



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CMAP Board  
**From:** CMAP Staff  
**Date:** March 5, 2014  
**Re:** Board Planning Session Recap & Next Steps

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At the Board's February meeting, a strategic planning and visioning discussion was held to help guide the staff in developing next year's annual budget and work plan, and to guide future strategic planning. The summary below includes an overall recap of the discussion as well as intended next steps for the Board to discuss.

### **Funding**

CMAP's enabling legislation described the responsibilities of the agency but did not provide funding for those activities. Although subsequent legislation established the Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund, that fund was dissolved just a few years later. Currently, transportation planning activities are funded through U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) grants, with transportation funds accounting for about 95 percent of agency revenues. Planning for non-transportation activities is limited because of a lack of funding. IDOT now matches our federal funds and provides us with a limited amount of funding beyond the match to do other transportation related work. We don't believe that this is sustainable in the long run and would like to find a stable and dedicated non-transportation funding source. The Board discussed potential options to secure funding to support regional planning activities beyond transportation. The following options were discussed:

- Receiving a portion of the RTA sales tax revenue that comes to the region, either through a voluntary transfer or codified in state law.
- Increasing local contributions to CMAP that are currently voluntary in nature and were generally decreased to an amount lower than the CATS and NIPC combined assessments prior to when CMAP was created.
- Increasing support from transportation agencies if these funds could be flexible in their use (i.e., used for non-transportation planning).
- Increasing state resources from agencies beyond IDOT.

- Creating federal level planning programs similar to those at USDOT at other agencies.
- Pursuing one-time grants from government and philanthropic funders.

**Next Steps:** At your April meeting, staff will propose one or two scenarios for the Board to consider for approval to pursue. The scenarios will include a rationale to pursue that funding source, as well as a plan and a strategy to work towards diversifying funding for the agency.

### **The Next Regional Plan**

While we are finishing an update to GO TO 2040 that will be adopted this fall, we have already started thinking about the successor plan that will be due in 2018. GO TO 2040 was a broad policy plan that included specific implementation activities across diverse focus areas, including livable communities, human capital, regional mobility, and efficient governance. Given the lengthy process of creating these plans, the time is now to begin considering the overall focus of the next plan.

There was consensus among the Board members that the next plan update would benefit from a deeper dive into our core issues of land use and transportation, and that there would be value in being more specific on our region's investment priorities and improving our ability to tie programming of projects to the plan. It was also noted that this could be potentially more controversial and that the agency should not lose the momentum that has been built on other focus areas of the plan completely.

**Next Steps:** Staff will be working on developing the FY 2015 work plan. As part of that work plan, projects and potentially a core program of the staff work next year will begin scoping the next plan update. This will include more detail of what the next plan should focus on, as well as identify research efforts, technical analysis, and/or stakeholder engagement. The work plan will be presented to the Board for discussion in May, with final approval expected in June.

### **Local Technical Assistance**

The Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program has been in existence since 2011. Since then, CMAP has used this program to deliver planning assistance to communities across the region. With over 50 projects completed, 50 underway, and another 40 committed, the program has benefited many communities. As we have completed many plans and look to the future of the LTA program, there was consensus among the Board members that we should consider devoting more resources to implementing the plans.

**Next Steps:** Staff will undergo an analysis and evaluation of the overall LTA program with a report expected to the Board by November, 2014. The evaluation will consider whether CMAP should advance the plans that we have already written or take a larger number of new projects in new communities; as well as the overall agency resources dedicated to LTA activities. Staff will work with the working committees and the Local Coordinating Committee to complete this evaluation. It is expected that the annual call for projects will continue this year and following the evaluation, the Board may make changes to the program in 2015.

## **Board Structure**

Our current structure includes a number of working committees and advisory committees to the Board and MPO Policy Committee that address specific issues or policy areas. We also have two coordinating committees that are focused on local issues and regional issues. The Board and the MPO Policy Committee are both established through our enabling legislation and have a memorandum of understanding outlining the relationship and coordination between the two boards. CMAP has an extremely high voting threshold for taking action while the MPO Policy Committee requires only a simple majority.

Overall, there was consensus that the committee structure meets the needs of the Board. A summary is provided at the monthly meetings summarizing the working committees meetings and the coordinating level provides an opportunity for a good discussion of the issues. Staff should remain cognizant of what is presented on those agendas. Finally, Board members stated that the Board structure benefits from the super-majority voting requirement and that since the MPO Policy Committee only requires a majority, this can create a conflict, as it did last year.

**Next Steps:** There was not a recommendation to make any changes at this time. The Board will consider its annual review of its MOU with the MPO Policy Committee at its March meeting. The annual joint meeting of the CMAP Board and the MPO Policy Committee should occur for the October meetings.

## **Legislative Outreach and Analysis**

The Board currently approves a legislative framework and agenda for both federal and state legislative activities on an annual basis. These tend to focus on legislative activities that are directly related to implementing GO TO 2040 and provide a method for us to react to specific legislation as it is introduced. CMAP has rarely led the effort to pass specific legislation and while we have provided information and been supportive of the legislative efforts of others we have seldom been out front.

The Board discussed the importance of considering a position on upcoming legislative issues, such as including potential tax reform and transit governance. It also discussed the potential for taking a more aggressive approach to implementing some of the policy work that we have developed.

**Next Steps:** Staff will present tax policy principles for the Board to consider at your April meeting. We will also continue to monitor any potential legislative activities related to transit, as well as our overall legislative agenda. Staff is underway with a more strategic effort to meet with state legislators this year with the intention of potentially pursuing a more aggressive legislative approach in the future.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Discussion

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