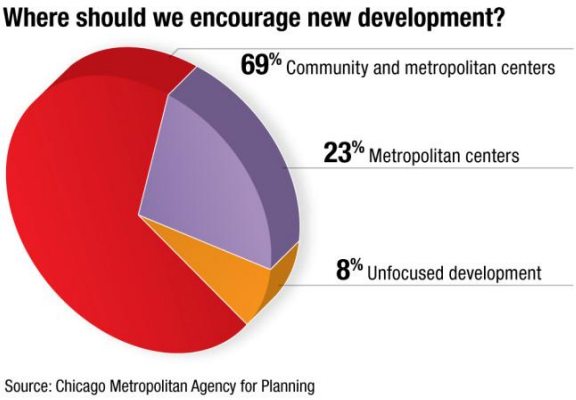
Public Support

An important question concerning denser, mixed-use communities is whether people actually want to live in these kinds of places. The clear answer is that some do, and some do not. In support of low-density environments, some people point to decades of rapid growth in low-density communities, coupled with population declines in urban centers (though recent years have seen some reversal of this trend).[ii] On the other hand, advocates of denser development point to higher sale prices of comparable homes in denser areas to demonstrate that people are willing to pay a premium for the benefits that density provides, and point out that homes in neighborhoods that are walkable and well-designed sell for more than similar homes in neighborhoods without these characteristics.[iii]

Affordable housing can also be a contentious issue. Many residents simply oppose it in their communities due to concerns about lowered property values, crime, and other real or perceived drawbacks. But much of this is based on perceptions of affordable housing as extremely high density concentrations of poverty that are far removed from current realities. If affordable housing is designed well and placed in mixed-income communities, it can be indistinguishable from market-rate housing. Studies have found that proximity to affordable housing does not have a negative effect on property values, as long as the affordable housing is well-designed and planned in context with the surrounding community.[iv]

During the *GO TO 2040* "Invent the Future" workshops held in the summer of 2009, CMAP directly asked participants about density preferences. Three-quarters of the participants felt our region needs to increase density in order to meet other regional goals, and most favored modest increases in density. Ninety-two percent of the participants believed new growth should be targeted to community and metropolitan centers overall. Indeed, many participants noted that changing the overall pattern of development was one of the most important actions that our region could take.





Fiscal Savings

What is perceived as cheaper "greenfield" development is, in the long run, more costly by many measures. Infrastructure costs increase as new roads, sewer, water, and utilities must cross significant distances to accommodate spread-out development. National and regional research shows that compact development patterns can significantly reduce the cost of local roads and other infrastructure, with the cost savings accruing to local governments and developers.[v] The cost of providing services such as fire and police protection or garbage pickup is also generally lower in a denser area.[vi] Infrastructure cost savings are described in greater detail on page X.

Household Cost Savings

Developing in ways that support livability reduces costs not only for the public sector, but also for individual households. An important feature of livability is its support for alternative transportation that helps reduce reliance on driving. Access to transit options can decrease what households must spend on transportation, because traveling by transit is much cheaper than owning, maintaining, and driving a car. Livability concepts, particularly supporting denser development and providing a range of housing options, are particularly beneficial around transit stations, as increased development in these areas can dramatically increase access to public transit. Supporting alternative transportation and shortening trips also reduce congestion, with benefits for all users of the transportation system – even those who continue to drive.

A regionally balanced range of housing can also reduce the need for long-distance travel, as it gives residents more options to live near where they work. Currently, housing is limited near many of the region's job centers, forcing lower-income workers to make long commutes from more-affordable residential areas. While many residents may still choose to make long commutes due to lifestyle or occupation choices, *GO TO 2040* seeks to make this decision a choice, rather than a necessity.

The full household cost savings of creating livable communities are best understood by including transportation costs along with housing costs when determining standards of affordability. The H+T index, recently developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, provides a means to do this.[vii] As a next step, energy and other utility costs – which also tend to be lower in livable communities, all else being equal – may be considered as a part of housing costs as well.

Economic Benefits

The quality of the region's workforce is a primary driver of future prosperity, and research has shown that the single best predictor of a region's economic growth is the educational achievement of its residents.[viii] Part of the solution is to improve education and workforce development systems, and this is a priority recommendation of *GO TO 2040*. But workers and jobs are increasingly mobile, with the ability to relocate quickly from region to region. Therefore it is important for the region to attract and retain skilled workers, in competition with other major regions across the nation and world.

To successfully compete, the region needs to be viewed as an attractive, desirable place to live and work, and livability is being increasingly recognized as a contributor to economic growth.[ix] Some researchers believe that attracting thehighly educated and skilled workers who drive economic growth is key, and that denser urban places will do best in this regard.[x] Others doubt that all skilled workers want to live in cities, but that they will be attracted to places with good schools, low crime, and short commutes, the same desires that have led to movement away from cities.[xi] The assumption of *GO TO 2040* is that the region will need to attract a variety of skilled, talented people to be economically successful, so the region will need a variety of community types – but they all should be designed with consideration of whether they will support a high quality of life.

Environmental Benefits

Environmental effects of continued development in rural areas include the loss of agriculturally productive land, missed conservation opportunities, degradation of streams and wetlands due to encroaching development and stormwater runoff, and increased pollutants and emissions from travel across a more-dispersed development pattern. An approach to livability that includes a denser development pattern that focuses on reinvestment within existing communities reduces the pressure for consumption of undeveloped land.

Developing more densely also reduces consumption of water and energy, all else being equal. Shorter pipe lengths in denser areas mean less wasted water, and smaller yards require less watering.[xii] Energy savings in denser areas, and corresponding decreases in greenhouse gas emissions, occur primarily because of the reductions in driving described above. Impervious cover is also reduced, on a regional scale, by higher densities, particularly if growth occurs as redevelopment in places that already have impervious surface cover.

While these positive environmental impacts are regional in nature, dense development and reinvestment in existing communities may cause localized problems. While denser development does lower the region's total acreage of impervious surfaces, for example, it also concentrates these into a smaller area, which can worsen flooding. Denser development can also create heat islands in areas without sufficient open space, or pockets of poor air quality caused by concentrating many motor vehicles and other pollutant emitters into a small area.

Many of these challenges can be solved or mitigated by applying green development techniques or conservation design, which is an element of *GO TO 2040*'s definition of livability. By incorporating open space, carefully designing buildings and landscapes, and using small-scale green infrastructure features, the localized negative impacts of density can be avoided. These techniques are described at greater length in the *GO TO 2040* sections on open space and resource conservation.

Quality-of-Life Benefits

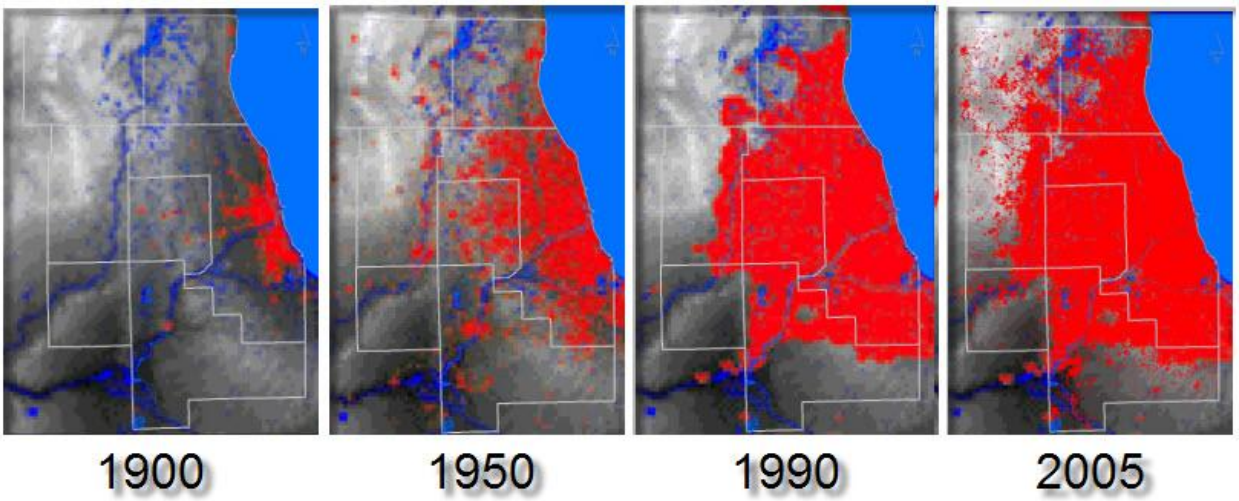
By definition, livable communities are intended to improve quality of life. The measures above – concerning household costs, economic growth, and environmental protection – are all ways to measure elements of quality of life, but there are other impacts that are difficult or impossible to quantify. A sense of community is one of the most important elements of livability, but defining or assessing this concept is impossibly complex. At its best, a strong sense of community can increase civic involvement, as residents feel commitment to improving their community; lower crime, as neighbors watch out for each other and for suspicious activity; and even improve disaster recovery, as stronger communities are better able to come together to care for their most vulnerable members.

Recent research also illustrates links between livable communities and both physical and mental health. Some benefits can be linked to physical design features such as access to parks and open space, and available bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Other benefits relate more the sense of community described above. In particular, designing for livability can allow older residents to "age in place" within their homes or communities, with demonstrable positive physical and mental health outcomes. Overall, while the positive impacts of livable communities have not all been isolated and statistically proven by research, there is plenty of quantitative and anecdotal evidence to argue for pursuing livability in development decisions.

Current Conditions

The Problem with Current Land Use Patterns

The region's development over the last several decades has resulted in a pattern of land use that is not sustainable. Development in the last half of the twentieth century has overall been a story of outward expansion, consuming vast amounts of land and requiring huge investments in water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure. Map X shows how the region's developed area has changed over the past century.



During this time, much development occurred unevenly, resulting in an imbalance between where jobs are located and where people live. As population expanded, many people moved to low-density, single-use neighborhoods that were only accessible by car. At the same time, jobs shifted from major concentrations in the region's industrial hubs to dispersed employment centers across the region. These changes were driven by diverse factors, including infrastructure investment decisions, tax policies, resident preferences for larger homes and lots, and movement toward areas with lower crime and better schools, to name a few.

The relative importance of these factors has been debated for decades and will not be solved by *GO TO 2040*. But whatever the reasons, the result of these major shifts is a disparity in where people work and where people live, and more particularly where affordable housing is located in relation to job centers. Further, this imbalance has hindered access to transit, increased energy use and household costs related to transportation, and helped to fuel the region's increasing traffic congestion. The environmental impacts of rapid growth in undeveloped areas are also severe, and the region has lost much of its former open space and agricultural land. Recognizing these issues, CMAP concludes that the region should alter the trend of land use that emerged over the past several decades, in favor of a development pattern that promotes livability.

Impediments to Planning for Livable Communities

While there are many good local examples of planning for livable communities, overall regional trends have not been positive. Recent development patterns resulted from various factors that remain in place today, and significant obstacles face communities or developers pursuing projects that involve reinvestment, compact or mixed-use development, or affordable housing components.

On the regulatory side, ordinances, codes, and other regulations often make it more difficult to build compact, mixed-use development instead of single-use subdivisions. Projects involving reinvestment in existing communities face particular challenges. Often, development requirements also affect the cost of housing construction or rehabilitation, inhibiting efforts to preserve housing; these can include aesthetic touches like requirements for brick facades, which can be important for community acceptance but can also make affordability a challenge. Land assembly can be extremely difficult in established downtown areas that have seen decades of fragmented ownership. Some development regulations like minimum parking provisions can add challenges to redevelopment of sites in denser areas. Further, well-intentioned planning policies can sometimes come into conflict with each other. For example, regulations meant to help manage stormwater in urban communities can make it difficult to pursue reinvestment projects in these areas.

Significant non-regulatory impediments also exist. Public opinions about perceived negative effects of dense or affordable housing – often based on past examples of large blocks of multi-family housing – can impede efforts to establish a range of housing opportunities in revitalized community cores. "Density" is often perceived as a negative term, although the primary challenge in developing more compactly often has more to do with issues of community fit than with density itself. And well-intentioned plans and policies that try to mix land uses do not always align with market conditions, creating retail vacancies that can detract from communities.

Although some of these impediments cannot be solved directly by local government actions, all can be addressed in some way. The public sector cannot create a market for redevelopment where none exists, but it can invest in infrastructure that makes redevelopment projects more viable. Changing existing perceptions about affordable housing may seem impossible, but over time, proactive education and well-designed affordable housing developments can make a difference. While CMAP recognizes that the obstacles to building livable communities are significant and complex, *GO TO 2040*'s recommendations concerning land use and housing are built on the belief that proactive planning by local governments can make a major positive difference.

Indicators and Targets

The recommendations described in this section seek to support local governments as they plan for livable communities, and to achieve a regionally balanced supply of housing of all types and costs. *GO TO 2040* proposes tracking progress toward these goals through two indicators: the amount of growth that occurs as reinvestment within existing communities; and percentage of income spent by low-income households on housing and transportation (H+T) costs.

Reinvestment

A critical element of *GO TO 2040* is encouraging development in existing communities, where infrastructure to support it is already available. According to analysis of infill opportunities, there are over 100,000 acres of land within existing municipal boundaries that are available for redevelopment. These are parcels that are vacant, or are "underutilized" commercial and industrial properties. (See page 3 for a map and definition of "underutilized.") By 2040, *GO TO 2040* seeks to redevelop this land with a mix of residential and non-residential uses, and projects that it could accommodate around half of the region's growth – or 1.2 million people.

- 2040 target: population growth of 1.2 million on infill sites
- 2015 target: population growth of 200,000 on infill sites

Housing affordability

The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) has developed a new measure of housing affordability that also includes transportation costs. Called the H+T index, this is a fuller measure of the true cost of housing, recognizing that while housing prices may fall in lower-density areas that are far from transit, the transportation costs of living in these areas are considerably higher.[xiii] According to this report, moderate-income and low-income residents of the region spend an average of 55% of their incomes on housing and transportation. By 2040, *GO TO 2040* seeks to reduce this number to 45%.

- 2040 target: 45%
- 2015 target: 53%

Recommendations

As described in the preferred Regional Scenario, *GO TO 2040*'s approach to land use and housing is to "support the efforts of local governments to improve livability within their communities and to encourage a future pattern of more compact, mixed-use development that focuses growth where infrastructure already exists," and to seek "an adequate and regionally balanced supply of affordable housing." The definition of livability beginning on page 3 defines this term more clearly. The recommendations described in this section do not add to the definition of livability, but instead focus on the way that its elements can be applied and implemented in northeastern Illinois.

The building blocks of local planning for livable communities are high-quality plans, ordinances and other regulations that are consistent with adopted plans, and trained and educated decision-makers (plan commissioners, zoning board members, or elected officials). *GO TO 2040* recommends addressing each of these building blocks through a combination of funding and financial incentives, technical assistance, and collaboration.

- **Comprehensive plans.** While many communities have adopted recent comprehensive plans that address issues of livability, there are many others whose plans are outdated, have been made irrelevant through zoning decisions (which often reflects a disconnect between the adopted plan and the realities of community development issues), or simply have never had a comprehensive plan. Even among those communities with current comprehensive plans, many do not include components such as housing affordability.

- **Ordinances.** Many of the comprehensive plans adopted throughout the region contain well-conceived development goals that are entirely consistent with *GO TO 2040*'s recommendations, but zoning ordinances in the region are largely antiquated, hobbled by years of "band-aid" modifications that often have resulted in internal inconsistency. Although zoning ordinances constitute the legal tool by which a local government can carry out the comprehensive plan, these ordinances commonly have not been updated to reflect and carry out the exemplary policies a community may have adopted in its comprehensive plan. Many times, such incongruence in zoning regulations prevents a suitable mix of housing types or limits opportunities for mixed-use development, for example. To actually implement the comprehensive plans of the region's local governments, fundamental regulating mechanisms need to be in sync with their current development goals.

- **Trained decision-makers.** Even with up-to-date plans and ordinances, there is still a critical role for local decision-makers, particularly plan commissioners and local elected officials, to implement *GO TO 2040*. Many development proposals require discretionary review, and judgment calls on the part of decision-makers are needed constantly. It is

important for these decision-makers to be aware of the regional as well as local consequences of their decisions, and to consider these as they review development proposals.

GO TO 2040 recommends that land use continue to be decided at the local level. With decision-making authority comes responsibility, and the communities making land use decisions should also be aware that their individual decisions, in sum, have regional impacts. Even seemingly small land use decisions should not be taken lightly, and each of the region's local governments should commit to a proactive and comprehensive approach to planning. Through the actions recommended below, *GO TO 2040* seeks to support local governments in their planning for livable communities, and strives for a positive dynamic that balances the need for local autonomy and regional cooperation.

Funding and Financial Incentives

The need to provide a funding source for local plan and ordinance updates has been recognized for a long time. For years, CMAP and other groups have recommended that the state allocate funding to the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act, which promised grants to develop local comprehensive plans but was never actually funded. While *GO TO 2040* supports continued efforts to fund the Act, it does not rely on this funding in the near term. Instead, the plan focuses on alternative funding sources that can be used for similar purposes.

Three funding sources have been identified as reasonable replacements. First, the RTA's Community Planning Program grants (formerly known as the Regional Technical Assistance Program, or RTAP) have provided millions of dollars to communities over the past decade to pursue transit-oriented development (TOD) or similar plans. Nearly 80 of these grants have been issued, and they have successful in linking land use and transportation planning. A second source is IDOT's Statewide Planning and Research funds, which have been used for projects that link land use and transportation in the past and were the source of the Illinois Tomorrow planning grants. The third and final source is Unified Work Program (UWP) funds, federal planning funds, which are administered by CMAP. These have been used in the past to fund RTA's planning grants.

GO TO 2040 recommends combining these three funding sources into a single, streamlined program, with funding decisions jointly agreed upon by CMAP, RTA, and IDOT. While each funding source has various restrictions concerning how it can be spent, activities that include transportation components would generally be eligible. The combined program should fund planning efforts that link transportation, land use, and housing. The funding program could be further supplemented by funds from environmental or housing agencies or other groups. This program should focus on regulatory and policy changes that implement plans, rather than on planning for its own sake. For example, many plans recommend changes to zoning ordinances or parking regulations, but funding is rarely available for these regulatory changes; this program should fund them. Further, *GO TO 2040* should recommend prioritizing planning

grants based on the degree to which each grant application can increase collaboration among neighboring communities, encompass related topics such as energy, or increase livability in other ways.

Federal programs may also provide new funding sources for planning and implementation. Recent collaborations between several federal agencies have indicated the federal government's interest in promoting livability, and these should be expanded and strengthened. In particular, while funding for planning is helpful, funding for implementation is even more critical. One new federal program, the Sustainable Communities Initiative, appears to provide initial steps in this direction, and the U.S. government should commit sufficient funds to this or similar programs to support plan development and implementation.

Opportunities for tying implementation funds to planning can even be pursued without new funding sources by reconsidering how existing investment decisions are made. Recognizing the interplay between infrastructure investments and land use, the region should use transportation funding strategically to support projects that help to implement *GO TO 2040*. Two examples from other regions, the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) and the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program, use a combination of state and federal funds for this purpose. These examples are described below.

> Since 1999, the Atlanta LCI program has funded planning studies in 80 communities, at a cost of slightly over $10 million. Almost all of these communities have incorporated the results of these studies into their comprehensive plans, and most have adopted zoning ordinances or other policies to implement the studies. The LCI program has directed nearly $130 million in infrastructure improvements to these communities, using STP funds, and has documented measurable results in terms of new development in communities where these investments were made.[xiv]
>
> The San Francisco TLC program funded 70 planning projects between 1998 and 2006, totaling about $2.7 million in cost, and directed $84 million in capital improvements over the same period. The capital improvements are funded with CMAQ and STP funds, and funding for the planning studies comes from a mixture of federal and state funds. The TLC program has a special focus on promoting high-density and mixed-use developments with affordable housing components near transit stops. Expansion of the program is currently being considered.[xv]

A similar program should be created in the metropolitan Chicago region. Currently, STP funds spent in the region are split between the state and local governments (with the local portion being further split between Chicago and the eleven Councils of Mayors), and CMAQ funds are programmed and administered by CMAP. It is recommended that a combination of state STP and CMAQ funds be used to create a separate funding source to be used for infrastructure investments that support livability. The infrastructure investments should be focused

specifically on implementing projects that spring from the recommendations of local comprehensive planning efforts. Local STP should remain programmed by the Councils of Mayors and City of Chicago, but CMAP encourages local programmers to consider incorporating support for livable communities into their funding decisions.

Technical Assistance

The broad term of "technical assistance" is used here to mean direct, non-financial assistance provided by CMAP staff to local government. Technical assistance activities will vary over time and will be detailed in each year's CMAP work plan. It is intended to be a proactive, rather than reactive, activity – in other words, CMAP will identify priorities and then work collaboratively with communities to accomplish them, but the agency will also need to react to changing conditions. Possible opportunities for assistance will be evaluated based on how well they match CMAP's priorities, support the principles of *GO TO 2040* in general, or relate to short-term crises or opportunities.

A first step in designing an annual technical assistance program is to determine what is most needed and most helpful. The Compendium of Plans, a review and summary of the comprehensive plans of all of the region's municipalities, should be updated every two years. This can be used to target technical assistance by providing an assessment of the current state of comprehensive planning, and also to identify commonly missing or underemphasized elements of comprehensive plans.

Technical assistance activities will often take the form of creating model ordinances or codes for municipal consideration, often on topics like water conservation that may be outside of usual comprehensive planning practice. CMAP will also research and explore innovative regulatory mechanisms such as the SmartCode and form-based coding, which may be more appropriate to mixing land use and preserving affordability than conventional zoning by helping to focus development discussions on how appropriate context, form, and even aesthetic concerns can counteract the negative perceptions about density, affordability, and compactness. Also, CMAP will help communities with forecasting and visualizing the long-term, actual effects of current ordinances that may unintentionally be stymieing desired development goals (with affordability and mixed-use being primary examples). Other software like the Centers Toolkit, the Return on Investment tool, and the MetroQuest software used during CMAP's Invent the Future workshops can all be relevant for communities at different stages in their planning processes.

A particular focus of technical assistance activities will involve housing, which is one of the most challenging components of livability to address; according to CMAP's recent survey of comprehensive plans, only 23 percent include an emphasis on affordable housing. While recognizing that local governments will take varying approaches to address the overall goal of a regionally balanced supply of housing, CMAP encourages every community to at least address it. Beginning with an assessment of housing supply and future demand (e.g., the "Homes for a

Changing Region" report series) can inform further discussion of the issue, and these reports should be continued and expanded to cover additional communities.

A variety of housing policy options are appropriate in different types of communities. Housing preservation, inclusionary zoning, community land trusts, removal of regulatory barriers, or foreclosure prevention programs – just to name a few – can be solutions in communities facing different housing challenges. CMAP can play a role in helping communities to sort through the various housing programs that can be adopted on the local level, finding those that fit best in a particular situation, and integrating them into a comprehensive planning approach. This is a role already played by a variety of regional and local nonprofit organizations, and their useful work should continue.

Intergovernmental Collaboration

GO TO 2040 strongly supports coordination between communities. Intergovernmental approaches are often the best way to solve planning problems in housing, transit, economic development, and other areas, and CMAP encourages the formation of these groups and offers technical support for their work. These can often be formalized as collaborative planning groups that are organized around a transportation corridor (such as the Cook-DuPage Corridor) or an area with specific economic development or housing needs (such as the Southland Economic Development Corporation or the South Suburban Housing Collaborative). State and federal agencies (such as the Illinois Housing Development Authority, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity at the state level, and HUD, USDOT, and USEPA at the federal level) should prioritize funding in areas that enter into intergovernmental agreements.

At a less formal level, coordination between municipalities is beneficial for information-sharing among planning professionals and officials. In addition to encouraging intergovernmental cooperation among neighboring communities, CMAP should also bring together communities that face similar challenges across the region, fostering networked collaboration to share ideas and strategies. For example, communities that have faced challenges in incorporating a range of housing options, or those that have applied particular housing solutions, can serve as useful case studies for other communities considering similar techniques, and there is no substitute for direct communication between them.

In all of these collaborative efforts there is a strong and significant role for Counties and Councils of Government (COGs). These groups are encouraged to take the lead to create and staff formal collaborative groups, or to convene local planners and planning officials in less formal ways. *GO TO 2040* recommends a supporting role for CMAP in these efforts.

Link Transit, Housing, and Land Use

Linking transit, housing, and land use is less a separate recommendation than a focused way to apply the recommendations in the other implementation areas. Transit-oriented development

(TOD) represents one of the principal linkages between the issue areas addressed by CMAP, and is a particular focus of *GO TO 2040*. The higher value of land near transit services often makes it more difficult to plan for affordable housing in these locations, so affordability needs to be addressed specifically.

The number of TOD studies completed within the last decade means that many of the most promising TOD locations have had plans prepared for them, but often implementation has been lacking. Ordinances and other regulations have not always been updated to match the recommendations of the plans, and there has also been no concerted effort to focus infrastructure investments to implement these plans. As described earlier in this section, *GO TO 2040* recommends increasing the amount of funding for planning, and allocating a significant portion of this to update ordinances; it also recommends creating a special funding source for infrastructure improvements that support the implementation of local plans.

It is also important to plan jointly for land use and transit in areas that may be outside of traditional TODs. CMAP should work closely with its partners, including RTA and the transit service boards, local governments, and regional civic organizations, to identify additional opportunities to support transit-supportive land use. This could include areas near train stations where site assembly has proven difficult, or where past projects have been derailed by opposition. More frequently, opportunities for transit-supportive land use planning will be in areas served by bus, or slightly outside the "walkable" range of a train station – and therefore outside the definition of a traditional TOD.

Improving transit is a priority recommendation of *GO TO 2040*, and requires supportive land use to succeed. *GO TO 2040* recommends that transit expansion be accompanied by land use planning that seeks to create an affordable, transit-friendly environment, with investments in sidewalks, bus shelters, and other infrastructure; transit decision makers should prioritize investments in places where supportive land use planning is occurring.

Preserving affordability or creating new affordable options near transit is often difficult, because high demand to live near transit increases the cost of housing. Municipalities should ensure that housing near transit includes affordable housing provisions and that affordability is maintained in the long-term. CMAP will work with partners including the Illinois Housing Development Authority to assure that applicants are rewarded when developing housing near transit. Additionally, CMAP will work with preservation collaborations to encourage affordable housing preservation strategies focused on areas around transit and employment.

Implementation area #1: Provide funding and financial incentives

Action	Implementers	Specifics
Align funding for planning and ordinance updates	CMAP, IDOT, RTA, local communities	CMAP, IDOT, and RTA should create a combined funding pool (using UWP, SPR, and CSPP, respectively) to fund local plans and ordinance updates. Use funds to create new streamlined grant program for transportation, land use, and housing which assists local governments to create plans or ordinance updates that are consistent with *GO TO 2040*. This program should be focused on addressing elements beyond plan preparation including ordinance changes, updates to municipal programs or policies, or similar activities. Supplement these funding sources with philanthropic or other public and private sources as appropriate.
Implement and expand the Sustainable Communities Initiative program	HUD, USDOT, USEPA, DOE, EDA	The federal government should apply the principles of the Sustainable Communities Initiative across other federal programs as well. Its administering departments (HUD, USDOT, and USEPA) should also commit sufficient funds in future years to make it a significant funding source for plan implementation, not just plan development. Federal agencies should also align federally-required planning efforts, such as HUD Consolidated plans, with *GO TO 2040* priorities, and federal investment should be geared to implement planning efforts that are consistent with the principles of the Sustainable Communities Initiative.
Develop regional infrastructure funding programs for plan implementation	CMAP, IDOT	Create a pilot program meant to focus infrastructure funds to implement local comprehensive plans, modeled on programs in Atlanta and San Francisco. Allocate a portion of funds currently programmed by the state (STP) and by CMAP (CMAQ) for this purpose. Retain the current programming of local STP funds, but encourage programmers to consider livability in their funding decisions.

Implementation area #2: Provide technical assistance and build local capacity

Action	Implementers	Specifics
Continually review status of local plans	CMAP, local communities	Update the Compendium of Plans every two years. Use its findings to target planning technical assistance. This could include comprehensive planning assistance to communities that do not have current plans, and assistance with implementation to those that do. Also use results to identify missing or underemphasized elements of local comprehensive plans, such as housing affordability or water conservation.
Create model ordinances and codes	CMAP, local communities	Develop sample ordinances or codes in areas relevant to *GO TO 2040* that can be adapted by local governments. Examples include water conservation ordinances, housing rehabilitation codes, and parking regulations. At the same time that model ordinances are under development, work with a few case study communities to ensure that can be adapted to work locally. CMAP should also promote best planning practices through publications highlighting local approaches to these issues.
Research and explore alternative land use regulation systems	CMAP, local communities, CNU	Research alternative systems such as SmartCode® and Form-Based Coding (FBC) that address structure, form and placement over conventional use-based, Euclidean zoning approaches. Coordinate with communities that have adopted alternative land use regulatory systems, assess performance, and provide resources and training for other communities interested in these methods.
Analyze ordinance outcomes	CMAP, local communities	In partnership with interested communities, CMAP should review existing ordinances to quantitatively analyze their impacts (in terms of stormwater runoff, local fiscal impacts, resulting housing cost, contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, and others). Also create visualizations that improve understanding of the outcomes of current ordinances.
Provide assistance in planning for affordable housing needs	MMC, MPC, Metropolis 2020, BPI, CMAP, local communities	In partnership with interested communities, research local housing supply and demand and identify appropriate housing strategies. Provide direct technical assistance, in collaboration with other regional civic organizations, to communities seeking to develop a balanced supply of housing through locally-appropriate strategies such as community land trusts, land banking, housing preservation, inclusionary zoning, removal of regulatory barriers, or developing strategies for vacant or foreclosed properties. Support local work through

		regionally-sponsored research such as the "Homes for a Changing Region" reports, the "Home Grown" best practices summary, or similar efforts.
Use and enhance existing assistance technical assistance software tools	CMAP, MPC	Strategically deploy CMAP's Centers Toolkit, Return on Investment (ROI) tool, MetroQuest software, and MPC's Placemaking program. Develop an online "library" of best planning practices by local governments, to be continually updated and improved as technical assistance activities continue.
Target technical assistance to communities demonstrating interest in furthering *GO TO 2040*	CMAP, local communities	Create menu of assistance "offerings" consistent with *GO TO 2040*, and clearly evaluate requests for assistance based upon conformance with these plan objectives. Proactively identify opportunities to provide community assistance.
Planning Commissioner workshops	CMAP, local communities, APA	Provide a cycle of Planning Commissioner Workshops throughout the region every two years. Workshops will cover such issues as importance of updating the comprehensive plan, consistency of local ordinances with comprehensive planning policy, making defensible land use decisions, roles of planning commissions and zoning boards of appeals, and placing local land use decisions within a regional context

Implementation area #3: Support intergovernmental collaboration

Action	Implementers	Specifics
Encourage formation of formal collaborative planning efforts	COGs, Counties, local communities, CMAP	Encourage COGs and Counties to lead formation of issue-specific collaborative planning groups to address issues such as housing, transportation, economic development, land use, or others. Provide technical assistance to existing collaborative groups in research and mapping, developing model ordinances and overlay districts, seeking funding, interacting with state and federal agencies, and entering into intergovernmental agreements.
Form collaborative groups to address affordable housing at the corridor level	COGs, Counties, local communities, other housing stakeholders	Encourage the formation of collaborative groups to address affordable housing across communities. These can be broad (such as the South Suburban Housing Collaborative) or specifically targeted to a specific housing issue (such as the Preservation Compact and the Lake County Preservation Initiative). These groups should include a broad array of housing industry stakeholders and should explore various funding mechanisms to produce strategies that are nimble and specific to the current housing market.
Prioritize funding to communities engaging in intergovernmental planning	State agencies (IHDA, IDOT, DCEO), federal agencies (HUD, USDOT, USEPA)	Provide financial incentives for involvement in collaborative groups by prioritizing funding to communities that apply for funding jointly and develop programs across municipal borders. Selection criteria in funding programs should recognize and reward intergovernmental applicants.
Facilitate communication between communities facing similar challenges	COGs, Counties, local communities, CMAP	Support initiatives by COGs or Counties that bring municipalities together in coordinated planning activities and information-sharing. These activities are less formal than a "collaborative" arrangement but are still useful for communication purposes. CMAP should work with County and COG staff to help coordinate these efforts. CMAP should also identify communities sharing similar features facing similar planning challenges, and provide a facilitated environment to bring them together to work on solutions and share ideas collaboratively.

Implementation area #4: Link transit, land use, and housing

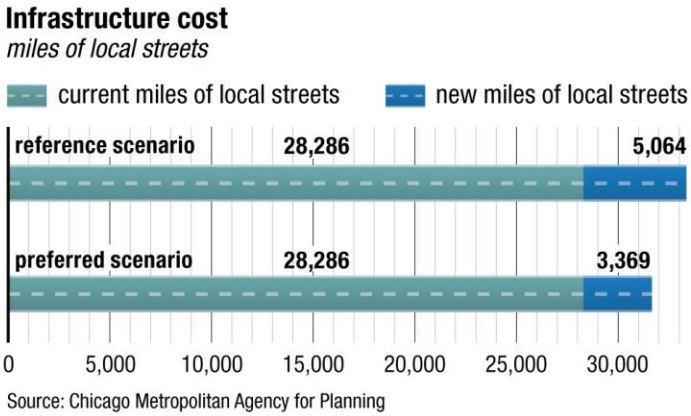
Action	Implementers	Specifics
Identify and exploit additional opportunities for TOD	CMAP, CNT, MPC	Many communities have embraced TOD as a strategy to revitalize their downtowns, and plans for many of the most obvious locations for TOD have already been prepared. CMAP and other regional civic organizations should identify other potential opportunities for application of TOD strategies and initiate pilot TOD projects in areas where TOD is more difficult (i.e. locations with difficult land assembly, bus-based TOD, etc).
Permit mixed-use, higher density development near transit	Local communities	Municipalities should pursue opportunities for more dense development which mixes uses and housing types within "location efficient" areas near transit services. Municipalities can increase density by providing density bonuses (in exchange for affordable units), creating transit overlay districts, or using form-based codes.
Promote housing affordability near transit	Local communities	Proximity to transit services often increases land value, making it more difficult to provide a range of housing. Municipalities can provide a variety of incentives to developers to bring down development costs in exchange for affordable units. These tools include land donations, density bonuses, permit fee waivers, land trusts and expedited permitting processes. These should be explored, considered, and adapted to specific local situations.
Target housing programs to rehabilitation in areas with transit access	HUD, IHDA, lenders, local communities	Affordable housing grant programs should give priority to preserving the existing affordable housing stock, particularly in TODs.
Plan for land use around existing stations or areas where expansion is expected	Local communities	Prepare plans and amend ordinances to support transit-supportive land use around existing stations or areas where bus-based service extensions are expected.
Require supportive land use planning before new transit investment is made	CTA, Metra, Pace	Consider supportive land use when making investment and programming decisions. The service boards should prioritize investments (new service in particular) in areas that have or are planning for land use and local infrastructure that supports transit.
Update guidelines for transit-supportive land use	RTA, CTA, Metra, Pace	Update materials produced by the transit service boards concerning land use planning and small-scale infrastructure investments that support transit. These materials should include additional topics such as housing affordability that go beyond the density and design issues which are currently included.

Costs and Financing

Cost Savings from Compact Reinvestment

Many studies over the past several decades have suggested that the cost per household of providing public infrastructure decreases as development becomes more compact.[xvi] This can also be the case with public services, such as schools and fire protection, but the relationship is not as clear for these services as it is with physical infrastructure. Intuitively, the length and therefore the cost of water mains, roads, and so forth should be less if homes and businesses are located closer together, and national studies and CMAP's own research has shown that this is in fact the case.

Within the region, the number of new miles of local streets needed can be reduced by as much as one-third if a more compact, reinvestment-focused development pattern is pursued. Savings would be expected both in initial construction and in maintenance because, for instance, each mile of roadway not built is a mile of roadway that does not need to be swept, plowed, re-striped, and eventually resurfaced and reconstructed.



This provides savings to both developers, who often build the roads, and local governments, who later maintain them. Maintenance savings alone from the local street reductions described above would total in the range of $1.5 billion over the plan's time frame, mostly accruing to local governments in high-growth areas. In other words, the local governments that have the best opportunity to implement livability principles in their planning – those in high-growth areas – are also those that have the most to gain from cost savings. The transportation infrastructure cost savings can be used as an indication of other infrastructure costs too, but these savings have not been calculated.

Financing of Local Planning

Planning on the local level is funded primarily through general revenue sources of municipalities and counties (and, in some cases, townships). Local governments face many demands for their resources and attention, and it can be a challenge for communities to prioritize comprehensive planning or ordinance review, particularly in difficult economic and fiscal times. However, land use planning is a fundamental responsibility of local governments, and one that must be taken seriously for the region to prosper in the long run. The remainder of this section identifies funding options beyond local sources, but it must be emphasized that

local governments are responsible for planning proactively regardless of external funding availability.

External grants for specialized planning activities are sometimes available to local governments, but outside funding for general comprehensive planning activities has been elusive. Some of the planning grant programs in the region include:

- The Regional Transportation Authority has made grant funding available for station area planning through its Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP), later replaced by the RTA's Community Planning Program (providing funding for such activities as station area TOD plans and guidelines) and the Subregional Planning Program (providing funding for such activities as transit and land use improvement studies, and TOD studies at the county, subregional or corridor level). Over the past ten years, nearly 100 plans have been funded through these sources, totaling over $15 million in grants. For a period, the RTAP program was funded in part through Unified Work Program (UWP) funds, which are administered through CMAP.

- The Local Planning Technical Assistance (20 ILCS 662) was enacted in 2002. In the absence of state-mandated planning, it has served to identify through state legislation components that should be included in comprehensive plans, and, in theory, provided an incentive to adopt certain comprehensive plan elements in order to receive funds for comprehensive planning through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). This provision, however, has never actually been provided with funding from the State, meaning that this promised incentive has never actually come to fruition.

- Likewise, the Local Land Resource Management Planning Act (50 ILCS 805), used frequently as the foundation for county-level planning activities though applicable to communities as well, also allowed for funding through DCEO. This also has never been funded.

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) allocates Statewide Planning & Research Funds to the Illinois Department of Transportation. These funds may be used for a variety of purposes such as planning, technical studies and assistance, demonstrations, management training, and cooperative research, and they were the source for Illinois Tomorrow grants, which have been used to fund planning activities in the past.

Most of the above funding sources are directed to comprehensive or small-area planning activities. Updates to ordinances or other development regulations are not generally funded through any of these sources.

Promising federal funding sources for comprehensive planning and implementation are currently under development, and are discussed on page 16. If sufficiently funded, these could

provide a significant boost to the implementation of all of the actions described in this recommendation.

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[i] Summarized at http://www.epa.gov/dced/partnership/index.html. In full, the principles are:

1. **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
2. **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
3. **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
4. **Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
5. **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
6. **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

[ii] http://www.eenews.net/public/25/14910/features/documents/2010/03/24/document_gw_02.pdf

[iii] Belden Russonello & Stewart Research and Communications (2003). Americans' Attitudes Toward Walking and Creating Better Walking Communities.

[iv] Full citation needed.

[v] Mark Muro and Robert Puentes, 2004, *Investing in a Better Future: A Review of the Fiscal and Competitive Advantages of Smarter Growth Development Patterns*, Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.

[vi] Full citation needed.

[vii vii] http://htaindex.org/

[viii] Reference from "what makes regions grow" paper.

[ix] CEOS for Cities, 2004, *The Changing Dynamics of Urban America*.

[x] Full citation needed..

[xi] Full citation needed. http://www.creativeclass.com/rfcgdb/articles/GlaeserReview.pdf

[xii] Full citation needed. Water 2050.

[xiii] http://htaindex.org/

[xiv] http://www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative/implementation

[xv] http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/tlc_grants.htm

[xvi] See for example Mark Muro and Robert Puentes, 2004, *Investing in a Better Future: A Review of the Fiscal and Competitive Advantages of Smarter Growth Development Patterns*, Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy; Burchell et al., 1998. *Costs of Sprawl – Revisited*, Transportation Research Board, National Academy Press, Washington, DC or TCRP Report 39, "Costs of Sprawl 2000" by the same lead author. Note that while the majority of the planning literature indicates that compact development decreases infrastructure cost, there is some scholarly disagreement about the extent and importance of the effect, which often comes down to the methods used to measure or project it. The Puget Sound Regional Council has even-handedly summarized this literature at http://www.psrc.org/assets/2032/appIF14-sprawl.pdf.