

2023 - 2024

Federal and State Advocacy Agenda

Washington, D.C.

Springfield, IL



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning



Introduction

In the time since the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) last updated its federal and state advocacy agendas, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to alter socioeconomic trends and reinforce longstanding challenges for northeastern Illinois. The pandemic disrupted local economies, deepened inequities, and changed the ways the region's nearly 8.6 million people travel each day. But it also spurred innovative approaches and collaborative solutions in the face of uncertainty.

[ON TO 2050](#), the region's long-range plan, and its update in fall 2022, continue to provide northeastern Illinois with a roadmap to steer the region through these enduring challenges and guide it toward new opportunities. CMAP's long-range plan forecasts needs and identifies improvements to transportation, the environment, the economy, and other issues affecting quality of life in the agency's seven-county region.

Northeastern Illinois remains one of the world's greatest economic centers with a diverse workforce, vast multimodal transportation system, and abundant natural resources. Yet, the region faces challenges with adequately funding transportation, a changing climate, and an increasingly competitive global economy with starker economic disparities.

The [three principles of ON TO 2050](#) — **inclusive growth, resilience, and prioritized investment** — are more relevant now than when the plan was adopted in 2018. Federal and state legislative leaders provide critical support to ensuring those principles are realized in the decades to come.

CMAP's 2023-2024 Advocacy Agenda details policy positions and priorities that can help the region address challenges and opportunities at each level of government. The positions and priorities, described below, align with CMAP's strategic direction that focuses on improving transportation, climate, and regional economic competitiveness in northeastern Illinois.



Transportation

The federal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#) presents a tremendous opportunity to modernize transportation and advance solutions that can address Illinois' most pressing mobility issues exacerbated by the pandemic.

The IIJA provides enormous funding opportunities to improve the safety of all travelers while addressing challenges — outdated street design, freight and traffic congestion, air quality, and resilience — that threaten the region's ability to grow inclusively by 2050 and beyond. At the same time, the pandemic has [shifted work commutes and travel patterns](#), causing congestion on the region's roads to return and transit ridership to drop.

Policies supporting transit and other transportation modes that can ease congestion and reduce carbon emissions are critical actions toward a more sustainable northeastern Illinois. Yet, the effects of the pandemic continue to compound concerns. The region's transit agencies (Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace) already are bracing for an expected budget shortfall of \$730 million by 2026 in part due to a sustained decline in ridership in the wake of the pandemic. The region will need comprehensive solutions that can sustain the future of transportation and strengthen the second largest transit system in the country.

Federal and state legislative leaders can help shape the region's future. Consistent with our responsibilities as the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), CMAP is working with our federal and state partners to build consensus and prioritize projects that can address the region's safety, emissions, and resilience challenges.

CMAP, like other MPOs, needs increased flexibility and improved access to federal funding. Additional steps can be taken at the state level to complement these new and significant funding opportunities from the IIJA. The following lists the transportation policy positions and priorities that CMAP supports on both the federal and state levels.



CMAP supports **sustainably** **funding transportation**

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Increase funding for transit available under the Highway Trust Fund and increase other transportation system user fees.

Prioritize and direct current funding streams to mass transit systems with the greatest infrastructure needs and highest number of passengers. Increase federal support for the operating costs of these systems.

Revise federal requirements to eliminate the funding disparity between transit projects and highway projects. This could include increasing the federal share under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts grant program from 60 to 80 percent for projects that extend the transit system.

Increase the federal motor fuel tax rate and index it to the rate of inflation each year.

Develop innovative funding mechanisms, such as a national per-mile road usage charge and a federal freight transportation fee in the long term.

Require the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop a report that recommends ways to modernize highway funding formulas and better align them with state and MPO performance measurement goals.

Provide greater flexibility for states and regions to impose user fees by removing federal restrictions on tolling the interstate system and removing interstate system restrictions on commercial activity.

STATE ACTIONS

Enact a comprehensive strategy to identify, create, and implement sustainable revenue sources for the region's transit system.

Implement exploratory pilot projects that examine replacing the state motor fuel tax with a road usage charge (of at least 2 cents per mile) and index to the rate of inflation.

Pilot different congestion pricing frameworks to assess whether different options enhance sustainable travel and limit the financial impact on drivers of low income.

Institute a regional fee on trips provided by transportation network and rideshare companies and allow for anonymous trip data to be shared with third-party transportation researchers and planners.

Provide incentives to employers that can encourage their employees to reduce the miles they travel by vehicle and require employers of a certain size within the Regional Transportation Authority's service area to participate in a transit benefit fare program. These fare programs typically allow employees to pay for transit and parking using pre-tax dollars.

Institute performance-based planning and project selection measures for investments funded through the IIJA and make these metrics publicly available.

Modernize processes for making transportation funding decisions. This should prioritize demonstrable system needs, align with federal funding and regional plans, and promote transparency.

Ensure revenues from motor vehicle fuel taxes can support holistic transportation system needs.





CMAP supports **increased investment in safe and complete streets**

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Fully fund and implement new IIJA programs like the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment program for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Outside of regional Transportation Alternatives Program funding, this program is the only federal competitive program that provides dedicated funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Expand MPOs' programming authority for funding available under the FHWA's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). HSIP provides federal aid to help significantly reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.

Through expanded HSIP programming authority, reflect the responsibilities of the FHWA's Safety Performance Management goals and establish a permanent 15-percent set aside for safety improvements that address vulnerable road users like bicyclists and pedestrians.

Identify dedicated resources that provide local governments with comprehensive support for implementing [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) provisions](#).

STATE ACTIONS

Expand capacity at the Illinois Department of Transportation to address traffic safety concerns in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion. This includes creating a new safe and complete streets coordinator position or similar role.

Create a competitive grant program to incentivize municipalities to dedicate more road space to non-vehicle users, design self-enforcing streets, and institute other measures that can calm traffic and improve traffic safety.

Give municipalities greater ability to make safety related improvements by reducing the barriers municipalities encounter when seeking to lower speed limits.

Allow additional municipalities to pilot automated technology to promote traffic safety equitably. Pilot programs would need required analysis. This would include an equity analysis that assesses impacts of automated technology on communities of color, as well as evaluations of the technology's effectiveness with reducing speeding and opportunities to dedicate potential revenues to safety improvements.

Identify dedicated resources that provide local governments with comprehensive support to implement ADA provisions.



Climate

The growing threat of climate change continues to test the resilience of northeastern Illinois. Over the past decade, CMAP's seven-county region reduced greenhouse gas emissions by a mere 9 percent, setting a pace that will fall short of ON TO 2050's goal to cut regional emissions by 80 percent by 2050. To prevent the most severe impacts of climate change, the region will need to reduce emissions by 5 percent every year through 2050.

But progress has been made at a state and federal level. The Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act puts Illinois on a path toward a 100 percent clean energy future by 2050 through investments in renewable energy and clean energy job creation. The state's Reimagining Electric Vehicles Act introduced new incentives to strengthen Illinois' competitiveness as a hub for electric vehicle manufacturing. The federal infrastructure law commits an unprecedented level of investment toward clean energy and resilience.

But more work remains to be done. And transportation is a key component to a sustainable and resilient region going forward. Today, the transportation sector is the largest source of emissions in Illinois, increasing the need for policies that can mitigate congestion and protect northeastern Illinois' communities from greater climate risks. The following lists the climate policy positions and priorities that CMAP supports on both the federal and state levels.



CMAP supports **stronger policies that enhance resilience and reduce emissions and congestion**

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Fully fund and implement new IIJA programs like the Healthy Streets program that will enhance the resilience of communities and transportation infrastructure across regions. The program provides critical funding to mitigate urban heat islands, improve air quality, and reduce flood risks.

Allow MPOs to use the Resilience Improvement Plan established by the IIJA to qualify for the 90 percent federal share for formula and competitive PROTECT funds within the urbanized area covered by the plan.

Increase transparency and coordination with regions around new resilience formula funding, such as IIJA Carbon Reduction and PROTECT. A more transparent, coordinated approach would ensure these programs are not being transferred or flexed to fund projects with minimal improvements to resilience and carbon reduction.

Establish a pilot program that gives greater authority to large MPOs to directly fund and select projects through a funding mechanism that allows regions to address carbon reduction and resilience.

Provide greater flexibility to use toll revenues to address strategic goals with multimodal transportation and carbon reductions. Greater flexibility could include providing high-speed, more reliable transit service to improve expressway corridors.

Adopt aggressive emission standards for post-model-year 2026 to accelerate the transition of low- and zero-emissions fleets.

Create a uniform "Buy America" waiver process across the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) agencies, including the FHWA and FTA, for projects that are proven to improve air quality substantially.

STATE ACTIONS

Establish state transportation emissions reduction goals that align with federally required greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and Illinois' carbon reduction strategy

Invest equitably in electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the northeastern Illinois region to maximize access.

Provide resources and incentives for local governments to complete the community energy, climate, and jobs plans as described in the state Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. The job plans are intended to support local governments with developing comprehensive approaches to coordinating and funding local energy, climate, and jobs programs.

CMAP supports **increased resources for integrated water resources management**

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Increase funding eligibility and coordination for water, wastewater, and stormwater improvements and planning to regions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should leverage the ability of regional planning agencies to assist disadvantaged communities with accessing federal and state funds.

Modernize policies related to flooding. This could include making risk information available for property sales. It also could include reforming the National Flood Insurance Program to develop long-term solutions, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Risk Rating 2.0 system, for properties that either are at high risk of flooding or have experienced repetitive losses because of flooding.

Encourage the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide regular updates of its precipitation reports, Atlas 14, to ensure future planning and investment decisions can withstand the impacts of extreme weather events.

Increase investments that maintain the health, recreational attractiveness, and economic benefits of Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes by providing stable, long-term funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The initiative accelerates efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes — the largest system of fresh surface water in the world.

STATE ACTIONS

Dedicate new and sustainable revenues to support state and regional water planning and enhanced coordination among the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois State Water Survey, Illinois Water Inventory Program, and regional partners.

Coordinate and standardize requirements for community water supplier reporting. Improve the sharing of data across agencies and partners to better support integrated water resources management.

Promote equity in water infrastructure investments supported by the state revolving loan fund. This could include increasing capacity within low-income communities to promote access to loans.

Update statewide design standards to reflect green infrastructure techniques and precipitation trends.





Regional Economic Competitiveness

While the pandemic reinforced many of the region's economic challenges, it also provided new opportunities to advance inclusive growth and build on northeastern Illinois' reputation as the premier freight hub in North America.

When supply shortages happened at the start of the pandemic, northeastern Illinois' multimodal transportation system continued to move goods to different parts of the country. Freight truck travel in the region declined modestly (10 percent), remaining elevated over nationwide declines (13 percent) in summer 2020. Northeastern Illinois moves about \$3 trillion in goods each year by truck, rail, water, and air freight. The region is the intersection for commercial activity in the country — home to ten interstate highways, six of the nation's largest railroads, and one of the world's busiest cargo airports.

The 2020 [Census figures](#), meanwhile, showed northeastern Illinois adding population and becoming more diverse, while our workforce continued to age with the baby boomer generation entering retirement age and birth rates declining. The region's essential workers, who are disproportionately people of color, continued to rely on transit to reach their jobs at all hours of the day during the height of the pandemic, even as the region's travel habits were shifting because of remote work. These trends emphasize the need for policies that can ensure northeastern Illinois remains economically competitive in more inclusive and thriving ways.

CMAP's federal and state partners can help the region better prioritize strategic and sustainable development practices, strengthen housing coordination, encourage regional innovation, improve access to high quality jobs, and promote investment in communities that have felt the brunt of disinvestment for decades. Local governments will continue to play an essential role in our region's post-pandemic recovery, increasing the need for regional collaboration and shared service delivery to foster a stronger and more resilient economy. The following lists the economic policy positions and priorities that CMAP supports on both the federal and state levels.

CMAP supports **stronger inclusive growth that reduces economic disparities**

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Amend the national highway goals in 23 U.S.C. § 150 to add a measure for how well the transportation system connects people to jobs and services.

Create a demonstration grant to provide reduced fares for riders of low income to help close transit equity gaps.

Ensure federal investments from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) are comprehensive and strategic through increased coordination with MPOs, especially in regions without an “Economic Development District.”

Continue American Rescue Plan Act EDA programs and funding levels that support regional economic development. This includes the Build Back Better Challenge, the Good Jobs Challenge, and the Economic Adjustment Assistance program.

Support place-based housing mobility solutions, including funding for efforts led by regional housing authorities.

Increase funding for re-employment, skilling, and reskilling programs authorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that can enhance, implement, and expand career pathway programs.

STATE ACTIONS

Authorize local jurisdictions to create a pilot program to test [income-based fines](#), escalating fines, or other alternative traffic enforcement structures that consider a driver’s ability to pay that may be below the statutory minimum.

Expand reporting of traffic violation fines and ticketing outcomes to allow for analysis with an equity lens.

Provide funding for local governments to study implementation of innovative partnerships, including shared-services models.

Further enable public-private partnerships for regional infrastructure, including providing resources for innovative financing, advancing design-build strategies, and promoting workforce equity.





CMAP supports **increased opportunities for comprehensive planning and economic development**

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Require the FHWA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide MPOs with comprehensive technical assistance and support for the newly authorized regional housing coordination plan process. Ensure MPOs have maximum flexibility to fund everything that is individually eligible within the housing coordination process.

Make programs like the Thriving Communities Initiative permanent through the reauthorization process so that investment decisions across transportation, land use, and housing have long-term federal support from HUD and USDOT.

Provide targeted assistance and funding through programs like the Thriving Communities Initiative to build communities' capacity. This includes support for Phase 1 engineering, a major barrier that many disadvantaged communities face when planning local projects.

Create a joint office between USDOT, HUD, and EDA to provide comprehensive support to regions with federal funding opportunities that address transportation, housing, and economic development.

STATE ACTIONS

Provide annual funding to support implementation of the Regional Planning Act and comprehensive planning for the state's MPOs.

Increase data sharing and transparency by state and local agencies, especially in instances that could aid in the COVID-19 recovery. This can help inform policymaking with data-driven decisions and regional collaboration.

Require a [regular audit of all tax abatements](#), diversions, and credits used for economic development to assess their economic and fiscal impacts.

Grant research partners access to additional information about sales tax rebate agreements (including agreement text and amounts of rebated taxes) through data-use agreements that protect proprietary business data

Institute tax increment financing (TIF) data reporting standards to allow planners and researchers to assess TIF expenditures, impacts, and the effectiveness of TIF across the region.

CMAP supports **improvements that help people and goods move efficiently**

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Establish a separate Office of Multimodal Freight within USDOT that comprehensively assesses freight system needs with high quality data sets. This can help inform competitive and formula freight programs based on need and significant national impact.

Require rail carriers to describe and disclose how existing and future passenger rail service would be impacted in the event of a merger between rail carriers.

Prioritize grade crossing improvements that will address increased freight traffic and delays due to rail mergers approved by the Surface Transportation Board. These projects should be prioritized for programs that can mitigate the negative impact of freight activities, including the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing Elimination Program.

Create a transparent data collection program for grade crossings that is regularly updated with quality public data and supports communities most impacted by freight movement.

CMAP supports **improvements to local and regional tax policy**

STATE ACTIONS

Modernize the sales tax to increase funding for transportation, reduce economic distortions, and give municipalities more options to generate sufficient revenue from existing and desired development. This can include polices that broaden the state sales tax base to cover additional services.

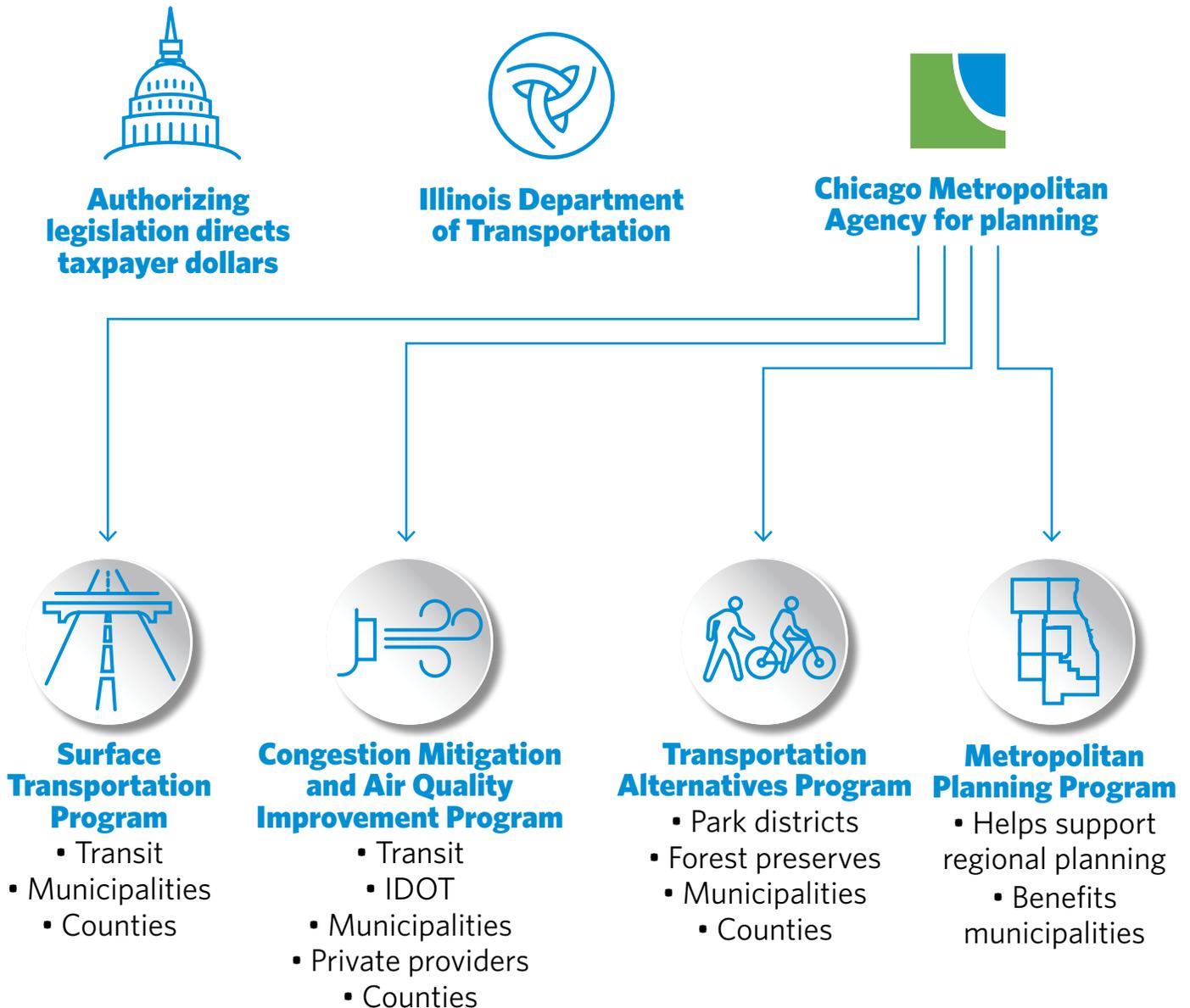
Increase state revenue allocation to local governments and reform state revenue disbursement criteria to reduce disparities across municipalities.

Allow non-home rule municipalities to impose certain kinds of user fees to provide services and better maintain infrastructure.



About CMAP

CMAP was created in 2005 by state statute (70 ILCS 1707). CMAP's Policy Committee is the federally designated MPO for the seven counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will, plus portions of DeKalb and Grundy. State and federal mandates require CMAP to conduct comprehensive regional planning, prioritize transportation investments, provide technical assistance for communities, and compile data resources that enhance decision making.



CMAP Board

City of Chicago appointments

Frank Beal, senior executive, Civic Consulting Alliance

John Roberson, chief operating officer, City of Chicago

Nina Idemudia, chief executive officer, Center for Neighborhood Technology

Stefan Schaffer, strategy, planning, and operations lead for environmental health, Natural Resources Defense Council

Anne Sheahan, executive vice president of business affairs, HNTB Corporation

Cook County appointments

Gerald Bennett, mayor, Palos Hills (Southwest Cook)

Paul Hoefort, mayor, Village of Mount Prospect (Suburban Cook)

Richard Reinbold, president, Village of Richton Park (South Cook)

Matthew Walsh, former trustee, Indian Head Park (West Cook)

Vacant (Suburban Cook)

Collar county appointments

Matthew Brolley, president, Village of Montgomery (Kane/Kendall)

Gary Grasso, mayor, Village of Burr Ridge (DuPage)

John Noak, mayor, Village of Romeoville (Will)

Nancy Rotering, mayor, City of Highland Park (Lake)

Carolyn Schofield, member, McHenry County Board (McHenry)

Non-voting members

Abolfazl (Kouros) Mohammadian, PhD, professor and department head, Civil, Materials, and Environmental Engineering, University of Illinois at Chicago

Leanne Redden, executive director, Regional Transportation Authority (MPO Policy Committee)

Vacant (governor's appointee)

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