



EMERGING PRIORITIES FOR ONTARIO 2050

Public Comment
DRAFT Report

June 29, 2016



CMAP

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CMAP seeks public comment on this draft report, *Emerging Priorities for ON TO 2050*, which is based on feedback from more than 100 workshops with stakeholder groups across the region (in addition to a web survey). Comments can be submitted until 4:00 p.m. on Monday, August 15, 2016. Please send comments via email to onto2050@cmap.illinois.gov with subject of "ON TO 2050 Priorities Comment." You may also send written comments to CMAP, ATTN: ON TO 2050 Priorities Comment, 233 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606.

Introduction

Metropolitan Chicago is globally renowned as an economic and cultural center. The region is at the crossroads of the country's rail, road, and air transportation infrastructure and boasts enviable natural assets. Yet difficult realities persist even as new opportunities materialize. Chicago lags behind other regions in recovering from the recession, lacks sufficient funding for its transportation system, and increasingly experiences flooding caused in part by climate change.

Development of ON TO 2050, the region's next comprehensive regional plan, provides a chance to assess where the region currently stands and to identify catalytic solutions for creating a sustainable and livable region. The plan's predecessor, GO TO 2040, provided a strong vision for the future, along with strategies to advance that vision. ON TO 2050 will build on GO TO 2040's foundation by providing greater detail on some of the previous plan's areas of focus, while also exploring new topics that support CMAP's role as a regional transportation and land use planning agency.

The purpose of this report is to identify the key regional priorities that have emerged from the initial analysis and public engagement conducted for ON TO 2050. These priorities will be emphasized as plan development moves forward to ensure that the plan responds to the concerns and needs of stakeholders. Please note that the engagement process identified some challenges such as crime, violence, and education that, although vitally important, are beyond CMAP's purview. While GO TO 2040's recommendations will continue to be high priorities for CMAP and ON TO 2050, this report zeroes in on pivotal divergences from or refinements to GO TO 2040 policies -- along with new priorities -- that will distinguish ON TO 2050 from its predecessor.

Public engagement

Achieving the vision established in ON TO 2050 will depend on coordinated action by many different stakeholders, including business owners, residents, units of government, non-profit organizations, civic groups, advocacy organizations, and transportation implementers, among others. To ensure its ultimate implementation, it is essential for development of the ON TO 2050 plan to be informed by the perspectives and experiences of these stakeholders.

To that end, the planning process includes three public engagement phases. The first phase kicked off on March 2, 2016, with a launch event attended by nearly 300 people. The purpose of the initial period of public engagement was to gather feedback on regional challenges and opportunities and identify priority topics that should be addressed by the plan. Over the course of three months, CMAP staff and stakeholder groups held more than 100 workshops and related events across the region, engaging more than 6,000 individuals from the private sector, transportation agencies, educational institutions, municipalities, counties, and non-profit and



philanthropic organizations. In addition, 500 people participated in a web survey, which featured questions similar to those discussed at the in-person workshops.

Combined with staff knowledge and experience gained since GO TO 2040, these engagement results significantly shaped the topics addressed in this report, which includes a brief synopsis of the public engagement on each major topic.

Figure 1. ON TO 2050 topics of study

Topics of study
 This table shows how topics for study relate to the four GO TO 2040 themes. Please note that ON TO 2050 will likely not be organized into these four themes.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

- Continue GO TO 2040 emphases
- Refine GO TO 2040 emphases
- Explore new topics

Livable Communities	Human Capital	Efficient Governance	Regional Mobility
Placemaking	Economic Indicators	Access to Information	Congestion Pricing
Local Food	Economic Innovation	Tax Policy	Non-motorized Transportation
Park Access	Regional Economic Coordination	Coordinated Investment	Capital Projects
Water Resources	Industry Clusters	Consolidation	Freight
Public Health	Inclusive Growth	Community Capacity	Transit
Housing Affordability and Supply	Economic Resilience	Shared Services	Performance-based Programming
Climate Mitigation			Transportation Revenue
Energy			Asset Management
Green Infrastructure			Highway Operations
Reinvestment/Infill			Transit Modernization
Lands in Transition			Transportation Technology
Stormwater			
Climate Resilience			

GO TO 2040’s recommendations will be supported in ON TO 2050. This table roughly characterizes the approach to different topic areas that CMAP is taking as the next plan is developed. Topics in red often still have ongoing work, but the policy recommendations will not change from GO TO 2040, and these topics are not substantively addressed in this report. Areas in blue will receive new information or refined specificity in ON TO 2050. Topics in green are new or their focus in ON TO 2050 will significantly change from that in GO TO 2040.

Figure 2. MetroQuest page

ON TO 2050

Progress

Regional Challenges

What to do Next Task

WELCOME

REGIONAL CHALLENGES

- Transportation Challenges
- Land Use Challenges
- Economic Development Challenges
- Environment Challenges
- Governance Challenges

Do you agree that the following are critical transportation challenges for our region?

More about this

"Condition of infrastructure"

Comment

"Need funding for transportation upgrades"

Comment

"Roadway and freight congestion"

Comment

"Transit is fragmented and not interconnected"

Comment

Suggest another item

Next Category

POTENTIAL RESPONSES

3

4 2050 BIG IDEAS

5 STAY INVOLVED



ON TO 2050 priorities

High-priority themes emerged from the initial ON TO 2050 outreach. Each topical section in this report provides a brief overview of the region's existing conditions related to the topic, major challenges and opportunities heard through the public engagement process, and ways that ON TO 2050 might address these issues.

Economic conditions

Metropolitan Chicago is one of the nation's few centers of global commerce. Its unparalleled transportation infrastructure coupled with nearly 1.1 billion square feet of industrial development create a hub for making and moving goods on the local, national, and international scales. Annually, the region's industries trade roughly \$365 billion in goods with domestic partners and \$245 billion in goods internationally. Following its slow recovery from the recession, the region is lagging behind its peers in producing jobs, increasing gross regional product, and growing population. Along with these challenges are some signs of growth. For example, the region's employed workforce is larger than it has ever been, and exports are growing. Human capital is a key determinant of economic success, and the region retains a well-educated workforce, with above average shares of workers possessing undergraduate or graduate degrees.

What we heard

During public engagement, stakeholders cited negative perceptions of the State of Illinois and its business climate. The lack of a state budget and concerns about government inefficiency and lack of transparency were mentioned frequently. Participants were worried about slow recovery from the recession and described the need for regional adaptation to technological and economic shifts. Feedback also highlighted the region's major assets, including its workforce, industry clusters, location, and infrastructure. Participants offered many solutions, such as strategies for attracting and retaining residents and businesses, in addition to renewing infrastructure investment.

What to do about it

ON TO 2050 will identify opportunities to support and expand the assets that make the region a center of global commerce, while recognizing our current economic realities. The plan will also continue GO TO 2040's emphasis on the importance of collaboration on economic development, innovation in our core clusters, and a highly trained workforce.

The region's and state's slow economic recovery also calls for some new approaches and, in other cases, increased efforts. ON TO 2050 will highlight state policies and fiscal issues that limit investment. CMAP will also outline new strategies to support coordination among counties, municipalities, civic organizations, and other actors to promote innovation, such as recent collaborations among the region's county board chairs on metals manufacturing industries, truck permitting, and increasing exports.



Given the evolving nature of the economy and technology, ON TO 2050 will also identify strategies to promote economic resilience and enhance our ties to the global marketplace. Shifts in technology, evolving strategies for moving goods, and structural changes in the economy all present opportunities for the region to grow. The plan will focus on supporting the region's globally traded clusters that connect our economy to the world at large.

Figure 3. Metropolitan unemployment rates, 1990-2015

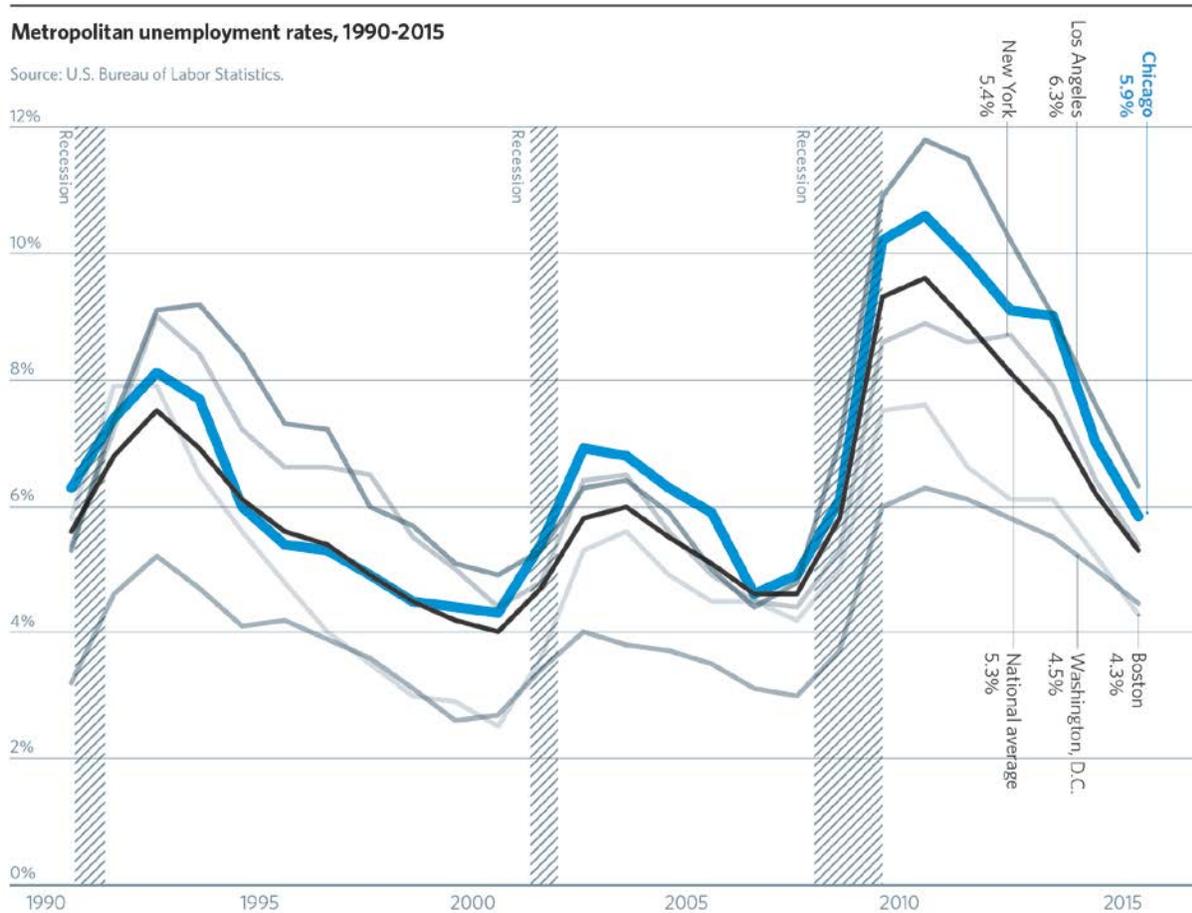


Figure 4. Real gross regional product growth by region, 2001-14

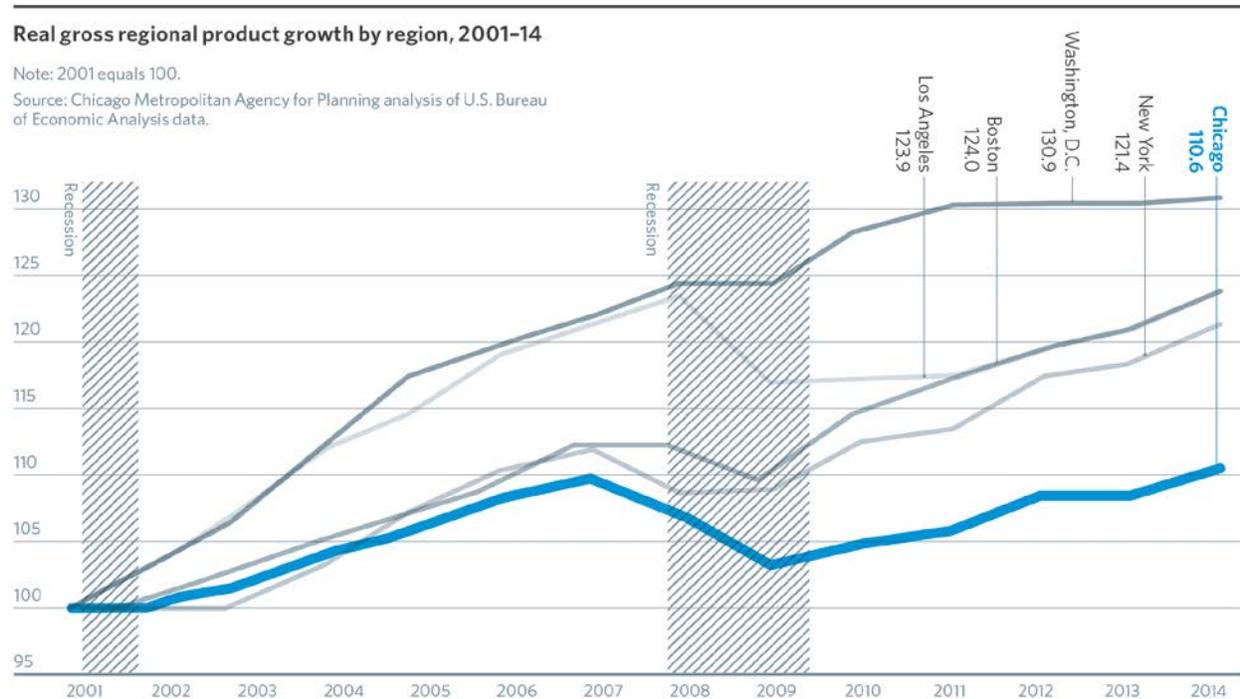
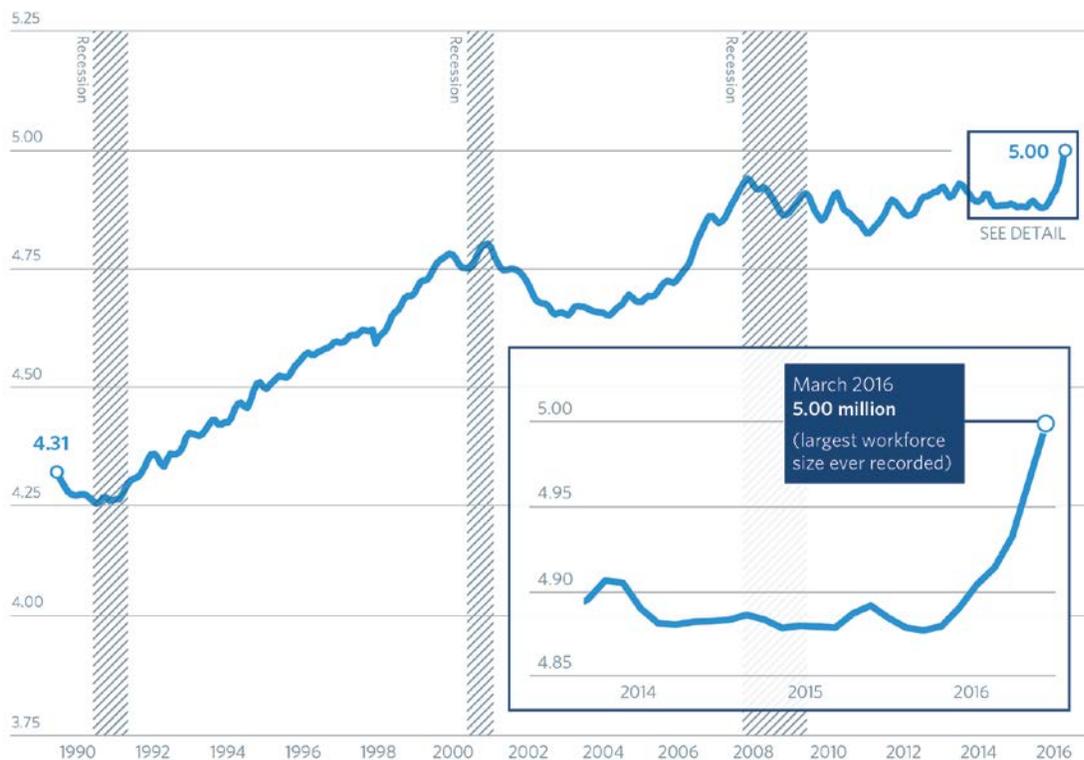


Figure 5. Chicago metropolitan statistical area labor force size, 1990-2016

Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area labor force size, 1990-2016, in millions

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.



Inclusive growth

A high level of income inequality and community segregation partly accounts for the region's lagging economic performance. Research shows that the regions and cities that perform best economically are integrated, diverse, and support economic mobility, but the Chicago metropolitan area is among the most segregated in the nation. This has economic consequences: the National Equity Atlas estimated that the Chicago region's gross domestic product would have been \$130 billion higher in 2012 -- a 20 percent increase -- if there were no racial gaps in income and employment.

The term "inclusive growth" links economic prosperity and inclusion as mutually supportive pursuits: achieving more equitable economic growth benefits all residents and strengthens the region's economy. At its core, inclusive growth distinguishes economic growth and inclusion as goals that are best achieved *together*, rather than at the expense of one another.

What we heard

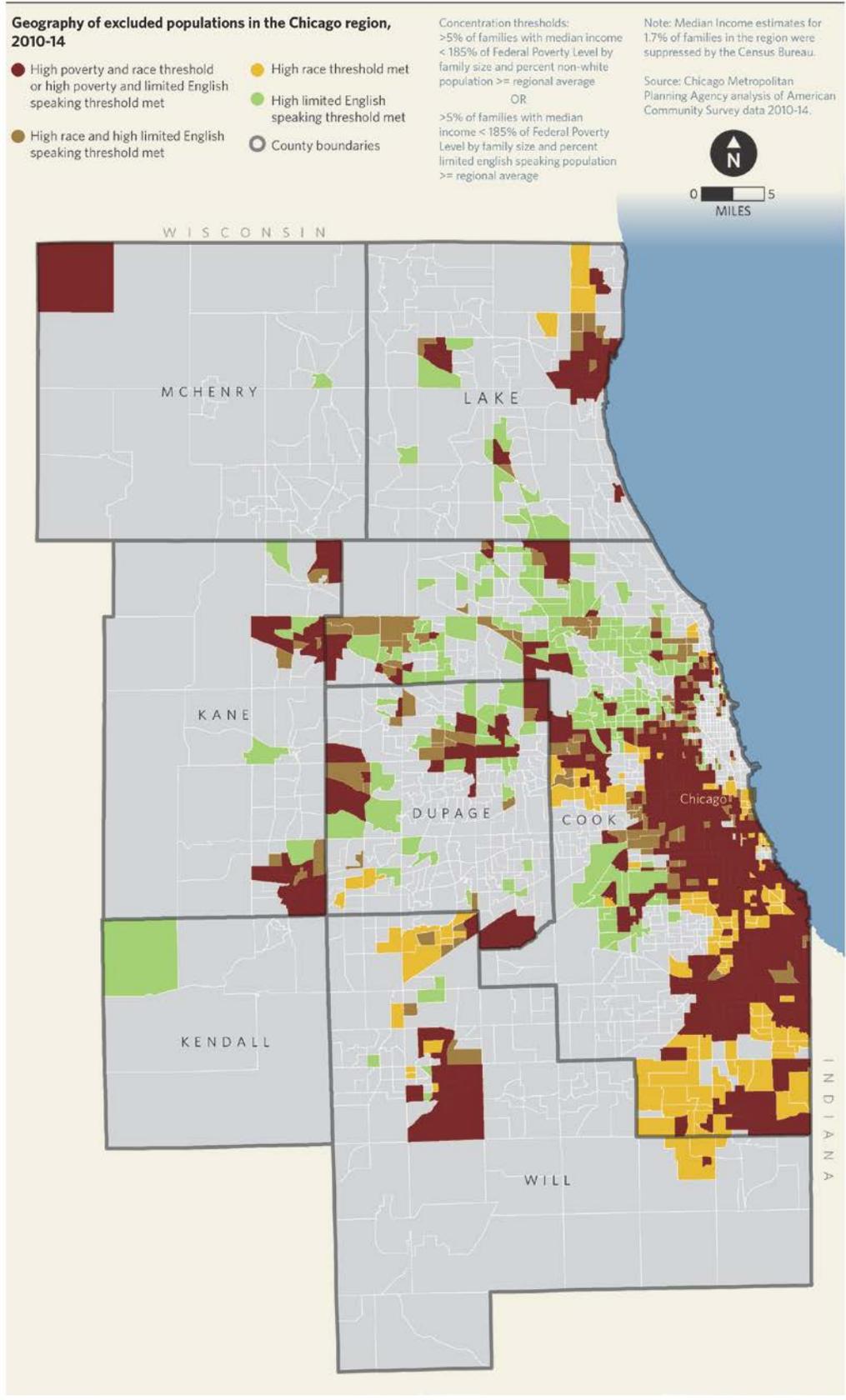
Participants strongly expressed concerns about negative trends of decreasing equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity for the region's residents. Public outreach highlighted the need to address deep-seated issues of racial and economic segregation, along with underlying causes like crime, education, economic opportunity, and limited access to resources. Respondents had a particular focus on issues of crime and K-12 education, topics that are tremendously important but beyond CMAP's scope. Comments also emphasized that the negative effects of poverty, economic isolation, and racial segregation are felt throughout the region. Stakeholders identified comprehensive solutions, with a focus on reducing barriers between communities, promoting access to well-paying jobs with long-term opportunity, and intentional investment in disinvested communities.

What to do about it

ON TO 2050 will identify strategies to promote inclusion to improve our regional economic performance and quality of life. The plan will also recognize that having a stronger regional economy offers better opportunities to promote inclusion. CMAP, in partnership with the Metropolitan Planning Council and key stakeholders, has identified five principles to guide ON TO 2050's approach to inclusive growth: coordinate approaches across jurisdictions and organizations, make existing economic opportunities more attainable, foster new opportunities in excluded communities, ensure that new economic opportunities are meaningful, and encourage access to planning and decision-making processes for all residents. ON TO 2050 will identify specific strategies for CMAP, as well as counties, municipalities, and other jurisdictions. Extensive partnerships will be required to address some of the broader issues intrinsic to promoting inclusive growth.



Figure 6. Geography of excluded populations in the Chicago region, 2010-14



Housing choice

A range of housing types is necessary to provide adequate housing choices for residents at all stages of life. Since 2000, the region's housing stock has become more diverse, but there is still a need for improved housing options and greater affordability. High-quality affordable housing is often located far from major job centers and has poor transit connections. While housing may be more affordable in lower-density areas far from transit, the transportation costs of living in these areas are considerably higher. Low-income households often spend a substantial portion of their income on housing and transportation, regardless of proximity to transit or employment. Major demographic shifts, such as an increasing number of seniors or changing housing preferences, also pose a major challenge that the plan must address.

What we heard

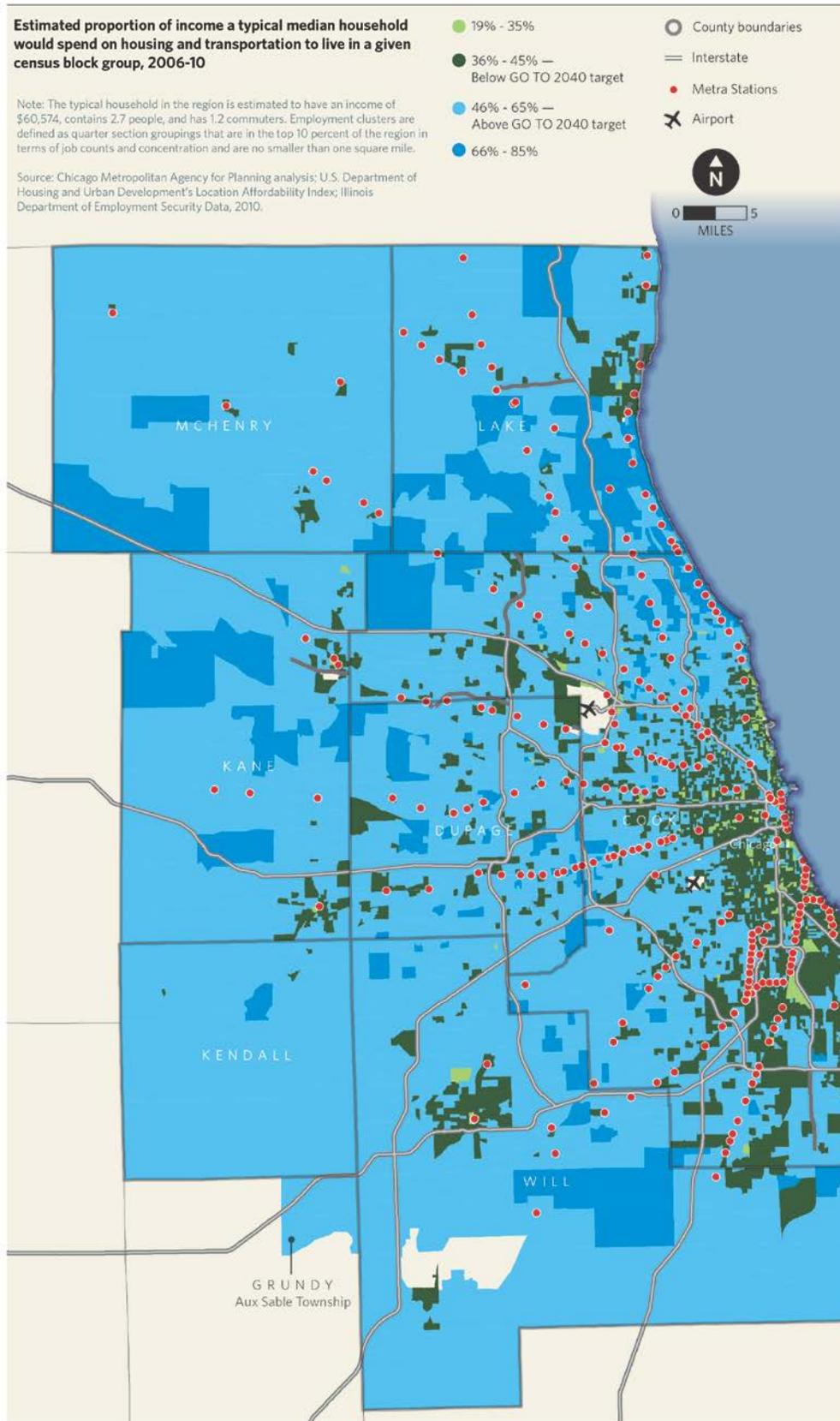
Public input affirmed the continuing need for improved housing affordability in the region. Many participants expressed concern about being priced out of their desired home or neighborhood, and others cited a general lack of certain housing types such as senior housing, workforce housing, rental units, and moderately priced, medium density housing.

What to do about it

GO TO 2040 discussed the need for a variety of housing options due to the numerous benefits of such diversity, including improved housing affordability. Subsequent implementation efforts have emphasized general housing stock diversity and planning for housing that meets the needs of all residents. ON TO 2050 housing analysis and recommendations will address the concept of choice -- the ability of all households in the region to find high-quality, affordable homes that meet their basic needs, including proximity to jobs, transportation, and other amenities. The refined direction focuses on barriers that prevent development of housing types that the region's residents want in places where those residents want to live. ON TO 2050 will identify strategies to better incorporate market factors into planning for housing of all types, address community concerns about housing development, and explore funding policies to support long-term housing demand.



Figure 7. Estimated proportion of income spent on housing and transportation, 2006-10



Transportation infrastructure

The region's extensive transportation network is a critical asset that must be maintained and modernized to meet standards for commutes, goods movement, recreation, and other trips. This system has advanced over the last decade as ride quality, bridge condition, and some aspects of transit system performance have slowly and steadily improved. While congestion on the region's expressways and tollways peaked in 2007, these facilities are still congested for several hours each day. In addition, travel time reliability has declined since 2007, making commutes less predictable. Finally, the region still faces a backlog of investment needs, with \$20 billion of deferred investment on the transit system alone.

What we heard

Congestion, safety, and the overall condition of the region's transportation system were strong concerns voiced through ON TO 2050 outreach activities. Congestion and poor system condition are costly in terms of decreased quality of life, lost productivity, and safety. Participants recognized the region's constrained funding environment, but expressed desire for targeted investment to create innovative, multimodal, safe transportation options, with investment targeted toward areas with the highest needs. Solutions ranged in scale from new road-railroad grade separations to Complete Street projects to more reliable transit alternatives.

What to do about it

Reinvesting to keep our transportation assets in optimal condition will be a major theme for ON TO 2050. While the Chicago region has a large transportation system in need of maintenance and modernization, it also has shrinking revenues to undertake that work. ON TO 2050 will encourage transportation implementers, counties, and communities to systematically maintain, upgrade, and operate physical assets cost-effectively, a practice known as asset management. The plan will identify strategies for transportation implementers at all levels to meet state-of-good-repair and modernization goals necessary for a high-functioning transportation system that moves people and goods effectively.

To reduce congestion and improve reliability, ON TO 2050 will identify strategies for the region's transportation providers to leverage new technology and collaborate to improve operations. Better incident detection and response, improved communications, and real-time traffic management are less expensive approaches to managing congestion that could have a large bang for the buck in a revenue constrained environment.

ON TO 2050 will also support GO TO 2040's emphasis on identifying projects that address the region's needs and meet long-term goals. This will include a focus on reinvestment in the existing system, through both state-of-good-repair and modernization initiatives that improve the system, reduce congestion, promote safety, and increase the use of alternative modes.



Figure 8. State of the region's transportation system

Investment in metropolitan Chicago's existing transportation assets is needed to keep our region and Illinois competitive in the global economy. Maintenance and modernization of highways, bridges, and transit infrastructure will be a central focus of ON TO 2050 and its development.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
www.cmap.illinois.gov/mobility/explore, 2015.

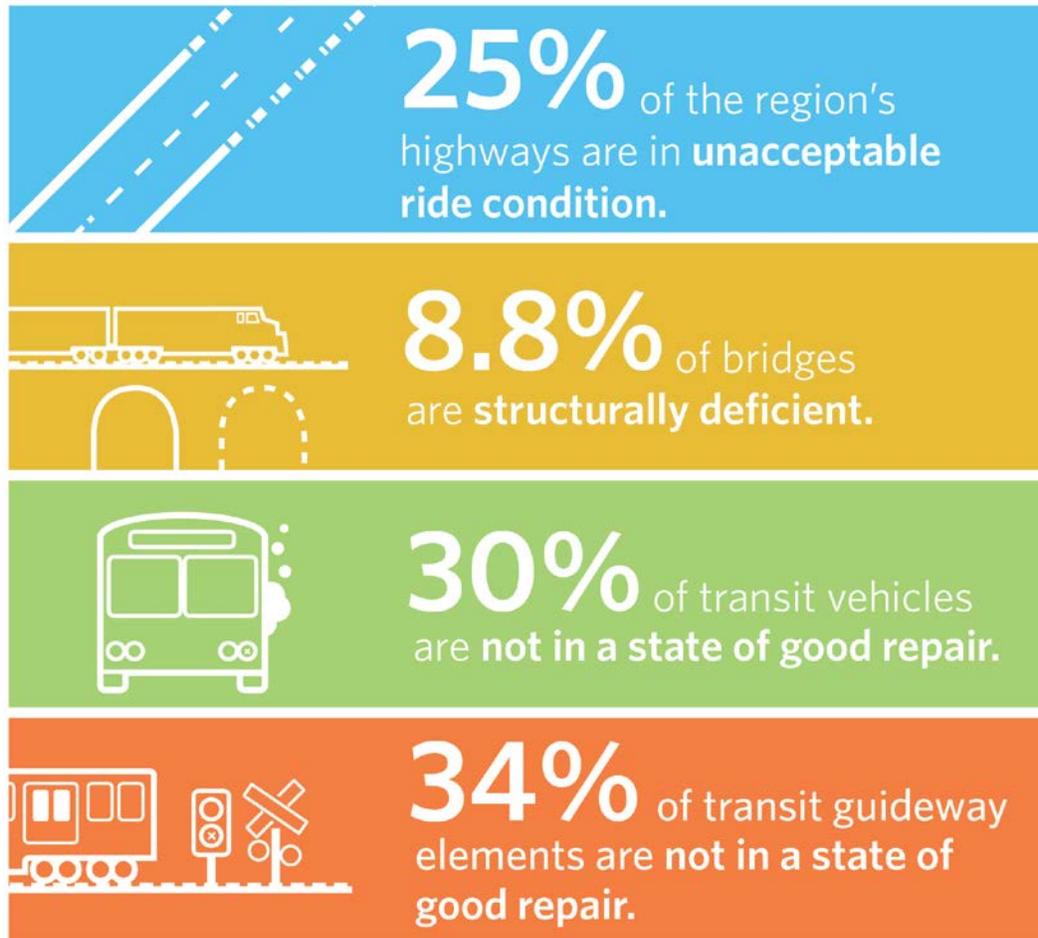
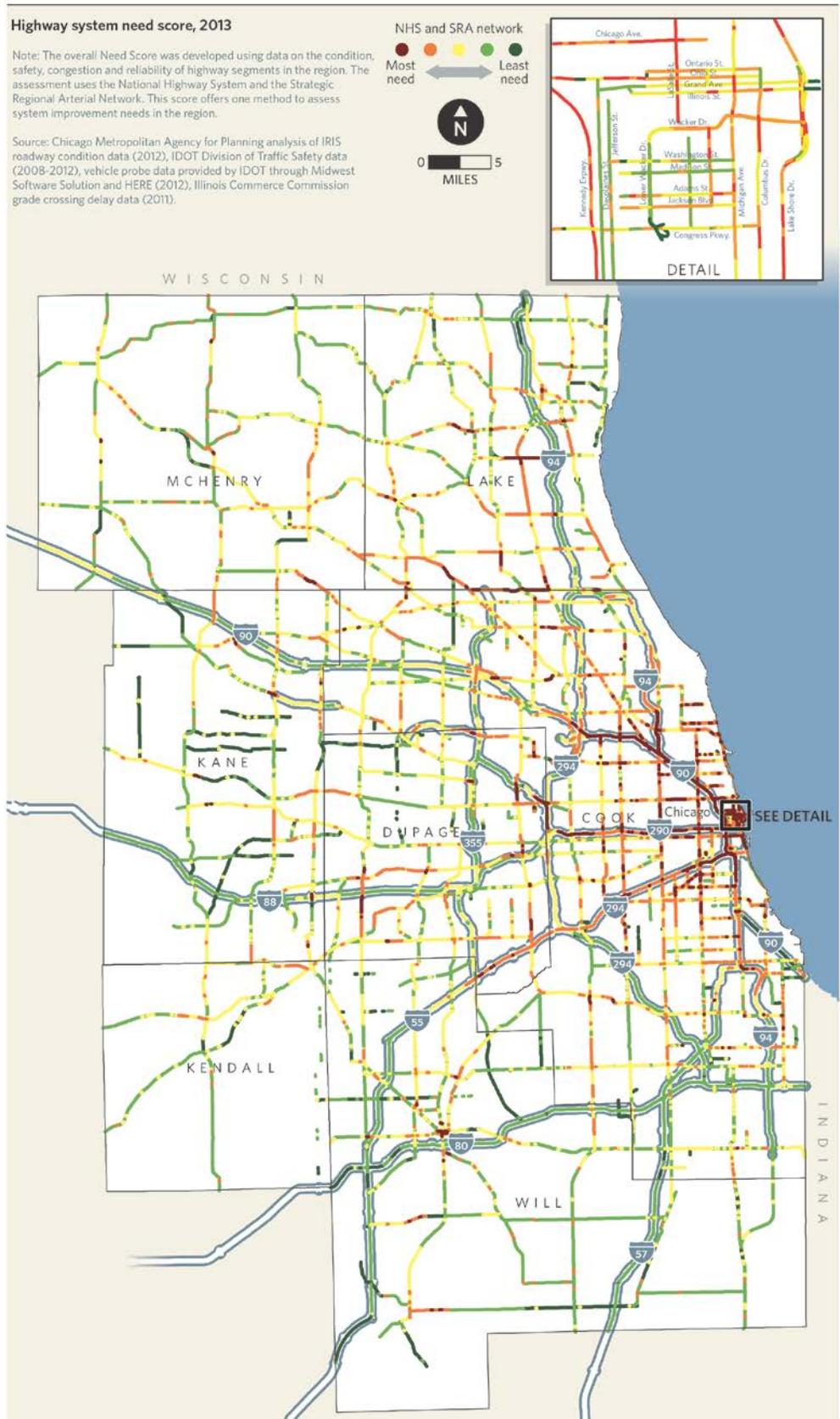


Figure 9. Highway system need score, 2013



Alternative transportation

While many stakeholders mentioned the overall condition of the region's transportation system, certain aspects of the system, including modes such as transit, bicycling, and walking, also drew significant attention. These modes are critical to improve regional mobility and health outcomes but present unique challenges and needs.

After decades of consistent growth in private vehicle ownership and use, vehicles miles traveled, single-occupancy vehicle commuting, and vehicle ownership rates have remained constant for nearly a decade. Transit, biking, and walking are increasingly used as options for commuting and other trips. But challenges exist to further expanding the use of alternative modes. Transit riders overall would like greater comfort, speed, safety, reliability, and usability. The region's rail transit system is carrying more riders, but bus service and ridership are down. CTA slow zones have decreased, but the transit system needs significant modernization to serve more riders and provide fast, reliable travel. While communities, counties, and highway agencies have begun building pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, the level of service for non-motorized users has not improved in the past decade and has even worsened in some places.

What we heard

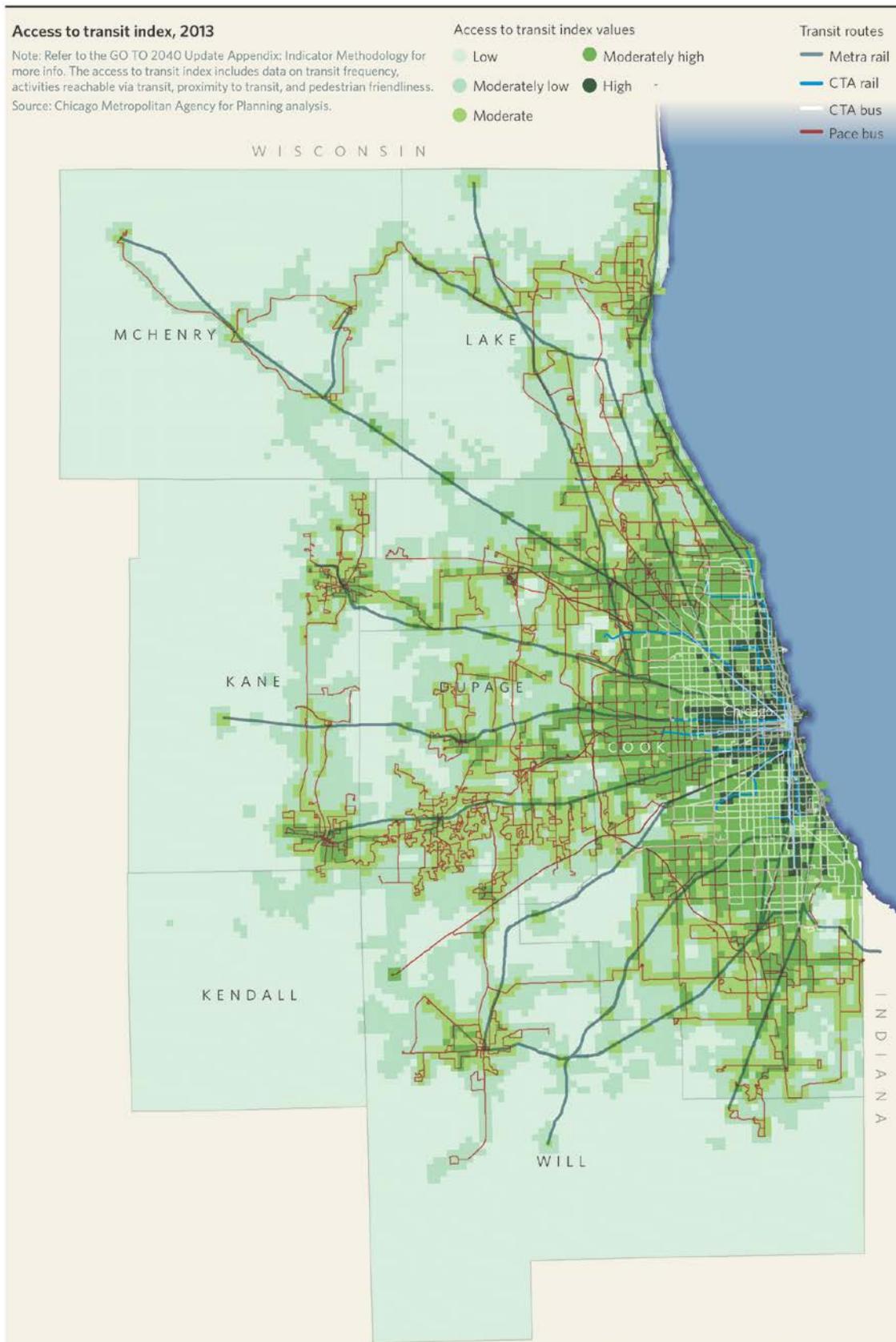
Feedback emphasized planning for all modes, particularly transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Outreach on bike and pedestrian issues showed strong support for recent improvements such as bike lanes, while calling for increased walkability and expansion of dedicated infrastructure. Participants also showed strong support for a better connected, modernized transit system that provides access to jobs and services, particularly for the region's most vulnerable residents. Many comments focused on the need to expand and improve the suburban transit system to create a viable alternative to driving.

What to do about it

ON TO 2050 will build on GO TO 2040's recognition of the importance of planning for a multimodal transportation system, including Complete Streets and connected bicycle and pedestrian networks. The plan will also outline strategies to provide a modern transit system. Technology will provide many new opportunities in upcoming years, including making the bus system more attractive by widespread use of transit signal priority for enhancing bus speed, providing better suburban transit service with flexible routing enabled by smartphones, and increasing the capacity of the rail system with better rail signal systems, among other options. Optimizing and improving operations to offer the types and frequency of service to meet the needs of all areas of the region will also be critical. The plan will also recognize the strong role that supportive land use planning plays in increasing transit ridership, and it will recommend increasing both housing and employment opportunities in transit-rich areas.



Figure 10. Access to transit index, 2013



Goods movement

Supported by an unmatched combination of freight transportation modes and infrastructure, a quarter of all freight in the nation originates, terminates, or passes through metropolitan Chicago. The region's concentration of intermodal moves -- transferring containers between rail, trucks, or other modes -- is even more striking, with about half of the nation's intermodal shipments touching the Chicago area. Congestion, aging infrastructure, and changing technologies must be addressed for the region to maintain its position as the nation's freight hub.

What we heard

Participant views on freight infrastructure reflected the need to support the region's preeminence in goods movement, but also to address the possible negative impacts of truck and rail traffic, including congestion, noise, and air quality. Feedback also highlighted the need to improve truck permitting systems, routing, delivery times, and parking to reduce congestion and the cost of moving goods.

What to do about it

Along with development of ON TO 2050, development of a regional freight plan is underway. The freight plan will promote continued coordination among jurisdictions and identify ways to prioritize freight needs (such as grade crossings and truck routes) in the ON TO 2050 transportation planning process. The plan will also provide land use and transportation strategies for the region's growing intermodal facilities. ON TO 2050 will focus on the relationship between freight transportation and the region's industrial areas. Specifically, the plan will identify subregions -- like the O'Hare and Midway airport areas, south Cook County, or Will County -- that may need further study to improve truck routing, preserve freight-supportive land uses, or address freight and industrial land use conflicts with sensitive school, hospital, and residential areas.



Sustainable transportation funding

While our transportation system enjoys a global reputation, it is falling behind other metropolitan areas due to lack of investment. Insufficient funding hampers the region's ability to pay for modernization projects and backlogged maintenance, and makes it difficult to expand the transportation system to provide new options. Existing major revenue sources such as the motor fuel tax (MFT) are not sufficient to fund the system over the long term. Vehicles have become increasingly fuel-efficient, and further improvements in fuel economy are expected, leading to a decline in a key revenue source for transportation improvements. In addition, federal, state, and local transportation revenues have not kept pace with inflation in construction costs, generating a need to find new ways to fund the transportation system.

What we heard

ON TO 2050 outreach highlighted a strong consensus around the need for increased transportation funding. Participants voiced support for congestion pricing, public-private partnerships, value capture, and increased fuel taxes with a sustainable replacement like a vehicle miles traveled tax. Many raised concerns about the equity of new taxes or fees like congestion pricing, requesting strategies to minimize impacts to the region's most vulnerable residents.

What to do about it

Transportation funding strategies in ON TO 2050 will promote investment in the transportation system by recommending increased transportation revenues, support for transportation user fees, and allocation of limited resources via performance-based funding. The plan will identify incremental increases to existing revenue sources as well as new sources that can provide sustainable funding for the region's transportation system, including a dedicated regional source for transportation capital projects. In addition, the plan may make policy recommendations about new ways to allocate existing revenue sources such as targeting MFT revenues more strongly toward transportation. The plan will also identify opportunities to save costs through best practices in project construction and operational efficiencies.

ON TO 2050 will also continue to emphasize the need to pursue innovative, project-specific revenue sources like value capture or financing options like public-private partnerships. The plan will refine GO TO 2040 guidance to local and regional implementers pursuing public-private partnerships, with an emphasis on protecting the public interest and minimizing financial risk. ON TO 2050 will also continue the prior plan's support for strategies like congestion pricing.

A core component of ON TO 2050 will be the selection of regionally significant projects, those major projects that best meet regional needs and can be funded with forecasted revenues. Project selection will be performance driven. Project evaluation will include system performance measures such as safety, reliability, condition, and congestion reduction, while also emphasizing the interrelated nature of transportation, land use, and the economy to assess



projects' impacts on the region's built environment, critical natural areas, and overall economic success.

Figure 11. RTA capital needs for maintenance

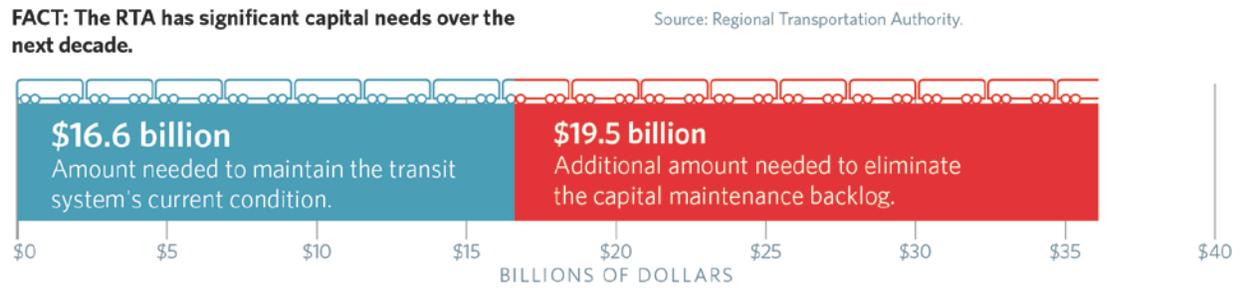
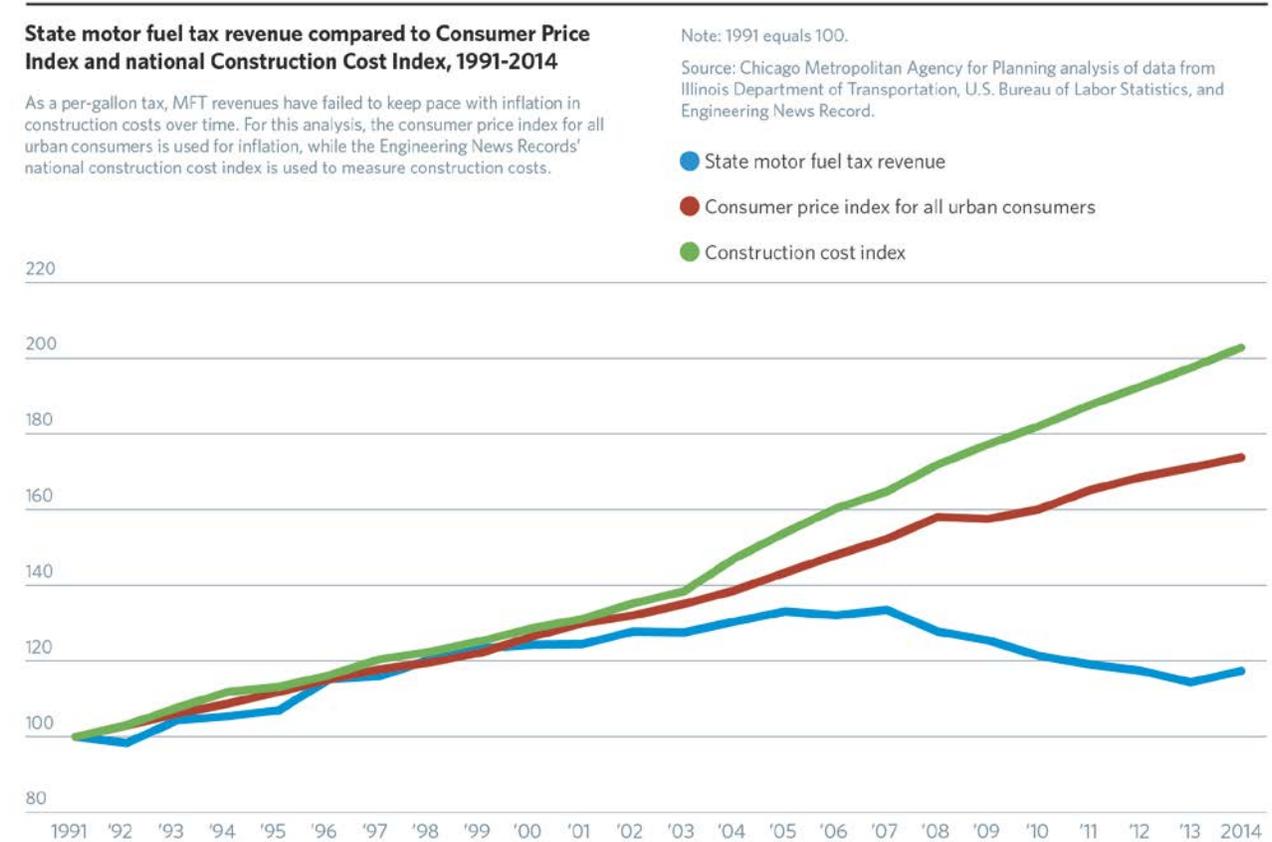


Figure 12. State motor fuel tax revenue compared to Consumer Price Index and national Construction Cost Index, 1991-2014



Reinvestment and infill

Reinvesting in the region's existing communities can help to revitalize economically depressed areas, support new growth without building costly new infrastructure, and preserve natural resources. Encouraging infill development -- growth that occurs in built-up areas with existing infrastructure -- is a key strategy for reinvestment and is critical to maximizing limited infrastructure dollars.

Since 2000, infill has occurred along Metra lines, as well as in and near the region's historic satellite cities: Aurora, Elgin, Joliet, Naperville, and Waukegan. Infill has also been concentrated in Cook County (especially the core of Chicago) and in DuPage County. Significant transit-oriented development (TOD) -- moderate- to high-density, mixed-use development generally located within a half-mile radius (ten-minute walk) of a transit station -- has also occurred throughout the region, with Chicago's central business district transit stations experiencing the greatest amount of development, followed by the transit stations in the rest of Chicago and in suburban Cook County.

What we heard

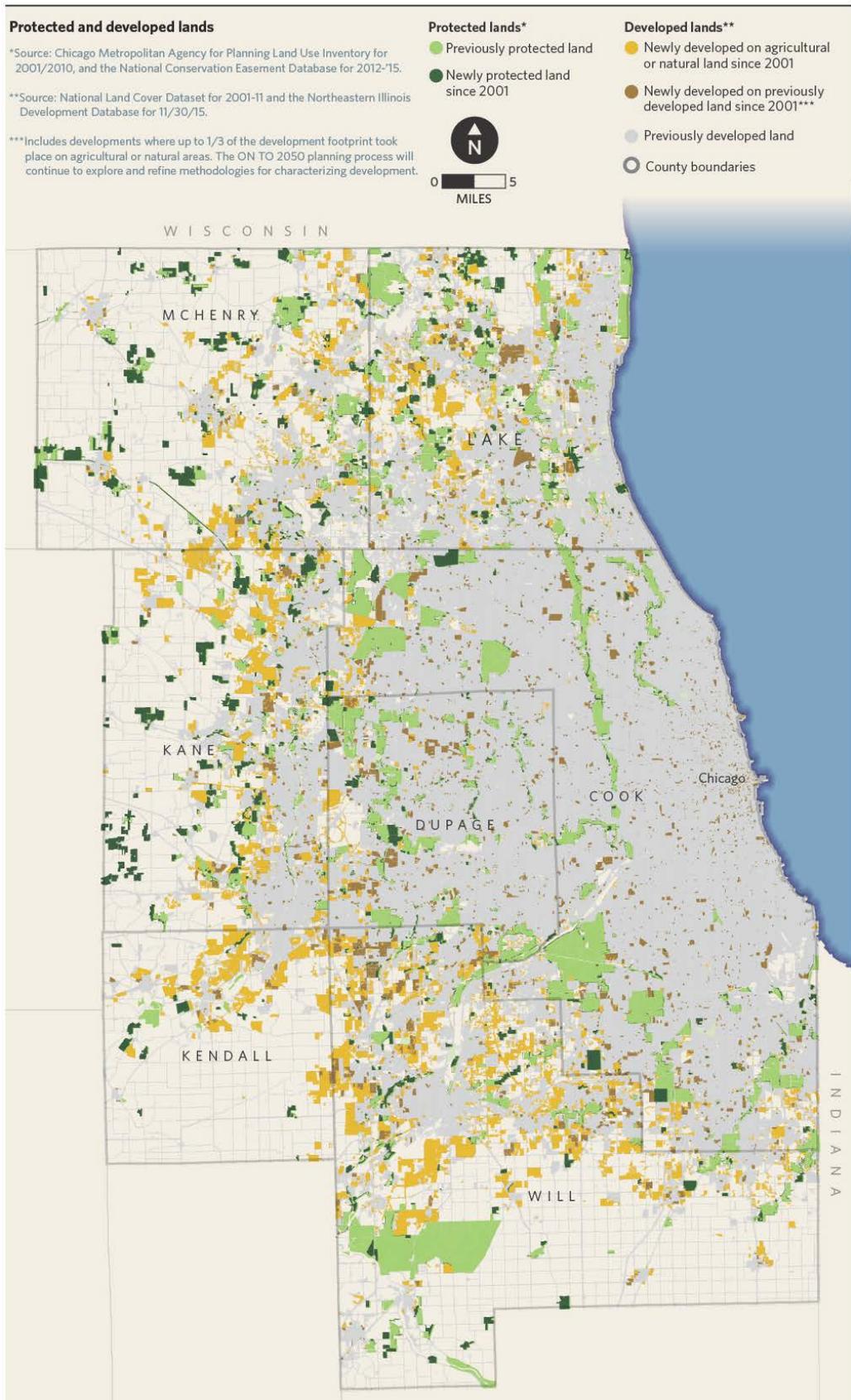
Engagement efforts indicated a strong desire for reinvestment in key locations across the region, such as bus and rail transit station areas and downtowns, and for development of solutions to spur investment in underutilized and disinvested areas. In particular, the need for increased TOD was voiced by many participants. Other themes included the need to provide sufficient housing density to support transit and to increase affordable housing options in transit station areas. Many also noted the challenges posed by high vacancy and tax rates, underutilized land, and chronic disinvestment in some parts of the region, and the significant barriers those challenges present for attracting new investment.

What to do about it

ON TO 2050 will continue to emphasize the importance of reinvesting in existing communities and will supplement that policy with strategies to promote market-feasible planning practices, encourage interjurisdictional collaboration, and revitalize areas that have experienced chronic disinvestment. While GO TO 2040 broadly recommended concentrating investment in mixed-use areas with good access to transportation amenities, ON TO 2050 can provide greater guidance by highlighting locally identified priority places for reinvestment and infill, including bus or transit station areas, downtowns and town centers, main streets, employment centers, or disinvested areas. ON TO 2050 recommendations will reflect local priorities and plans that align with regional goals, and consider barriers to reinvestment in these areas and strategies that could help to catalyze growth. While reinvestment will continue to be a priority, managing greenfield development -- conversion of previously undeveloped land, such as agricultural land or open space -- will require a separate set of strategies.



Figure 13. Protected and developed lands



Conservation

Despite a trend toward infill development in the region, natural and agricultural lands are also being consumed at the region's periphery, primarily for residential subdivisions. The application of good planning and design principles can reduce the impacts of greenfield development on natural and agricultural resources and minimize the expense of associated infrastructure and municipal services. In turn, conservation has many benefits, including improved stormwater management, increased biodiversity, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and lower land surface temperatures to mitigate the urban heat island effect. From 2001 to 2011, the region developed approximately 100,000 acres of its remaining agricultural and natural lands. At the same time, almost 50,000 acres of these lands were permanently protected -- representing a 30 percent increase over the amount protected in 2001 -- a trend that illustrates the continued importance of conservation to the public. Much of this protection was locally driven and financed through open space referenda.

What we heard

Feedback corroborated that conservation is increasingly important to the public, and many stakeholders cited the need for active conservation to prevent the depletion or destruction of natural resources in the region. Some also acknowledged the negative impacts of development on water quality and groundwater supply, calling for action to protect Lake Michigan and other lakes, streams, groundwater, and watersheds. Others pointed toward opportunities to protect agricultural land and increase access to healthy food by encouraging local food production.

What to do about it

GO TO 2040 called for preserving the most important natural resources in the region and increasing the overall acreage of conservation open space. The plan included the Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV), which broadly identified the core lands, hubs, and corridors that form the foundation of the region's green infrastructure network. The GIV has been the basis of many partners' conservation efforts, and ON TO 2050 will now propose more targeted regional conservation priorities. The plan will also determine concrete strategies for conservation, restoration, and management of natural assets, along with best practices to apply to greenfield development.

GO TO 2040 also emphasized local food, both in terms of production and access, and water resources. For the latter, the plan recommended supporting water use conservation efforts, considering water resources in land use and site planning decisions, encouraging watershed planning and stormwater retrofits, and optimizing water supply sources. ON TO 2050 will reinforce the analysis and recommendations for these two topic areas, explore links to other topics such as agricultural preservation, climate resilience, and stormwater management, and consider newly available data and modeling for water supply issues.



Flooding and climate change

Flooding regularly strikes northeastern Illinois communities, causing major transportation and utility disruptions, sewer overflows, damaged property, and severe losses by residents and businesses. These floods have become more frequent and damaging in recent decades, due in large part to the effects of climate change and urbanization. Northeastern Illinois has already experienced -- and is expected to see even greater -- fluctuations in temperature and precipitation attributable to climate change, with record-breaking floods, heat, and drought in recent years. The region has seen consistently higher temperatures and more severe storms than the historical average, punctuated by presidentially declared flood disasters in 2008, 2010, and 2013. Longer and more severe periods of intense heat and heavy precipitation events are occurring more frequently than at any other point in the region's history.

What we heard

During public outreach, many respondents identified flooding and other climate change impacts (increased heat and severe storms, for example) as major concerns. Many respondents specifically mentioned climate change as a significant long-term issue, and encouraged greater public awareness of its likely effects. A number of comments related to mitigating climate change through reduced emissions, but more focused on the need for resilience -- better preparedness to withstand climate change.

What to do about it

In partnership with The Chicago Community Trust, CMAP has developed a strategy with three guiding principles to make the region more resilient to climate change. The principles focus on building responsive and robust infrastructure that can withstand a range of climatic conditions, using participatory and integrated processes that improve communication and collaboration, and reducing vulnerability to climate change, particularly for those who are least equipped to respond to its effects. Integrating resilience into planning efforts and building local capacity to conduct such efforts are both integral to CMAP's approach to climate resilience.

ON TO 2050 will give special attention to the need for more-resilient transportation infrastructure, seeking to avoid future disruptions to both passenger and freight travel. Green infrastructure will also be a focus, with particular attention on preparing ecosystems, water resources, and other natural systems for climate change. Ongoing work to understand urban and riverine flooding will inform detailed stormwater solutions for ON TO 2050. While climate change affects the entire region, the plan will address the disproportionate burden that some communities experience from flooding and climate impacts, the relative difficulty that those communities encounter in recovering from these events, and the disinvestment that may ensue. While it will focus substantially on climate resilience, the new plan will continue to emphasize policies for reducing emissions to mitigate climate change, which will be further refined through future development of ON TO 2050 energy strategies.



Figure 14. Annual precipitation in northeastern Illinois

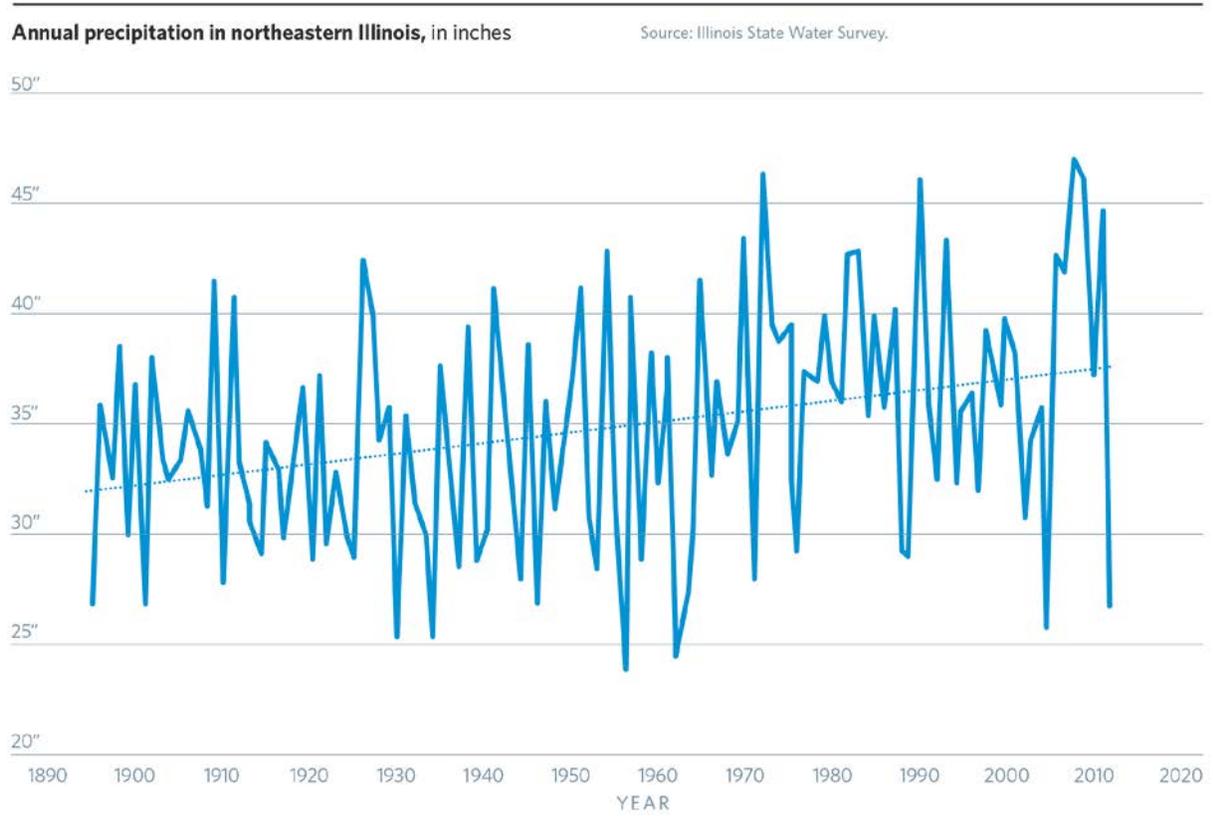


Figure 15. Projected precipitation changes by 2041-2070

Projected precipitation changes by 2041-2070

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Climatic Data Center, Cooperative Institute for Climate and Satellites, North Carolina.

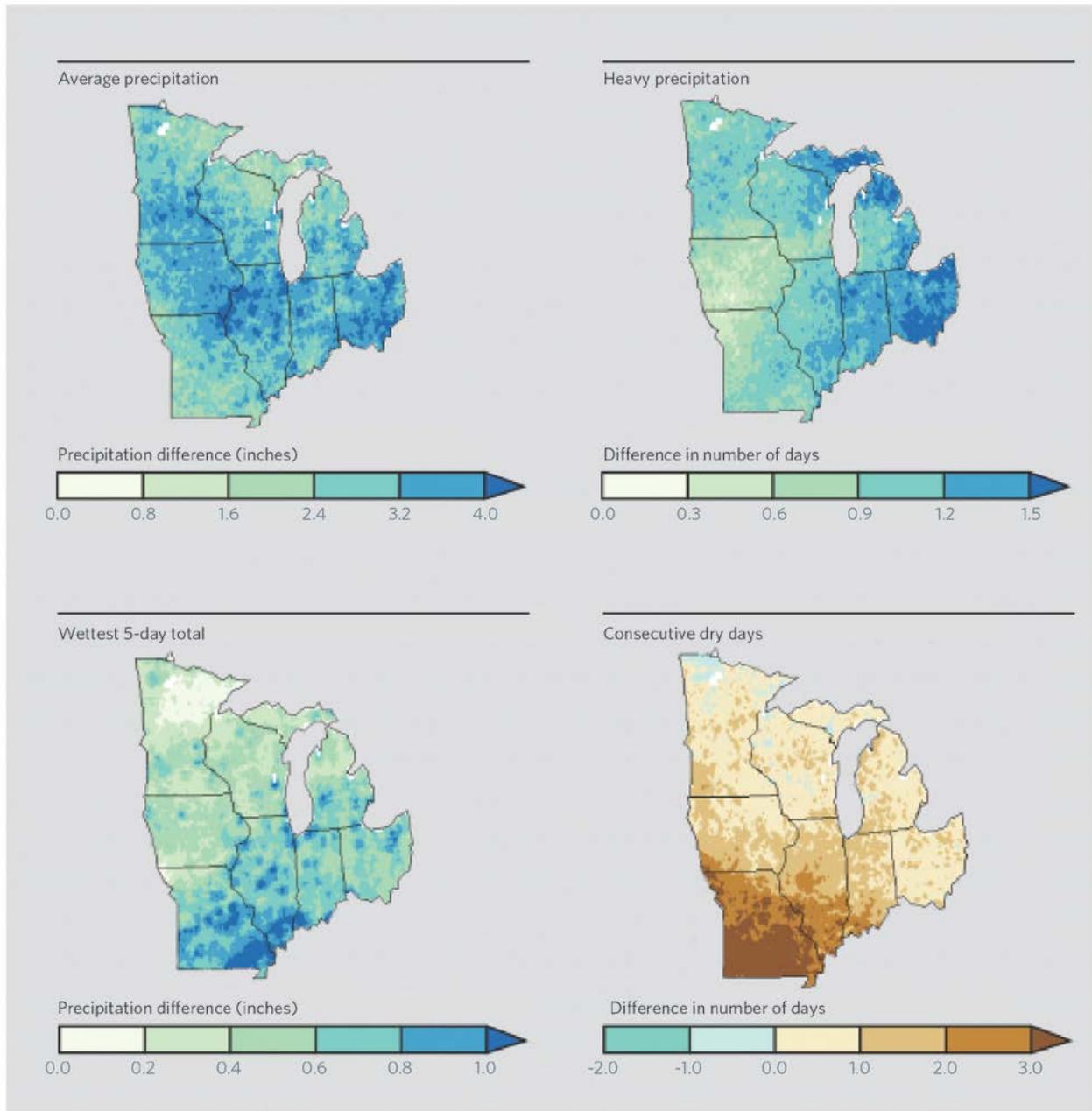


Figure 16. Localized street flooding in Summit, July 2010



Source: Sergio Garcia



Collaboration and capacity

Today, many local governments are under severe fiscal stress caused both by local structural issues and the current State of Illinois budget impasse, which places additional burdens on local governments. Some communities struggle to survive due to their limited fiscal resources, small size, and other barriers. Highly localized provision of services is a strong tradition in Illinois. But while this brings benefits in many cases, it can also be inefficient. Because many of the region's most challenging problems are best addressed at the local level, it is important to build community capacity to respond to local challenges and work toward regional goals.

What we heard

Many engagement participants expressed concern over government inefficiencies, overlapping responsibilities, and duplication of services by different units of government. Some suggested solutions -- from general support for greater collaboration, to specific ideas for sharing services across municipal borders, to calls for government consolidation. A number of respondents also noted the important role that CMAP can play in helping communities address their challenges through local assistance.

What to do about it

ON TO 2050 will reinforce the importance of action at the local level to create a strong, economically successful region, while affirming local control of land use. ON TO 2050 will explore new ways that CMAP can go beyond the planning assistance it currently provides to offer capacity-building assistance to local governments and community-based organizations. This new form of assistance will help to translate the recommendations of the plan to the local level. The plan will also identify roles for organizations -- such as counties, councils of government, and multijurisdictional organizations -- that can serve as intermediaries between the regional and local levels.

The plan will also continue to address the challenges inherent in today's fragmented jurisdictional system. Topics will include intergovernmental coordination, greater regional and subregional collaboration, and service sharing. ON TO 2050 will address the difficult discussions of government consolidation, while recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for how the region's communities should be governed. Finally, the plan will highlight the importance of local action to achieve the region's goals -- not only by units of government, but also by neighborhood leaders, block clubs, homeowner and tenant associations, and community-based organizations of all types.



Next steps

Successful, vibrant communities foster a high quality of life that attracts residents and businesses alike and contributes to the region’s overall success. While still in its early stages, the ON TO 2050 public outreach process has already shown that people and organizations of all types have significant interest in regional efforts and outcomes. This level of involvement will continue throughout the course of the plan’s development.

CMAP will publish a series of snapshots and strategy papers on topics of particular interest. Snapshots will highlight existing conditions and trends in the region, while strategy papers will examine policy directions for specific topic areas, including those described in this report. Driven by stakeholder input, these documents will reveal the direction and recommendations of the eventual ON TO 2050 plan. Your continued involvement in the development of these preliminary products is vital to the success of ON TO 2050.

In addition, two more major opportunities for broad public input will occur during the plan’s development. First, in summer 2017, CMAP will conduct extensive engagement on a series of alternative future scenarios for the region. These scenarios will project the economic, social, and environmental changes that have potential to profoundly affect the region in the future, such as climate change, economic shifts, or technological innovations. The engagement process will examine strategies that could help to prepare the region for these changes, which will in turn inform the policies included in ON TO 2050. And second, the draft plan will be released for public comment in summer 2018 prior to its ultimate adoption in October 2018.

Figure 17. ON TO 2050 development timeline

