

Municipalities

The region contains 284 municipalities, and their elected officials, appointed officials (like plan commissioners), and staff are the intended audience for this section of the plan. To a lesser extent, actions that can be taken by park districts, townships, and other units of government of similar size are also discussed. In the following pages, this section describes how municipal actions can support the implementation of GO TO 2040, stressing the plan's recommendations but also covering other areas. It relies heavily on case studies and best practices from around the region, with links to CMAP web pages that have further information on these topics and more examples of case studies and best practices.

How Municipal Decisions Affect Plan Implementation

Municipalities are critical to the success of GO TO 2040 because of their responsibility for land use decisions, which create the built environment of the region and determine the livability of its communities. The most important thing that a municipality can do to implement GO TO 2040 is to take this responsibility very seriously.

This requires a local commitment to proactive planning, as well as the right set of planning “tools,” including an up-to-date local comprehensive plan, ordinances and other regulations that are consistent with the comprehensive plan, and trained decision-makers — primarily plan commissioners and local elected officials — who fully understand the impacts of their land use decisions.

Local governments are also owners and operators of significant elements of the region’s transportation system and spend nearly \$2 billion per year on transportation, which is more than the federal government and slightly less than the state. Investment in open space, either by municipalities or through stand-alone park districts, occurs at the local level. Municipalities are directly involved in creating “livability,” one of the central themes of GO TO 2040. This is not just through regulation and investment, but also through programs that create a sense of community identity, such as fairs or fireworks displays, or support for local arts and culture.

Municipalities are also the primary providers of many government services, such as police, fire, and other emergency services, public works, garbage collection, and many others (although not all municipalities have all of these functions). These are important functions but are outside the scope of GO TO 2040. In other words, municipalities have responsibility for many important functions beyond the issues covered in GO TO 2040 such as land use regulation, transportation, and open space.

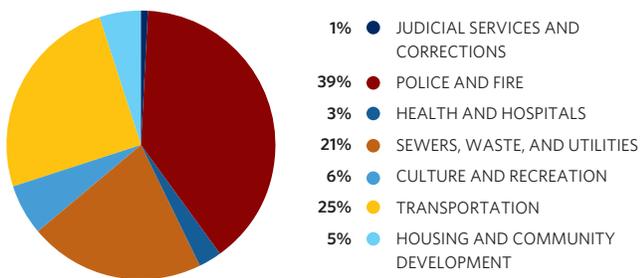
According to data from the U.S. Census, shown in **Figure 70**, municipalities spend the greatest share of their resources (39 percent of expenditures) on police and fire services. This is followed by transportation expenditures (25 percent), mostly focused on maintenance and operation of local streets; and by expenditures on other public works activities, namely sewers, waste disposal, and utilities (21 percent).

Special-purpose units of local government can also support the implementation of GO TO 2040. Park districts are sometimes a municipal department and sometimes a stand-alone unit of government, but in either case they play a central role in the provision of open space and recreational areas in a community. Townships have responsibility for road maintenance, particularly in unincorporated areas. Townships also provide

a variety of human services, operate (or contribute to) paratransit services, and maintain parks in some parts of the region. A variety of other special-purpose units of local government, such as library districts or fire protection districts, also exist across the region, but the services provided by these governments are outside the central focus of GO TO 2040.

Many municipalities already do things that support the priorities of GO TO 2040, and many have plans and ordinances that are good examples of how the plan can be implemented. These best practices should be shared and spread across the region. There is no “one size fits all” solution across communities in the implementation of GO TO 2040’s recommendations. Municipalities are encouraged to develop their own locally specific ways of defining the concept of livability and to support development that meets their definitions. One consistent element across municipalities is the importance of proactive planning; regardless of how they apply livability principles, municipalities have the right and the responsibility to actively plan for their futures and implement their plans.

Figure 70. Municipal expenditures in northeastern Illinois, 2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and CMAP analysis

Livable Communities

Municipalities are among the most important implementers of the high-priority recommendations of GO TO 2040 that relate to livable communities, including land use and housing, resource conservation, open space, and local food. Other municipal actions beyond these also support the concept of livable communities, and are discussed after the high-priority recommendations.

Land Use and Housing

GO TO 2040 discusses the important role of local land use regulation in supporting livable communities. The plan recommends a number of actions directly to municipalities, and provides additional recommendations to CMAP and other regional agencies concerning technical and financial assistance to support local planning. The overall direction is to improve the “building blocks” of local planning — up-to-date comprehensive plans, consistent ordinances, and trained decision-makers — and use these tools to plan for livable communities; there are already many good examples of this occurring in the region, described further below.

A major way that municipalities can implement GO TO 2040 is by pursuing reinvestment within their existing developed areas. In the long run, development within existing communities is typically more efficient than development on the fringes of the region because these areas are already served by infrastructure. Particularly strong opportunities for redevelopment can be found on **brownfields**, or land on which contamination may be present (former industrial sites, gas stations, or dry cleaners are often brownfields). Communities can conduct inventories of brownfields, and then seek state and federal funding and private investment to redevelop them. This not only returns the brownfield to active, productive use, but it benefits the entire neighborhood, as studies of the impact on brownfield redevelopment on nearby property values have shown.

Pursuing denser, mixed use development can also support GO TO 2040.

The definition of “denser” development differs between communities but generally means densities that are somewhat higher than prevailing patterns of development in that area. The definition of “mixed use” also varies and can refer to mixing land uses (such as residential, office, or retail) within a single structure or on the same block, or even simply providing connections between residential and commercial areas of a community.

Municipalities are encouraged to review their plans and ordinances to see where denser, mixed-use development could be supported, and to work collaboratively with developers to find locally-appropriate ways to accommodate them. Planning for dense, mixed-use development near transit, in the form of **transit oriented development (TOD)**, is a particular focus of GO TO 2040, which gives specific recommendations to local governments and transit agencies to accomplish this.



In Palatine, a brownfield site near this residential development was redeveloped as structured parking as part of a larger downtown development effort. The cleanup had significant catalytic effect on nearby properties as well, with the value of nearby property doubling within five years after completion of the cleanup. Image courtesy of [Patrick Barry](#)



The “Uptown” development near the Park Ridge train station includes fairly dense residential development (over 200 units on 5 1/2 acres), retail and restaurants, and open space. Buildings are four to five stories in height, and designed to be friendly to pedestrians and consistent with Park Ridge’s existing architecture. This project has won awards from Illinois American Planners Association and Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) chapters in recent years. Image courtesy of [Congress for the New Urbanism](#)

GO TO 2040 treats housing as a critical part of the region’s infrastructure and seeks a balanced supply of housing distributed throughout the region; there are a variety of ways that municipalities can support this goal. Because every community is unique, a study of housing supply and future demand is recommended to understand the most important housing issues to address.

Municipalities are in the front lines of discussions about housing. They can do much to counter negative perceptions that residents may have about affordable housing — which are typically expressed most strongly at the local level in response to development proposals that include affordable housing. Municipalities can do this by mixing affordable housing within developments and paying close attention to the design and appearance of proposed affordable housing. Putting a face on the residents of affordable housing is important; a mix of housing units is needed to allow “aging in place” by residents and provide homes for teachers, nurses, and other valuable members of a community. The perception that affordable housing means concentrated areas of poverty and crime needs to be countered.

A key strategy for creating an adequate and regionally balanced supply of affordable housing is for municipalities to support and permit its construction. Affordability and balance are broad concepts, and there will be varying ways that local governments define these terms to meet local needs. Some areas face particular **regulatory barriers** in providing a range of housing, but can use techniques like density bonuses, allowance of accessory apartment, streamlining permitting processes, or other tools to encourage developers to propose affordable units.

In many communities, more active approaches than simply permitting affordable housing are needed. These work best to promote livability when targeted to specific situations, rather than broadly applied. For example, **housing preservation** programs work well in communities seeking to preserve the quality or the affordability of their housing stock, or to rehabilitate it. On the other hand, **inclusionary zoning** programs can be applied in communities that have limited affordable housing but are interested in creating more. A broad variety of other techniques, such as land trusts, foreclosure interventions, and others are also appropriate in different situations.

An overall sense of community is an essential component of livability — but is difficult to define or quantify. A municipal government cannot create a sense of community from scratch, but it can facilitate its development. While it may seem far removed from the regional scale of GO TO 2040, efforts by municipalities to create vibrant communities with active civic and social lives are actually very related to the region’s future.

High-quality design is critical to create livable communities. Attractive streetscapes and buildings, public spaces for civic life, and overall appearance of an area are all important elements, but are challenging to quantify. Municipalities can create design review boards or similar groups to review the character of new development.

Local historic context is important in every community, and reinvestment projects can be balanced with historic preservation that respects context and character. More than just individual buildings, preservation should address context and landscapes. Preservation can complement urban design projects and encourage reinvestment in existing communities. Some communities also find **teardowns** to be threatening to their character, and can seek to limit them or reduce their negative impacts.



After working closely with the local chapter of the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois and developers working in the community, the Village of Bolingbrook passed an ordinance in 2003 that requires all new single-family homes to be built with features that allow a person in a wheelchair to visit without any special assistance. Nationally-recognized for its leadership in the area of “visitability,” Bolingbrook has witnessed the addition of thousands of new homes accessible to persons with limited mobility, including older adults, featuring at least one step-free entrance, minimum widths for doorways and hallways, and a first floor bathroom which allows for wheelchair access. Image courtesy of [Concrete Change](#)



St. Charles is one of several local communities in our region to adopt inclusionary zoning. Yet unlike most communities, which require developers to set aside a flat percentage of homes as affordable, St. Charles created a “tiered” system, which requires new developments of different sizes to incorporate a different percentage of affordable homes. The ordinance also provides developers with fee waivers for affordable homes and density bonuses. Image courtesy of [Tom Henneman](#)



The Sears, Roebuck Power House in Chicago was converted from a defunct power generation building (built in 1905) to an education center. Portions of the original machinery were incorporated into the new buildings, which offer math and science courses that acknowledge the City’s technological progress over time. This project won the Landmarks Illinois Project of the Year award in 2009. Image courtesy of [David Schalliol](#)

GO TO 2040 supports intergovernmental coordination between municipalities, as this can be an effective means to address issues like transportation, housing, or economic development that are broader in scope than a single community. Coordination can effectively occur between neighboring communities, or between communities facing similar issues that may be more remote from each other. GO TO 2040 identifies this as a high priority, and recommends that municipalities work with their local county or Councils of Governments (COGs) — organizations that are described at greater length later in this chapter — to accomplish this.

Resource Conservation

GO TO 2040 focuses its recommendations on actions that communities in the region can take to conserve energy and water and manage stormwater, and supports an active approach for municipalities in this area. Some of these recommendations are directed to water utilities, which are often housed at municipalities; others are directed to local governments in general. A number of best practices in resource conservation practices by municipalities, described below, are already underway.

Incorporating water — drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater — into local planning would support GO TO 2040, which recognizes the interconnections of these systems. Municipalities have a great deal of responsibility in these areas. They can prescribe the performance standards (although minimum requirements are usually set at the county level) used to manage stormwater, and they often make permitting decisions for drainage and stormwater detention. They often have primary responsibility for floodplain management, as well. Municipalities can support GO TO 2040 by encouraging **stormwater** best management practices through the development process. It is also important for municipalities to collaborate in watershed plans that identify and propose solutions for water resource problems. The resource conservation section specifically recommends a variety of stormwater best management practices that should be considered by municipalities.

Drinking water utilities are generally operated by municipalities. While conditions vary across the region in terms of water sources, water rates, and so forth, the main thing municipalities can do to support GO TO 2040 is to encourage water efficiency through **conservation best management practices**. These can range from metering all customers to leak detection programs to using reclaimed water; the use of full cost pricing is a specific recommendation of the resource conservation chapter.

Most wastewater treatment systems in the region are operated by municipalities (although the largest volume of wastewater is treated by the regional sanitary districts). Through good **wastewater planning**, municipalities play an important role in protecting streams from pollution. The use of improved wastewater technologies is a good way for local communities to continue their role in preventing pollution from entering streams. There are many options available, such as nutrient removal, membrane bioreactor technology, and others. Wastewater is also connected to land use planning in that new wastewater infrastructure is generally needed in newly developing areas to support new growth.



A group of 28 municipalities in Cook County formed the South Suburban Housing Collaborative to develop a comprehensive, coordinated redevelopment plan for their communities, which were some of the hardest hit by foreclosure in Illinois in recent years. The Collaborative leveraged funding from local, state, and federal agencies and programs to support the redevelopment plan. Image courtesy of [Joe Balynas](#)



The Villa Park police station in DuPage County was built on the site of a parking lot downtown. It decreased runoff in its mostly built-out watershed by three stormwater best management practices: a green roof, bioretention swales, and permeable paving in the parking lot. The police station is also an example of infill development. The project was partly financed by a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). Image courtesy of [IBC Engineering Services, Inc.](#)

Many municipalities are taking action to limit their emissions of greenhouse gases and overall impact on climate change. The primary contributor to climate change is **energy use** in homes and businesses (followed by the transportation system). Because of this, GO TO 2040 highlights the retrofit of existing buildings as a particularly important element of a climate change strategy, with roles for regional, local, and other agencies. As a first step to addressing energy use, communities can create climate action plans, which provide baseline assessments of current energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and also lay out reduction strategies.

Municipalities can address energy use by both examining and improving their own practices, and by affecting private energy use through education, regulations, or incentives. Designing energy-efficient public buildings, or retrofitting existing buildings, provides a good example to others in the community and can have positive fiscal benefits through lower energy costs. GO TO 2040 specifically recommends that local governments play the role of early adopters, acting as demonstration models of innovative energy and water conservation activities.

Local governments are also well-positioned to address **waste disposal** issues. Municipalities can ensure that their own facilities have recycling options, and through their role as the unit of government primarily responsible for garbage collection, can also create residential or commercial recycling programs, or promote other waste reduction programs like composting. Municipalities that experience high levels of construction or demolition activities can also look for solutions to reduce debris from these activities, including “deconstruction” practices for demolition.



To address sustainability, the City of Elgin established a “Green Initiative” — a series of projects and plans designed to create a “greener” Elgin. The first phase of the green initiative involves undertaking several “eco-friendly projects,” including a program to create a comprehensive tree inventory and maintenance program, and a revolving loan program to assist homeowners to fund energy efficiency upgrades in their homes. In addition, the City of Elgin has teamed up with ComEd to offer its residents a variety of incentives for making decisions that result in reduced energy use. These projects are designed to help Elgin begin to become more “green” while a more formal and comprehensive environmental master plan is created. Pictured above is Sherman Hospital in Elgin, which is powered by renewable geothermal energy. Image courtesy of City of Elgin

Open Space

GO TO 2040 addresses conservation open space like forest preserves, local parks, and connections between open space. The recommendations identify the provision of local parks as the primary role for municipalities (or park districts, where these are stand-alone units of government), although municipalities can also have a role in connecting larger open space parcels using trails. Because municipalities have land use regulation responsibilities, recommendations concerning conservation design, which can help preserve and provide connections between open space, are also directed to them.

Municipalities and park districts can support GO TO 2040 by providing **parks and open space**, an important ingredient of livability, throughout their jurisdictions. Park creation activities can be targeted to places without adequate open space — usually, denser and older parts of the region — and GO TO 2040 recommends that municipalities and park districts seek a variety of ways to increase park space in these areas. Creating connections between larger open space parcels or along waterways through greenways is also a critical action for local governments. Maintaining and improving parks are very important functions — often even more so than expansion — and opportunities to enhance or **restore natural features** in parkland should be explored. Parks can also be used for **arts and culture** programming and can support local arts communities, if passive space is included and informal arts activities are encouraged.

Municipalities can use **conservation design** to minimize the negative environmental effects of development or provide environmental enhancements. This can be applied on greenfield sites, but also as part of reinvestment projects as a form of urban greening. Conservation design can include open space as part of a site, natural landscaping, clustering of buildings, permeable pavements or other surfaces, green infrastructure approaches to stormwater management, and green building design. The open space chapter recommends more aggressive use of conservation design concepts in areas with valuable natural features, but they can be applied to some degree anywhere in the region. A major step that municipalities can take to promote conservation design is to permit it as a by-right use, instead of a conditional use; this makes the development process more predictable for developers and makes it more likely that proposals for conservation design projects will be received.

Local Food

GO TO 2040 highlights the fact that local food production and distribution is increasingly being recognized as an element of livable communities. Municipalities across the region can encourage small-scale food production by permitting certain agricultural activities as a conditional use, and by converting publicly-owned vacant lots to food production. Communities with large areas of farmland either within or adjacent to their boundaries can also zone for larger-scale **agricultural production** in these areas, preserving them as farmland. Food distribution issues can be supported by local governments by assessing whether there are “food deserts,” areas where fresh food is not accessible, within the community and working with retailers to solve these problems, or by supporting local farmers’ markets.



In 1999, a citizen led group approached the Barrington Park District about purchasing a 55-acre, former industrial site in hopes of transforming it into a community park. Three years later, Barrington residents approved a referendum that eventually allowed for the construction of Citizen's Park, which houses several unique amenities including an amphitheater, a 3,000 sq. ft. pavilion, and a fully accessible, 2,000 sq. ft. tree house. The park has won awards from the Illinois Association of Park Districts, among others. Image courtesy of [Vermont Timber Works](#)



The Homer Glen Conservation Design Ordinance was passed in 2006 to create a mechanism that would allow for the addition of up to 1,000 acres of new open space. Unlike most existing conservation design ordinances, Homer Glen's is mandatory, requiring “developers of new residential subdivisions to set aside between 20 percent and 50 percent of the area as permanent, dedicated, publicly-owned open space.” The ordinance is meant to result in open space that could “be connected from one neighborhood to the next, where feasible, creating an extensive, interlinked network of open spaces.” Image courtesy of Flickr user [Roberto41144](#)

Other Actions That Support Livability

GO TO 2040's recommendations do not provide a full view of everything that municipalities can do to support livable communities; many that are not covered in detail in the high-priority recommendations are also important components of other activities of livability. Some of these — though by no means a comprehensive list — are discussed below.

Municipalities can provide opportunities for local **arts and culture** to flourish. They can increase programming in local public buildings and include art in public spaces. Also, municipalities can permit artist live-work spaces and allow a mix of land uses — both are important ingredients for a lively local arts scene.

Also, conflicting development standards between municipalities and school districts have been identified as a particular problem. Some **school siting** regulations effectively prohibit school construction on any sites but large, undeveloped areas on the fringe of a community. Municipalities should work with school districts, as well as neighboring municipalities who share the same school district, to eliminate conflicting regulations and update ordinances.

Local governments have an important role to play in safety and security. Municipalities can **prepare for emergencies** and encourage their citizens to do the same leading to a “culture of preparedness;” establishing good relationships with other local governments, transportation agencies, and federal and state agencies can help with coordination in the event of an emergency. Local governments also have a particular role in ensuring that vulnerable residents within their communities, including the elderly and disabled, those living in group quarters, or those without cars, are included within evacuation and recovery plans.

Many municipalities provide police service and can adopt community-oriented policing strategies that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Because of their broad responsibilities, some municipalities have developed programs that link community-oriented policing efforts with human services provision and economic development, with positive impacts on **crime and public safety**. Communities that have public spaces that encourage interaction between different groups can lead to improved **human relations** outcomes and cultural understanding.



The Village of Algonquin adopted a “Public Art Master Plan” in 2005 to promote local art, as well as that from the region, country, and world while improving property values. The plan was established to “enhance the community’s sense of place,” provide educational opportunities for artists, and create a planning framework to distribute and fund art through the community in a way that made sense. The plan led to the formation of a Public Arts Commission to oversee this effort. Image courtesy of [Village of Algonquin](#)



In the event of an emergency, many people are unwilling to leave their pets if their animals cannot be evacuated. The Palatine Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has established a volunteer Animal Response Team that is responsible for the rescue of animals trapped or left-behind, along with their shelter, care, and reunification with owners. Image courtesy of [Anne Hornyak](#)

Efficient Governance

The GO TO 2040 plan also includes high-priority recommendations that relate to governance, including tax policy, access to information, and coordinated investment. Direct municipal roles are recommended to address access to information and coordinated investment.

The plan’s tax policy recommendations are primarily oriented to the state, but will affect local governments. The main recommendation of the tax policy section is to form a task force at CMAP that will be responsible for conducting further research on this subject and recommending specific action; municipal representation on this task force will be sought.

Access to Information

GO TO 2040 recommends the increased sharing of data among government agencies, and between government and the public. Making federal, state, regional, county, and other data available will reduce the time needed to do time-consuming research by staff of other government agencies. There is also a significant role for municipalities in making administrative data, such as building permits, publicly available — which in turn reduces the need for research by other government agencies. Sharing data with the general public also improves transparency, and fulfills the ever-increasing expectations of the public concerning the availability of information.

Coordinated Investments

GO TO 2040 notes that the sheer number of local governments in the region — not just municipalities, but townships, park districts, library districts, and many other units — can make coordination difficult. Service coordination, or in some cases consolidation of some governmental units, can create greater efficiencies and reduce duplication of services. Municipalities can best approach this sensitive issue through direct conversations with other nearby local governments about the benefits and challenges of service coordination, facilitated through or in partnership with a county or COGs.



The City of Chicago posts its business license information [online in searchable format](#). This allows the public to search for business licenses by geography, including street address, ward, or block, or by business name. Image courtesy of [CityofChicago.org](#)



In 2008, the Villages of Kildeer and Deer Park combined their police services into a single department. Each contributes funding for the shared services, which are recognized as being higher quality than could be provided independently. The compatibility of the communities and their proximity were major elements in the success of the service. Image courtesy of [Michael Brown](#)

Regional Mobility

Municipalities also have a role to play in supporting the high-priority recommendations related to regional mobility, including transportation finance, public transit, and freight. Other municipal actions beyond these also support regional mobility, and are discussed after the high-priority recommendations.

Transportation Finance

GO TO 2040 addresses the need to make better and more efficient transportation decisions as well as find additional revenue to support our transportation system. As owners and operators of thousands of miles of local roads and other transportation facilities, there are a variety of ways that local governments can support GO TO 2040. The bulk of local spending on transportation is devoted to maintaining the road system. Local governments are encouraged to continue to focus their investments on improving and modernizing their existing infrastructure, and pursue major infrastructure expansions only on a limited basis.

Municipalities can support GO TO 2040 by reviewing their **parking** regulations and pricing policies. Many zoning ordinances have excessively high minimum parking requirements, and there are opportunities to reduce these or allow shared parking between compatible nearby land uses.

Most parking across the region is free and easily available, even though the construction and maintenance of a parking space is far from free. Municipalities are generally responsible for pricing public parking (and can also influence parking pricing in private lots), and should recognize that pricing affects travel behavior. Parking pricing is a key transportation revenue source to be investigated. Raising or initiating parking prices can be controversial, should be pursued with caution, and is not universally appropriate; using parking revenues for visible projects such as streetscape enhancements can help to build public support. Parking can also provide access to transit, and many municipalities with train stations manage commuter parking. Appropriate parking rates vary based on parking availability and service levels, and need to be established individually. In some cases, municipalities can use parking revenues to support access to transit through alternative modes.



An evaluation of Oak Park's parking supply led to a comprehensive parking management program. The new program eliminated hourly limits, priced spaces by desirability, lowered garage prices, and made it easier to pay for parking with the use of pay boxes. Image courtesy of [Total Parking Solutions, Inc.](#)



The Village of Niles is improving the pedestrian experience along a 5-mile stretch of Milwaukee Avenue as part of their Milwaukee Avenue Beautification Plan. The first improvement is the intersection of Milwaukee at Touhy. Intersection improvements include new brick-paved crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals, decorative street lights, benches, planters, and sidewalks. As an area with many senior citizens and high traffic volumes, the Village hopes that this will make crossing the street safer and more pleasant. Future plans include a proposed arterial rapid transit (ART) bus service, which these improvements will help to support. Image courtesy of the [Village of Niles](#)

Public Transit

GO TO 2040 identifies municipalities as important actors in supporting transit service, due to their responsibility for land use regulation and their ability to provide small-scale infrastructure improvements. In general, support for alternative transportation modes — including walking, bicycling, **car-sharing**, and others — supports transit service, and can be addressed by municipal action.

Transit works best in **walkable** communities; making a community walkable requires infrastructure investments such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings at major roads, and curb cuts and ramps for wheelchairs to allow access by disabled residents. Direct pedestrian connections between transit stops and nearby destinations are important to make transit attractive to use. Other small-scale infrastructure improvements also help to support transit, including installing bus shelters, adding bicycle racks at train stations and bus stops, or removing on-street parking spaces to improve bus access.

Transit also requires supportive land use planning in the form of **transit oriented development (TOD)**, with sufficient densities and a range of housing options, to be most successful. Beyond physical infrastructure improvements, making a community walkable and transit-friendly also involves land use planning that creates a comfortable environment for pedestrians and uses **high-quality design** features. Communities can implement TOD planning principles around current stations, and also plan proactively for transit service expansion.

Freight

GO TO 2040's freight recommendations are oriented primarily toward federal, state and regional groups, and private industry, but addressing the impact of freight on communities is very relevant for municipalities. Municipalities can work with regional agencies and the freight industry to identify and address community concerns in terms of grade crossing delay, noise, pollution, or other issues. Local governments can also coordinate truck route designations with neighboring areas, review delivery time policies and truck parking restrictions, and may seek to actively attract freight-related businesses for economic development purposes.



Realizing the importance of freight to future development, the village of Blue Island incorporated “cargo-oriented development” into their “transit oriented development” plan along two Metra rail stops in the industrial corridor — to increase retail as well as industry and freight, strengthening their downtown. Image courtesy of Flickr user [Christopher Esposito](#)

Other Actions That Support Regional Mobility

The plan's high-priority recommendations include a specific focus on transit, but support all alternative transportation modes; local governments can support GO TO 2040 by planning multimodally for their transportation systems.

Best practices in local road management include complete streets techniques, which allow for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations, and may involve narrower lane widths for lower-volume and low-speed roadways. On collector or higher-volume roads, local governments can pursue practices such as **access management, signal timing adjustments, or signal interconnects**, in coordination with county transportation departments or the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). These improvements can speed traffic flow while not requiring major construction or significant capacity additions.

Municipalities can also support **bicycling** as an important transportation mode. Most experts recommend a “three-E” process of education, enforcement, and engineering, recognizing that it is critical for both bicyclists and drivers to understand the rules of the road, and for traffic laws regarding driver behavior to be enforced. Engineering can include striping bicycle lanes or signing roadways for shared bicycle use, pursuing “complete streets” techniques on roads, constructing off-street trails, and providing bike parking near transit or high-volume locations. Planning for bicycle access and parking at train stations and bus stops can help to support transit. Also, bicycle routes that are components of greenways can also help to support connections between parks and other open space.

Promoting walking and bicycling as serious transportation options can have positive impacts on **health** and is especially helpful for certain residents. Pedestrian and bicycle access is particularly relevant around schools, giving students the opportunity to walk or bike. Having a range of alternative transportation options allows older residents to “age in place” and helps to create communities that are friendly to seniors and the disabled.



In Wilmette, an 18-month construction project has converted 4-lane Sheridan Road into a 2-lane road with bike lanes in either direction and a middle turn lane from Lake Avenue north to Westerfield Drive and the Plaza del Lago. Image courtesy of the [Village of Wilmette](#)



Schaumburg has 87 miles of bike paths, 1,000 bike parking and locker spaces, bike racks on village trolleys, bike parking at the Metra station and the Northwest Transportation Center, a local bicycle club, and bikeway connections to neighboring communities. The village was designated a Bicycle-Friendly community in 2003 by the League of American Bicyclists. Image courtesy of the [Andreas Siegel](#)