



Using GO TO 2040 as a guide, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has developed a set of principles to inform federal legislators and other national policy makers about CMAP's positions on national policy issues. This agenda focuses on principles that will help to direct CMAP's support or opposition to specific pieces of legislation over the course of the federal legislative calendar.

In this day and age, many public policy issues transcend local jurisdictions or can be too large for any one unit of government to undertake. Issues such as economic development, transportation, and environment require regional cooperation. Regional planning helps coordinate efforts and resources within a metropolitan area, providing state and federal governments with a unified vision for a region's future. As the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will, CMAP was mandated by state statute to develop and guide the implementation of the region's GO TO 2040 comprehensive plan. The plan builds on the region's assets, identifies shortcomings, and recommends actions to help sustain the region's economic vitality and global competitiveness over the next 30 years.

Pursue Coordinated Investments

Metropolitan regions drive the U.S. economy, and this should be reflected in federal policy and programs. An increasingly "regional approach" to investment decisions, which would both invest more in metropolitan areas as well as devolve more appropriate authority for funding decisions to the regional level, is helping to harness the economic power of regions. Comprehensive regional plans like GO TO 2040 should guide federal investment decisions since they identify regional priorities by linking transportation, land use, the natural environment, economic prosperity, housing, and human and community development.

Legislative Principles

CMAP supports legislative initiatives that take a regional approach and foster inter-jurisdictional collaboration. A more robust investment by federal agencies in regional comprehensive planning is central to this goal.

CMAP supports initiatives and programs that are competitive and based on comprehensive evaluation criteria considering the interconnected focus areas of transportation, land use, housing, the environment, and economic development. Past examples include the USDOT, HUD, and EPA joint Partnership for Sustainable Communities, and the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive, performance-based transportation funding program first offered through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Invest Strategically in Transportation

GO TO 2040 emphasizes the vital importance of strategic transportation investments. Given the transportation system's importance to the regional economy, this recommendation is especially pertinent in difficult economic times. GO TO 2040 recommends using existing revenue sources more wisely by implementing performance-based criteria rather than historical formulas for funding apportionments and project selection. These criteria should include broader elements of livability along with traditional engineering criteria. GO TO 2040 also recommends increasing user fees, as current revenues are insufficient to maintain, modernize, and expand the regional transportation system. The existing motor fuel tax should be brought up to date with today's actual costs of maintaining and operating the system. Additionally, the implementation of new and more innovative structures including congestion pricing will better reflect the broader social costs of transportation, such as congestion. To that end, the federal government can empower states and regions to provide adequate, sustainable funding for transportation by allowing tolls on the existing Interstate system.

Legislative Principles

CMAP supports legislative initiatives that increase and index the existing motor fuel tax to support the repair and modernization of the transportation system. Additionally, CMAP supports legislation to permit and encourage innovative transportation funding measures predicated on user fees.

CMAP supports implementing congestion pricing and managed lane strategies on new and existing infrastructure. CMAP supports the removal of federal restrictions on tolling the Interstate system.

CMAP supports legislative initiatives that empower metropolitan planning organizations to make strategic transportation investment decisions and allocate resources accordingly.

CMAP supports efforts to improve project selection based upon performance criteria, including those that reflect livable communities.

CMAP supports efforts to begin addressing the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) reauthorization, which expires this fall.

Create a More Efficient Freight Network

Metropolitan Chicago is the nation's freight hub. An efficient freight system enables a global supply chain to provide goods at lower costs and gives businesses an advantage in today's global economy. While MAP-21 advances national freight policy, the next reauthorization bill should make that policy stronger with a dedicated source of revenue and incentives to promote greater investment in freight mobility including a truly multimodal vision, and a strong role for regional agencies in setting freight priorities.

A federal multi-modal freight policy and investment strategy can address the efficient movement of goods, and federal resources can be directed to the projects with the greatest national benefit. An overarching federal policy concerning freight would provide valuable guidance as regions attempt to confront freight challenges, many of which have national impacts.

Legislative Principles

CMAP supports a national freight policy with dedicated funding and investment incentives for freight projects and multi-modal corridors of national significance in which future investment will be focused.

CMAP supports an analysis of the future capacity of national freight rail networks as a potential long-term system management strategy of balancing freight movements among modes.

CMAP supports stronger legislative and policy ties between metropolitan regions across the U.S. to advance joint interests in national freight policy.

CMAP supports securing funding to complete the CREATE Program.

Increase Commitment to Public Transit

Federal funding for the maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of our region's public transit remains of vital importance. Public transit is highly valued by northeastern Illinois residents, and modernization of the system is a key recommendation of GO TO 2040. Capital needs continue to outpace available capital revenues, and the system faces a large backlog of deferred maintenance, which affects service across the region. While MAP-21 expanded the eligibility of New Starts funding for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and improvement projects -- rather than just new capacity -- the bill did not make reforms to level the playing field between transit and highway projects. Specifically, GO TO 2040 recommends addressing the different federal requirements for local

match funding of transit and highway projects, as well as the stricter requirements on the use of federal funds for the engineering of transit projects, to eliminate the funding bias in favor of highway projects. Additionally, we encourage our federal partners to support transit-oriented development through their transportation, housing, and economic development investments.

Legislative Principle

CMAP supports legislative initiatives that provide more resources for the maintenance and modernization of our transit system, transit-oriented developments, and that provide for reasonable expansion of the transit system as described in GO TO 2040.

CMAP supports revising federal requirements that place transit projects at a funding disadvantage relative to highway projects.

Achieve Greater Livability through Land Use and Housing

The federal government has an important leadership role to play in helping communities strive toward the principles of livability -- healthy, safe, walkable communities that offer transportation choices for access to schools, jobs, services, and basic needs. The federal government took steps to evaluate one aspect of these interrelated issues through HUD's initiative to create a national Housing and Transportation Affordability Index. As noted above in "Pursue Coordinated Investments," the federal government had increased its support for livable communities and addressed the need to link planning across disciplines through programs like the Sustainable Communities Initiative (which funded CMAP's Local Technical Assistance Program). However, Congress has not funded the SCI for two years or any other efforts to encourage local collaboration and planning such as the new Office of Economic Resilience, which would focus on supporting community's efforts to diversify their economies, address distressed and isolated neighborhoods, and fund development and infrastructure improvements. These agencies can also prioritize funding to communities engaging in intergovernmental planning, particularly those addressing the interconnected relationship between transportation, land use, and housing. Funding incentives from the federal government to encourage local governments to plan collaboratively for the future will help move northeastern Illinois toward the goal of greater livability.

Legislative Principles

CMAP supports funding restoration for implementation and expansion of the Sustainable Communities Initiative program and other similar initiatives that seek to link planning and investment decisions across disciplines.

CMAP supports the prioritization of federal funding to communities engaged in intergovernmental planning.

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

Manage and Conserve Water and Energy Resources

The conservation of water and energy is a top priority for GO TO 2040. Like other places in the country, the region has historically suffered from under-investment in drinking water infrastructure, leading to unnecessary leakage and reliability problems. Wastewater infrastructure funding has also been inadequate to meet identified needs. One of CMAP's major goals is to promote the investment in water and wastewater infrastructure necessary to maintain and improve service for residents, use water efficiently, and protect the environment. In addition, the Great Lakes are beset by numerous threats including invasive species, water level declines and ongoing and legacy pollution. The federal government can support the restoration of the Great Lakes through cleanup of legacy contamination, reduction of non-point contamination sources, promotion of green infrastructure, and full implementation of the Great Lakes Compact, which will ensure a cooperative, performance-based investment process that balances ecological and economic goals.

The federal government can provide local and regional funding assistance for communities to reduce energy consumption in buildings through retrofits. It can also redouble efforts to transition away from centralized electricity generation with inefficient long-distance transmission and toward smaller-scale, decentralized generation, and the “smart grid.” This will enable better demand management, and more intelligent utilization of capacity. The federal government can also invest in and provide incentives for research, production, and transmission of clean energy technologies and alternative fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Lastly, climate change is a critical issue regionally and nationally. Comprehensive climate legislation at the federal level that addresses greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors would be the most efficient and effective way to combat the threat of a warming planet. Because evidence suggests that increases in storm intensity, flood heights, and heat wave frequency -- all thought to be effects of higher levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere -- are already occurring, assistance is needed in adapting to the effects of climate change. Rules governing planning and design for federal infrastructure funding programs may need to be reviewed to ensure they are accounting for the expected effects of climate change.

Legislative Principles

CMAP supports federal initiatives that encourage water efficiency, take a “green infrastructure” approach to water resources management, and protect the Great Lakes, including implementation of the Great Lakes Compact.

CMAP supports regional funding assistance for communities to reduce energy consumption in buildings through retrofits as well as federal investment in smart grid applications.

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

CMAP supports national targets for reducing greenhouse gas reductions and federal support for strategies for achieving those goals, as well as funding and technical assistance for local efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change. CMAP encourages the federal government to allow regions latitude to implement the most relevant local strategies to attain these targets.

Expand and Improve Parks and Open Space

Much of the park or open space is provided by state or local jurisdictions, but the federal government can still play a central role. Less than half of the residents of the CMAP region have access to adequate park and recreation areas near their homes, even though numerous studies have shown that such areas have a beneficial effect on both physical and mental health. The federal government should support direct investment in open space, particularly to preserve large “macrosites.” This can happen through formation of national wildlife refuges, as has begun at the newly established Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, or the transfer of surplus federal property to open space uses, as occurred at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Fort Sheridan.

Legislative Principle

CMAP supports direct federal investment in open space preservation. This could include additional grant funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Urban Park Recreation Recovery programs, the formation of national wildlife refuges, or the transfer of surplus federal property to open space.

Promote Sustainable Local Foods

There is growing concern about the environmental impacts, safety, and quality of our food. Also gaining widespread attention are the disparities of access to fresh, nutritious, and affordable foods and the health implications of “food deserts” (areas without nearby retail outlets that have fresh, nutritious, and affordable food). The federal government can support a variety of demonstration programs to evaluate different means of providing better food access in food deserts, including funding these efforts and communicating best practices.

The federal government can support local food production by providing the tools and resources necessary to ensure that its farmland preservation investments and general agricultural subsidies promote viable local food systems. Federal policy should recognize the importance of local food production.

Legislative Principle

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

CMAP supports improved data collection research, training, and information sharing in this field.

Improve Education and Workforce Development

Researchers, business leaders, and elected officials agree that the quality of our workforce is one of the most important factors -- if not the most important -- in strengthening the region's economy. Not just in the region but across the U.S., student achievement has been declining compared to other industrialized nations. Additionally, numerous industries and occupations are suffering due to the lack of trained workers. In order to reverse these trends and grow a high quality workforce, the federal government can strengthen and expand strategies that link employers, educators, and other workforce development entities. The federal government should increase flexibility and funding for workforce development programs and better coordinate them with education and economic development efforts. The federal government should also play a role in monitoring impacts, communicating outcomes, and targeting resources toward effective strategies and strategic industries.

Legislative Principle

CMAP supports legislative initiatives that improve data-driven decision making to align workforce development and education with employers' needs.

Support Economic Innovation

Economic innovation, the development and commercialization of new products and processes, is a key driver of economic performance. Recent federal programs and policies have recognized the fact that regions are the drivers of our nation's economy. Investing in regional economic innovation is gaining importance in federal policy as a way to support economic growth. Federal financing can harness the power of regional industry clusters and help transition start-up firms from incubator programs into the business world. The federal government can help create innovation through a robust national policy agenda, which includes incentives for regional collaboration across stakeholder groups and developing regional clusters of innovation. Several federal initiatives to promote innovation have emerged recently and involve significant coordination between the federal agencies and local applicants. Technical assistance would help regions organize and successfully implement the federal government's vision.

Legislative Principles

CMAP supports reauthorizing and funding the America Competes Act, which invested in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and fostered innovative research and commercialization. Of significant regional interest is that the legislation authorizes the creation of a "regional innovation program" to "encourage and support the development of regional innovation strategies, including regional innovation clusters." This program would make awards available to regional cluster initiatives on a matching basis.

CMAP supports legislative initiatives that improve data-driven decision making and target investments toward industry clusters.

Tax Policy

CMAP's specific interest in tax policy is how these policies, which are set primarily on the state level, influence the overall economic well-being of the metropolitan region, including the commercial, industrial, and residential development of our communities. That being said, larger economic trends in consumer behavior may require joint action by the states and federal government. For example, an eroding sales tax base that is out of step with the Internet economy imperils the fiscal well-being of our communities. However, the State of Illinois cannot require out-of-state sellers to collect sales taxes on in-state purchases under current federal law, nor does it have the authority to provide a national solution. Only the federal government has the ability to enact the policy changes necessary to help ensure the sustainability of the region's sales tax revenues.

Legislative Principle

CMAP will support legislative initiatives such as the Main Street Fairness Act that ensure the sustainability of the region's tax base and allow states to require collection of sales taxes by all retailers.

Improve Access to Information

Most federal and state agencies control large amounts of data and information. Policy challenges cannot be solved -- and efficient governance cannot be achieved -- without comprehensive, current, and accurate data resources. Residents are served best when government information is freely accessible to all. When public bodies have access to complete, accurate, and timely information, leaders can make decisions that are better for our communities, our region and the state.

Legislative Principle

CMAP will support legislation that expands the dissemination of federal data, helps and provides incentives to state and local governments to post data online, and helps implement best practices and technological improvements that facilitate open exchange of data.

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About CMAP

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP developed and now leads the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. To address anticipated population growth of more than 2 million new residents, GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.

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