

# **ON TO 2050: Initial Recommendations of the Governance Chapter**

*CMAP staff is distributing this working draft of the ON TO 2050 governance recommendations to related CMAP committees, partners, and interested stakeholders for initial review. Please note this is a preliminary draft that will undergo some refinement of text and graphics (and closer proofreading) before being released for public comment in the full draft plan on June 15th.*

# Contents

ON TO 2050 Outline .....	3
Introduction .....	4
<b>Collaboration at all levels of government.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Use collaborative leadership to address regional challenges .....	6
Encourage sharing or consolidating services and consolidating local governments.....	10
Coordinate infrastructure operations and maintenance .....	16
<b>Greater capacity to achieve local and regional goals.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Develop tax policies that strengthen communities and the region .....	20
Provide technical assistance to build communities' capacity .....	25
Prioritize training for local government officials and staff .....	29
<b>Data driven and transparent investment decisions.....</b>	<b>32</b>
Base investment decisions on data and performance .....	32
Improve access to public information with technology and transparency .....	37



# ON TO 2050 Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Principles to move the region forward
  - a. State of the region
  - b. The three principles
    - i. Resilience
    - ii. Inclusive Growth
    - iii. Prioritized Investment
- III. Engagement
- IV. Land Use
- V. Environment
- VI. Economy
- VII. Governance
- VIII. Mobility
- IX. Indicators and Layers
- X. Moving Forward
- XI. Appendices

*Note: ON TO 2050 will be conveyed primarily on the web. The structure assumes that readers will not approach the document linearly. The plan will be organized around five topical areas, each containing a set of recommendations that may repeat across chapters, as will some strategies within those recommendations. Each recommendation will describe its support for the three principles of the plan.*



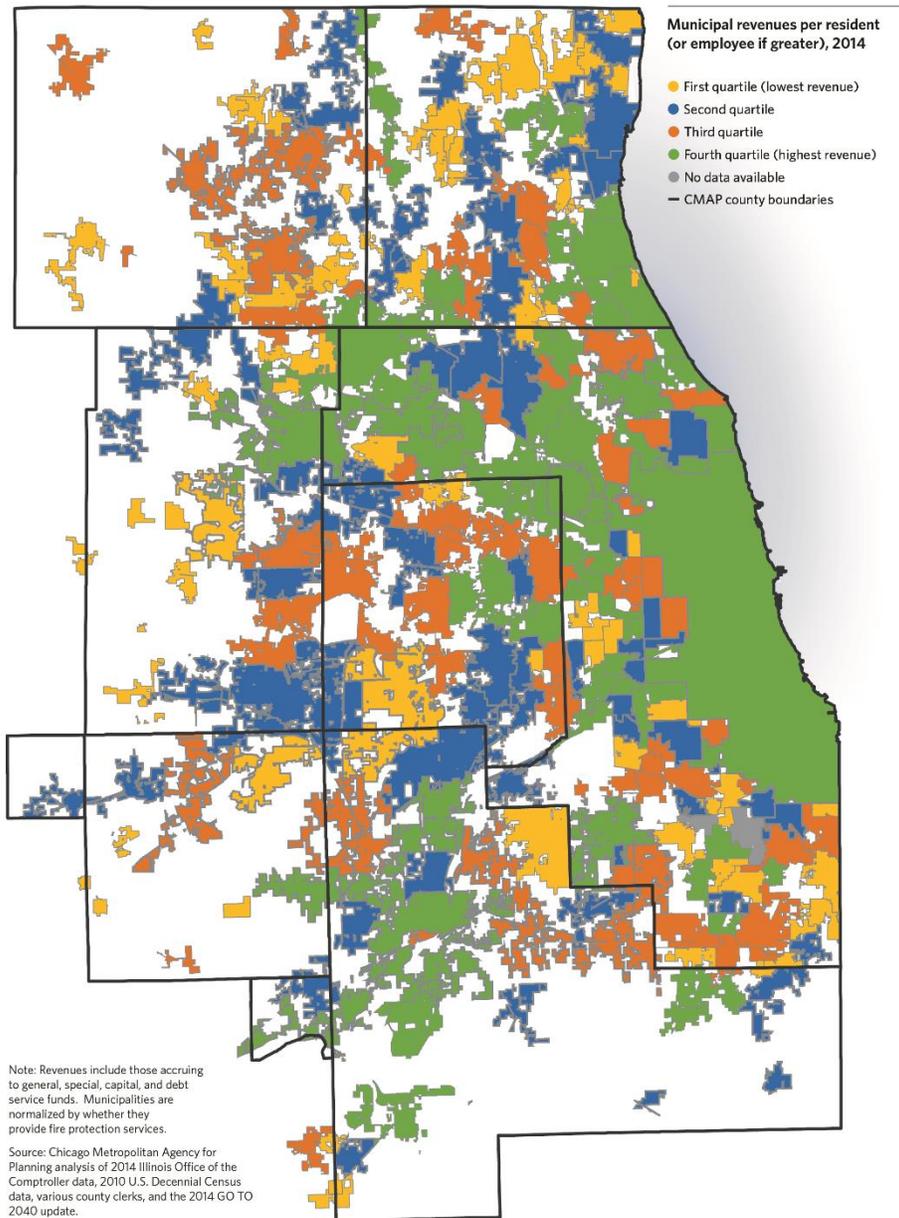
## Introduction

In addition to requiring significant leadership and investment at the federal, state and local levels, ON TO 2050 implementation will depend on government units collaborating across their jurisdictions, increasing their efficiency, and building their capacity to achieve local and regional goals. CMAP, local governments, the State of Illinois, and other partners will all need to coordinate actions for the region to meet planning goals, ensure sufficient local revenues, and improve outcomes for residents and businesses alike.

State legislative and administrative processes should be reformed to help the region plan more effectively. State funding plays a crucial -- yet quite uncertain -- role in the region's ability to invest in infrastructure and fund local government budgets. A more modern tax system, a long-term plan to pay for obligations, and transparent, data-driven budgeting and programming can improve the state's near-term fiscal condition and long-term outlook.

ON TO 2050 goals for building the region's communities call for local governments to lead the way, but funding constraints impede municipalities' and counties' ability to serve the public. Without adequate resources, many have been forced to defer projects and eliminate staff. ON TO 2050 recommends that local governments have access to ample resources to meet the needs of communities and to implement ON TO 2050, a departure from To address these declining resources, ON TO 2050 recommends reform of state tax policies to support all communities while overcoming wide divergences of local revenues. By partnering across municipal borders, communities can improve the ability to provide the services and infrastructure that residents and businesses require. Sharing or consolidating services, as well as consolidating governments in some cases, can further help them to improve public services and increase efficiencies.





State and local governments -- along with transit agencies -- need the fiscal, technical, and administrative capacity to function effectively. Technical assistance and training by CMAP and its partners will help municipal staff and officials advance ON TO 2050 implementation while building local expertise and systems to promote resilience and growth. With proper funding and support, the State of Illinois and local governments will be able to implement performance-based decision making, improve asset management, and leverage new technology for better services and infrastructure.

This chapter describes recommendations to promote:



1. **Prioritized Investment** in services and infrastructure through data-driven decision making.
2. **Inclusive Growth** through tax policy reforms and technical assistance to communities.
3. **Resilience** through improved long-term finances and increased collaboration across jurisdictions.

## Collaboration at all levels of government

For northeastern Illinois to more fully achieve its potential, leaders will need to actively improve infrastructure and promote economic growth, both of which have been stagnant for years. Regional leaders also must come together to develop innovative and broad solutions to key challenges like ensuring inclusive growth and building resilience at the local and regional levels. Disjointed, siloed approaches will be insufficient to achieve our shared goals.

Resource and funding constraints across all levels of government require new approaches, from sharing and consolidating local services to ensuring collaboration by roadway agencies to maintain the system and improve its reliability.

## Use collaborative leadership to address regional challenges

Northeastern Illinois is a global center of commerce with many powerful assets, but our region must find solutions for numerous challenges to ensure sustainable prosperity. The region has experienced lackluster growth in recovering slowly from the previous economic recession. In addition, federal and state sources of funding for infrastructure and services have diminished. These trends have resulted in resource constraints for local governments across metropolitan Chicago. This unstable and unsustainable fiscal situation has resulted in greater stress on local funding, inadequate support for services and infrastructure, and obstacles to long-term planning and implementation activities.

Overcoming constrained resources and stagnant growth will require innovative, collaborative action from the entire region. When the region's communities, leaders, local governments, infrastructure providers, civic groups, residents, and businesses come together, they can meet these challenges and achieve beneficial regional outcomes. As the region's MPO, CMAP can collaborate with and convene partners to better coordinate investments in the region and promote economic growth and opportunities for all residents.

Past collaboration among regional leaders has yielded better strategies for economic growth. The newly created Chicago Regional Growth Corporation (CRGC) is an independent nonprofit entity formed by Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties and the City of Chicago as an important step to improve coordination of their respective economic



development organizations.<sup>1</sup> CRGC will need to identify initial opportunities for impactful work and secure sustainable, long-term funding as a basis for continued multijurisdictional collaboration.

CMAP has the ability to directly implement ON TO 2050 goals by convening partners to collaboratively administer UWP, CMAQ, TAP, STP-L, and other federal transportation programs for which the agency is responsible. These programs provide funding for IDOT, transit providers, and local governments to improve the region's roadway, bridge, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure. A recent agreement between the councils of mayors, the City of Chicago, and CMAP has yielded important enhancements of STP-L, establishing a new shared fund for accomplishing large projects by promoting regional priorities and performance-based outcomes to program the local dollars.

[graphic explaining the federal funds programmed by CMAP]

CMAP's LTA program provides technical assistance to local governments across the region, helping advance the principles of GO TO 2040 and ON TO 2050. In addition, CMAP engages in wastewater planning pursuant to the state's Regional Planning Act, ensuring that wastewater treatment services meet regional environmental and water quality goals.

Yet CMAP's ability to fulfill its comprehensive planning mandate remains constrained because most of the agency's operational funding derives from federal UWP funds and state transportation funds, sources that cannot be used for activities beyond those relating to transportation and certain land use issues. If the agency's sources of funding remain unchanged, CMAP's ability to work across all of ON TO 2050's strategies will continue to be limited.

**The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.**

***Take a leadership role in implementing federal and state investments***

CMAP has led regional responses to funding opportunities, such as by helping the Chicago Metro Metals Consortium in applying for TIGER funds,<sup>2</sup> to leverage regional assets, combine contributions from stakeholders, collaborate on shared challenges, and produce more competitive applications. In addition, CMAP has been a leader in guiding implementation of federal and state funding programs and regionally significant projects, as with recent enhancement of STP-L.

*CMAP should continue to lead in pursuing federal and state investments where appropriate.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Cook County, "Chicago Regional Growth Initiatives," 2013, <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/content/regional-initiatives>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/de/programs/lta/cmmc>



*CMAP* should collaborate with regional partners to drive more efficient, effective, and cooperative programming decisions.

*CMAP and partners* should develop a process to develop coordinate and prioritize responses to federal freight funding opportunities such as INFRA.

### ***Support formation of an entity with the mandate and resources to implement a regional growth strategy***

Overcoming metropolitan Chicago's prolonged slow growth and uneven prosperity will require a shared vision for the regional economy. Initial success under the Chicago Regional Growth Corporation (CRGC) can help demonstrate the benefits of collaboration among the region's political and economic development leaders. With sustained private sector engagement and institutional support, CRGC can play a critical role in focusing economic development activities and marshalling resources to address issues that cut across the region's diverse industries and communities. Such initiatives include integrating data and information systems for rigorous market analysis, improving freight movement in the region, and assembling support for prioritized, multijurisdictional infrastructure investments. Regional coordination should especially emphasize cluster-oriented economic development strategies by convening business leaders and partners like anchor institutions to address shared, sector-specific challenges.

*CMAP and partners* should continue to support CRGC's initial endeavors by assisting in convening regional stakeholders as appropriate, providing research and data, and securing financial support, as appropriate.

*County and municipal EDOs* should develop a shared vision for the regional economy that articulates the region's strongest economic assets and competitive advantages in support of regional marketing and branding.

*CRGC or similar entity* should help county and municipal officials pursue shared goals across jurisdictional boundaries that complement their respective strengths and competitive advantages.

*CMAP* should continue to research and articulate the benefits of intergovernmental collaboration through responsive data and analysis on the regional economy's performance.

### ***Collaborate for inclusive growth***

Current regional forecasts show increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the years to come. Yet data on economic outcomes reveal stark disparities in how low-income and minority populations share in regional progress. To meet its economic potential, the region's economy



requires opportunities for all residents to contribute to and benefit from its growth. By creating new pathways and systems that challenge existing inequalities, the region can place itself on a path to higher, more durable growth. Because the causes of inequality are myriad and no single solution exists, the region needs multiple, sustained initiatives to tackle the many issues that contribute to persistent economic inequality and impair regional prosperity.

Regional partnerships and shared goals are critical for implementing ON TO 2050's many strategies related to inclusive growth. Existing initiatives such as Partnering for Prosperity show the potential for regional collaboration to decrease economic inequality. Yet the region's inclusive growth goals will also require some actions targeted to particular communities' needs and others designed to reform and integrate activities across public and private institutions. While this strategy includes new and existing activities for CMAP, it will also require additional partners to take the lead and foster regional collaboration. For example, political, civic, and business leaders should continue developing a regional career pathway system, increasing investment in disinvested areas, and ensuring that emergent transportation technologies support inclusive growth.

*Government, business and civic leaders, and other regional actors should develop and implement a shared vision for inclusive growth in northeastern Illinois, as well as define key metrics to track regional progress towards inclusive growth goals.*

*CMAP should establish or enhance partnerships with local, regional, and state entities across sectors in developing and implementing inclusive growth strategies for the Chicago region.*

*CMAP should continue to share its expertise and knowledge of the region and its communities within larger efforts to decrease economic inequality and promote inclusive growth.*

### **Secure funding for CMAP to pursue all ON TO 2050 goals**

CMAP is charged with the responsibility to comprehensively plan for the Chicago region, incorporating land use and transportation planning with work on housing, regional economic growth, water resource management, community development, and environmental issues. And yet the region's goals are not constrained by the agency's current funding limitations. While transportation, land use, and related issues are central, ON TO 2050 recommendations also encompass water resource management, local and regional economic development planning, municipal capacity building, shared services, and consolidation. In light of its currently limited ability to take on these challenges, CMAP should seek out adequate and sustained funding sources for purposes such as these. In addition, the state legislation that created CMAP included language pledging to fund the agency's operations and to match federal formula funds with state funding, which the State of Illinois should provide to support *all* of CMAP's state-mandated planning activities.



*CMAP* should seek funding opportunities to plan for water resource management, climate resilience, economic development, local capacity, and other ON TO 2050 priorities.

*CMAP* should pursue reliable access to state funds that support all of its planning work.

## **Encourage sharing or consolidating services and consolidating local governments**

Communities across the region have put increasing emphasis on partnerships to combine resources, increase efficiency, improve service delivery, and make the best use of constrained resources. Many have found ways to share the cost of services or purchases, or in some cases, consolidate units of local government. These mechanisms can all provide similar benefits, including improved capacity and resources, greater efficiency, enhanced service quality, and cost savings.

[Graphic: explaining shared service, service consolidation, and local government consolidation]

There has long been a culture of service sharing and partnership between local governments in northeastern Illinois. While certain actions will necessitate an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) due to complexity, local governments often initiate successful partnerships without a formal agreement. To facilitate partnerships, some counties, COGs and municipalities have laid out clear criteria and structures for entering into IGAs.

Several COGs in the region have formed the Suburban Purchasing Cooperative to facilitate the joint purchase of equipment, vehicles, supplies, and services for participating communities, creating economies of scale in terms of pricing and staff resources. The cooperative is centrally operated by the Northwest Municipal Conference, with shared oversight from the other participating COGs: DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, and Will County Governmental League. Another example is the Municipal Partnering Initiative, created in 2010 for 18 member municipalities of northern Cook County and Lake County to share services and procurements.

[Graphic: the different models of shared services]

Local governments that lack the resources to analyze needs, find potential partnerships, or develop shared services can benefit from technical assistance. In 2015, for example, the Villages of Oswego and Montgomery and the United City of Yorkville worked through *CMAP*'s LTA program to identify opportunities for service sharing and develop a new Lower Fox River Partnering Initiative, which oversees long-term cooperation among the communities.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> *CMAP. Lower Fox River Partnering Initiative Shared Services Study*. October 2015, <http://cmap.is/2AC2xHq>.



When many small, adjacent jurisdictions provide the same services, the result can be higher costs and lower overall capacity. Consolidating services may produce cost savings, increase capacity or efficiency, or enhance service delivery. Although less prevalent than service sharing, successful service consolidation has been implemented in multiple service areas. For instance, the six south suburban Cook County communities served by the Thorn Creek Basin Sanitary District have seen significant cost savings over an extended period by consolidating sewage treatment.<sup>4</sup> Municipalities with limited need for a certain service may save costs to hire, train, and manage qualified separate staff by contracting with a county to perform that function. To cite one example, Lake County delivers code enforcement and development review services on behalf of multiple municipalities.

Similar benefits would occur through consolidating adjacent units of government, which may be pursued to merge services or combine resources or tax base. Alternatively, vertical consolidation between overlapping units of government, such as a municipality and a special district, may also better coordinate public services, reduce administrative costs, or enhance civic participation. Consolidation of governments can increase communities' capacity to achieve local and regional goals.

Consolidation depends on support of local residents and civic leaders, as well as unique local conditions. In each case, decision makers should consider the extent to which the governments are already sharing services or engaging in joint projects; the similarity of governments' tax bases; and the similarity of levels of service. Challenges for adjacent local governments considering consolidation can occur when dissimilar service levels and/or tax bases result in an increased burden for property taxpayers located in whichever of the involved districts has lower levels of service or a higher tax base.

The State of Illinois has studied local government consolidation, and the General Assembly has approved several statutory changes that would make it easier for local governments to consolidate. Yet no state programs directly fund or provide assistance for local government consolidation. Other states around the country, such as New York, have provided technical assistance and awards to local governments to achieve cost savings and improve efficiency through cooperative agreements, mergers, consolidation, and dissolutions. For more information on consolidation programs in other states, see CMAP's [Considerations and Practices of Local Government Consolidation](#) policy update.

Finally, annexation of developed, but unincorporated, areas may improve services and lower costs for them. Development patterns have created a large urbanized area, most of which is incorporated into municipalities, but a patchwork of unincorporated neighborhoods remains. This results in some counties having to provide what are typically municipal-level public safety and regulatory services to areas spread out across the county. Due to the geographic

---

<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. [Northeastern Illinois Local Government Shared Services Survey Report](#) (July 2015), 25.



distribution, county services for unincorporated areas are inherently less efficient than what an adjacent municipality could provide. In addition, local roads in these neighborhoods are operated and maintained by small township road districts, which are designed to serve a spread-out, rural grid, not neighborhoods within municipalities.

*The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.*

***Facilitate partnerships between local governments interested in service sharing, joint procurement agreements, or consolidating services or local governments***

Local governments need assistance to develop agreements for sharing or consolidating services. Facilitation efforts could include relatively informal offerings, such as forums or meetings with other communities and vendors to discuss partnership opportunities, or more formal programming, such as direct brokering of collaborative agreements. COGs and counties could also offer online tools for shared services matchmaking, and perhaps partner with professional organizations to develop function-specific matchmaking. This could include establishing database inventories of service sharing, consolidated services, and intergovernmental agreements for their area of the region and features to connect additional interested governments. This information would help facilitate new partnerships for local governments interested in forming service-sharing agreements.

*CMAP, counties, COGs, and new or existing regional entities should provide analysis and recommendations for local governments to consider the fiscal, efficiency, and other consequences of sharing or consolidating some local services for all interested communities, particularly those with lower capacity.*

*CMAP, counties, COGs, and new or existing regional entities should partner to develop service-sharing resources, including providing guidance documents to local governments on best practices.*

*CMAP and partners should explore forming or designating a regional entity to facilitate efforts for shared or consolidated services and for local government consolidation.*

*Counties or COGs should create staff positions for coordinating shared services, joint procurement, and other local government partnerships.*

***Provide funding for sharing or consolidating services and consolidating local governments***

The State or counties should create a competitive grant program that provides funding to local governments for studying the feasibility of service sharing and consolidation. While the State of Illinois has created statutory processes to streamline some local government consolidation, it has not funded the practice. Several states, such as Michigan, New York, and Ohio, have



pursued initiatives to promote and provide incentives for government consolidation by enacting legislation and awarding grants.<sup>5</sup>

Another potential avenue would be to use existing federal allowances for grants or loans to enable studies of local service consolidation, such as the IEPA's State Revolving Fund (SRF), which has the ability to set aside a portion of its funding as technical assistance grant funding for local communities. Other states have used this to support engineering, rate, and consolidation studies. This tool could be helpful for local governments exploring new water management structures and systems to relieve their capacity constraints.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, local governments considering consolidation face the prospect of dissimilar service levels and/or tax bases that may result in an increased property tax burden for taxpayers located in the district with lower levels of service or a higher tax base. For initiatives that will result in long-term savings, tax credits could offset the resulting tax differential and ease concerns of property owners about tax increases.

*The State* or county governments should provide funding to local governments for service sharing and consolidation feasibility studies.

*The State* should use existing federal allowances for grants or loans to enable studies of local service consolidation.

*The State* should provide tax credits for a limited period to offset property tax differentials resulting from local government consolidation.

### ***Implement data sharing to streamline collaboration***

The ability of local governments to access peers' data is important for identifying partnership opportunities. They should make it a high priority to maintain and share accurate data on their programs, operations, and assets to track progress and explore and assess potential partnerships. To coordinate matchmaking, COGs or counties should gather relevant data from member local governments and promote exploration of it through an easily accessed platform.

*Local governments* should ensure their data management practices allow for data sharing with other local governments.

---

<sup>5</sup> For examples, see New York Division of Local Government Services, "Local Government Efficiency Program," <https://www.dos.ny.gov/LG/lge/index.html>, Michigan Department of Treasury, "Competitive Grant Assistance Program," [http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751\\_2197\\_58826\\_62422---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/0,4679,7-121-1751_2197_58826_62422---,00.html), and Ohio Development Services Agency, "Ohio Local Government Innovation Council," [https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs\\_localgovfund.htm](https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_localgovfund.htm).

<sup>6</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency, "How the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Works," <https://www.epa.gov/drinkingwatersrf/how-drinking-water-state-revolving-fund-works#tab-5>.



COGs or counties should consider implementing a municipal data-sharing program.

***Use long-term planning efforts to proactively explore sharing services, staff, and procurement***

Shared services, staff, and procurement have many potential challenges or benefits, such as how existing service levels may be affected. However, local budgeting and planning processes can evaluate the consequences of opportunities for sharing or consolidating services. Developing common regulations and processes for code inspection, development review, and other functions could also facilitate the use of shared services or staff. For example, coordinating to adopt the same international building codes or creating a uniform rental registration program can create cost saving opportunities for shared code inspection staff.

*Local governments* should proactively explore opportunities to share services and identify opportunities for joint procurement.

*Local governments* should inventory their projected needs for the next five years across all services and infrastructure, and share that information with counties, COGs, and neighboring communities, with an invitation to partner on service delivery and purchases.

*Neighboring municipalities* should work together to adopt more uniform processes and regulations for common activities to better facilitate the use of shared services or staff.

*CMAP, COGs, and counties* should introduce and provide analysis to connect lower capacity municipalities with partnership opportunities.

***Highway system operators should share traffic management resources***

Opportunities to share resources should be identified and implemented by highway system operators. For example, communications infrastructure and automated messaging could be coordinated to streamline delivery of information and protect against failures by ensuring redundant, fail-safe systems. Traffic management center hardware and software could also be shared among highway operating agencies, allowing use from remote locations and limiting maintenance activities to a single location with fewer computers. And shared staff would allow traffic management centers to be operated 24/7 at reduced expense. These various forms of coordination could lead to improved service delivery, with cost savings freeing up funds for enhancing or expanding the management systems.

*CMAP* should fund a study of the costs and benefits of implementing a regional, multijurisdictional traffic management center, either virtual or traditional.

*IDOT and counties* should collaborate to establish a regional arterial management center.



### ***Local governments should explore consolidation of services***

Local governments should seek and evaluate opportunities to consolidate certain services based on their potential for saving costs and increasing capacity. By studying the performance of consolidated services over time, local governments and their partners can weigh potential benefits and consider other opportunities for service consolidation

*Local governments* should coordinate with counties or COGs to assess the benefits of consolidated services, such as inspection services or development review, to enhance service delivery and achieve cost savings.

*The civic community, CMAP, MMC, State of Illinois, and other partners* should conduct an assessment of the region's experience in consolidated services.

*Community water suppliers* should explore shared investments and consolidation of services.

### ***Pursue annexation of developed unincorporated areas***

In developed, unincorporated areas, many services are provided by counties, leading to inefficiencies and high costs. Encouraging the annexation of these areas by adjacent municipalities, however, is not without challenges. Many residents prefer to remain in an unincorporated area, in part due to differences in local regulations. In addition, many of these areas would require significant infrastructure improvements to meet municipal standards. Planning and securing funding for these infrastructure improvements is a key step in encouraging municipalities to annex these areas. Because their residents and businesses in will play important decision-making roles, their concerns must be addressed in any annexation process.

*Municipalities* should form boundary agreements with neighbors, periodically study the benefits and costs of annexation, maintain dialogue with their counties, and annex adjacent unincorporated neighborhoods, where appropriate.

*Counties* should commit resources toward needed infrastructure improvements in unincorporated areas ripe for annexation.

*CMAP* should help counties and municipalities plan for annexation of developed unincorporated areas.

### ***Local governments with extensive existing partnerships should explore opportunities to consolidate***

Local governments that are already sharing services, implementing infrastructure projects together, or engaging in joint contracts have many elements in place and have proven that they are capable of working together. Where there is interest by residents and civic leaders, adjacent local governments with extensive existing partnerships, similar tax bases and services levels, or



limited potential for growth should consider the benefits and costs of consolidating. Overlapping units of government -- such as municipalities, townships, or special districts with existing partnerships or complementary services -- should also consider consolidation when local interest exists.

The State has made several statutory changes over the years that provide processes for some local governments to consolidate. The State should continue to work on improving that framework by providing for locally-driven consolidation processes, removing outmoded statutory barriers, and ensuring that local governments maintain the ability to solve problems with innovative solutions.

*Local governments* should explore opportunities to consolidate.

*The State* should approve legislation that facilitates local government consolidation.

## **Coordinate infrastructure operations and maintenance**

The region's transportation, water, and other infrastructure extends across multiple jurisdictions, requiring collaboration to ensure a well-functioning system and maximize public investments.

Municipalities in the region often already share infrastructure or collaborate on joint or aggregated projects. One current example is the Cal-Sag Trail, where a group of municipalities along the Cal-Sag Channel collaborated with other public and private partners to construct a 26-mile trail using more than \$35 million in federal, state, municipal, and private funds. This approach can work on a smaller scale as well. Collaborating on infrastructure allows the region's communities to deliver vital services, resulting in capital cost savings and lower operational costs through economies of scale. It can also benefit municipalities that do not have the capacity to host an infrastructure project alone. And capital projects that combine transportation elements with water or wastewater improvements can better leverage limited capital funds.

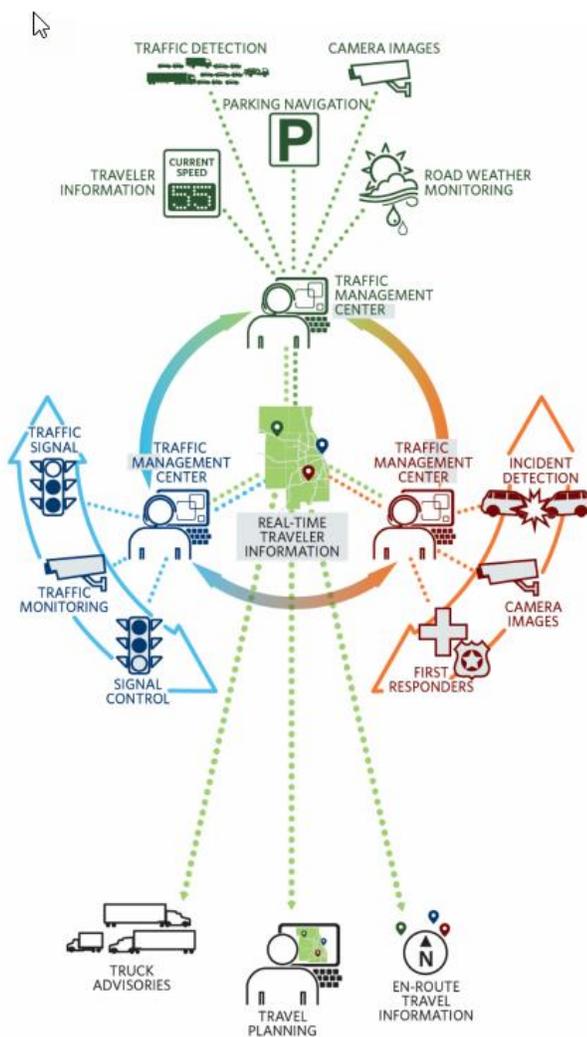
[graphic showing a schematic project with transportation and water elements]

Another challenge in delivering capital projects and improving highway system performance is disruption resulting from construction. Coordination of projects across transportation agencies, water and wastewater infrastructure providers, and utility companies could reduce the frequency and duration of construction on rights-of-way and potentially lower costs, reduce driver delays, and improve safety. In addition, schedule delays during road construction projects caused by the presence of utilities can impose significant cost increases. Often utility infrastructure, including publicly or privately owned communications, electricity, gas, water, or other lines or equipment, is located in the transportation facility right-of-way, and must be



relocated or removed during construction. Coordination with utility companies is important to avoid construction delays.

For day-to-day highway operations, effective coordination can reduce the need for costly roadway expansion by making the most efficient use of the existing system. The highway system is most effectively managed when coordination goes beyond an individual operating agency. Establishing real time communication and operational agreements between highway agencies, emergency management services, transit operators, and traveler information services can improve transportation system safety and reliability, and reduce congestion. The following chart provides an overview of the region’s highway operations system, which could benefit from increased coordination.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.



### ***Partner with other units of government to deliver infrastructure projects***

Improved coordination can speed up the construction and maintenance of infrastructure, reduce the number of times that roadways must be reconstructed, and improve system reliability. Transportation departments should partner with one another as well as with other entities that implement infrastructure projects. Project coordination could include jointly delivering single infrastructure projects or aggregating infrastructure projects across boundaries to increase cost efficiencies or financing options. This could also simply mean coordinating across entities that maintain roadways, water infrastructure, and utilities to reduce the number of times underground improvements must be made.

### ***Improve utility coordination***

Greater coordination with utility companies is necessary to reduce delays on transportation projects. Construction-related delays can impose significant cost increases for transportation projects. Better data is needed on detailed utility location information, and a database of detailed utility location information in a secure format should be developed by infrastructure owners and housed at IDOT. The City of Chicago is already working to collect this data during construction activities for future project planning. To improve coordination, counties should reinvigorate their utility coordination councils. Moreover, the State should consider updating the statutes that govern utility coordination regulations.<sup>7</sup>

*IDOT and other infrastructure owners should work with utility companies to develop a detailed utility location database.*

*Counties should use their utility coordination councils in a more effective manner.*

*The State should make the statutes that govern utility coordination regulations more effective.*

### ***Enhance cooperation to improve roadway operations***

Roadway agencies and emergency response agencies should work together to improve system reliability through the establishment of operations goals, objectives, strategies, and intergovernmental agreements. Transportation agencies and emergency response agencies should also work together on operational goals and strategies to improve system reliability during emergencies. This could include sharing data and information, improving policies, and establishing necessary agreements between agencies. Communication between emergency responders and traffic management centers should be routine and automated.

---

<sup>7</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, "Policies to improve coordination between utilities and transportation agencies," October 14, 2016, [http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/587538/Utility+coordination\\_v4.pdf/2418b237-69d1-4318-bdd6-35d232f3ed27](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/587538/Utility+coordination_v4.pdf/2418b237-69d1-4318-bdd6-35d232f3ed27)



*The Tollway* should work with IDOT to expand their effective incident management procedures across the expressway system.

*The State* should require that 911 call centers work with road system operators to establish automated information exchange and data sharing.

*The region* should collaborate to establish a system of secure, high-capacity data infrastructure region-wide with sufficient redundancy to ensure uninterrupted communication, to operate roadways more efficiently and take advantage of future vehicle technology.

*IDOT* should implement a regional traffic management center that includes arterials.

*Transit management centers and highway management centers* should establish routine and automated information exchanges.

### ***Integrate local goals with roadway regulations***

IDOT and counties should work with communities to improve their regulations in order to ensure state and county transportation infrastructure is consistent with local goals. As communities in northeastern Illinois consider how to improve their bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improve truck access and routing, and meet other ON TO 2050 transportation priorities, it will be increasingly important for other roadway jurisdictions to strengthen relationships to achieve these goals. IDOT and counties should work with communities to implement local goals for the transportation system, such as increased bicycle and pedestrian resources, improved truck access and routing, and other ON TO 2050 priorities.

## **Greater capacity to achieve local and regional goals**

The ability of local governments to achieve goals is essential to the advancement of our region as a whole. Too often, however, public revenues are insufficient to deliver services, maintain infrastructure, and fill other essential government functions. The region needs a modernized tax structure that will provide ample opportunities for each municipality to support its plans, goals, and desired development patterns.

Technical assistance provided by CMAP and partners through the LTA program has provided essential support for communities to implement local and regional goals. A similarly sustained commitment to assistance and resources for building capacity of local governments will bolster each municipality's ability to meet its residents' needs, implement its community plans, and achieve ON TO 2050 objectives. Proficient local staff and officials -- with skills maintained



through professional development and training -- are essential for their units of government to undertake important initiatives and to complete projects.

## Develop tax policies that strengthen communities and the region

All communities need the ability to generate revenue that supports their plans, goals, and desired development patterns. Under the current tax structure, communities without sales tax generating businesses or dense commercial development are often left with few options to raise municipal revenues sufficient to cover the cost of public services and infrastructure. Some resulting municipal regulations limit space for development that does not generate sales taxes or other major revenues. For example, some communities exclude non-sales tax generating businesses from commercial areas. These choices reflect local preferences, but have large effects on the region's built environment and ability to support economic activity when viewed at the regional scale. While often producing lower revenues, office and industrial development provide support for industries ranging from manufacturing, to goods movement, to business services, to corporate headquarters. Many communities aspire to promote these regionally beneficial industries, but current tax structures do not always offer sufficient revenue options for municipalities to recoup costs incurred by these developments. For example, manufacturing facilities often produce little property tax revenue and generate truck traffic that imposes high wear and tear on local roads. The data story below highlights the interaction of local goals, costs, revenues, and economic impact for selected typical development types.

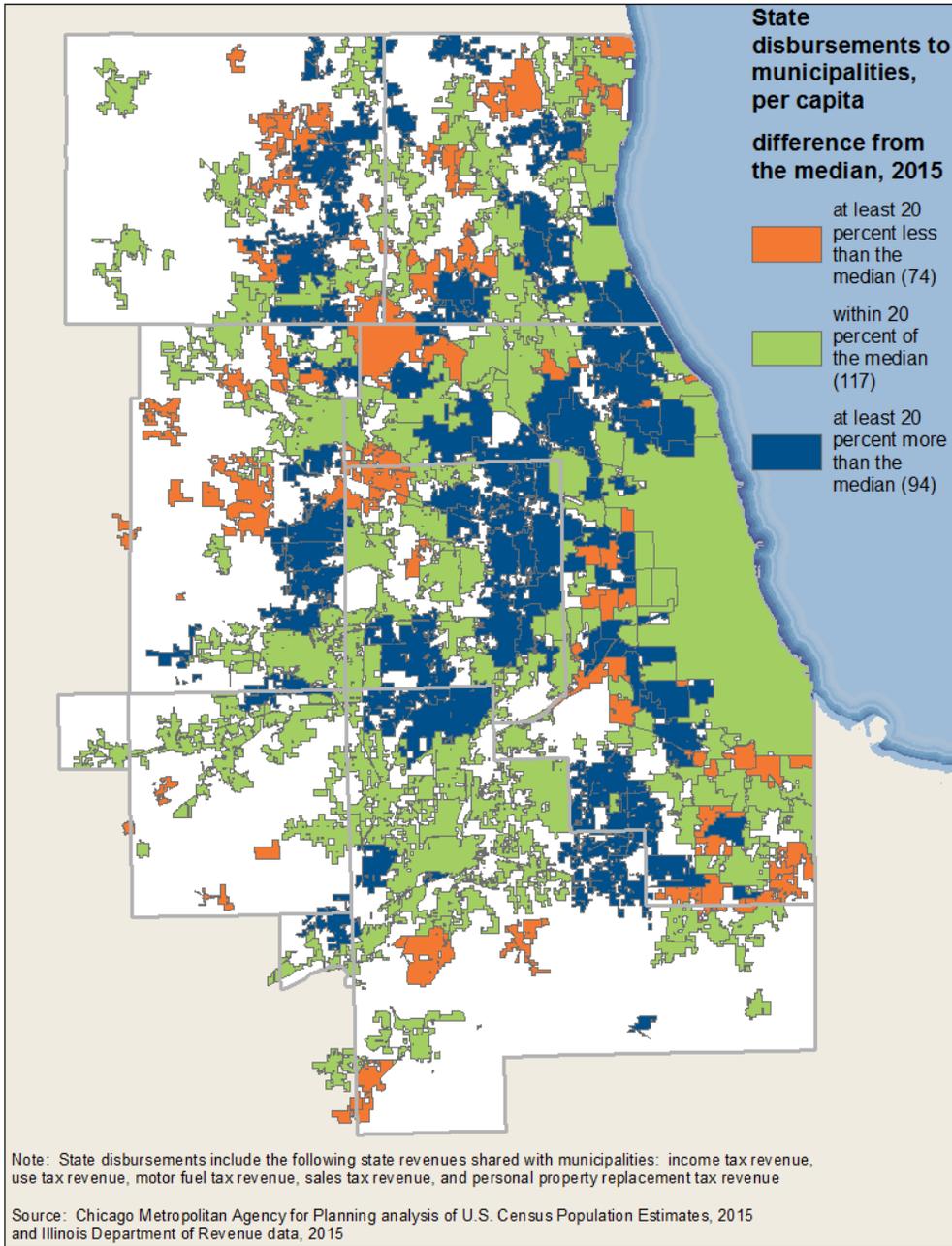
[graphic: fiscal/economic impact data story]

Tax policies have a broad impact on the ability of local jurisdictions to provide services and keep infrastructure in a state of good repair. Individual municipal revenues depend on land use mix, size of the tax base, and state and local tax structure. Costs grow from a combination of interrelated factors: locally defined needs, the amount and condition of infrastructure, and long term debt and obligations. State statutory criteria for revenue disbursements, like sales or motor fuel taxes, can create wide divergence in revenues among municipalities, in part because the criteria may not reflect the capacity of a municipality's own tax base to raise revenue or the level of public services needed by a municipality's constituents.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the State's own financial situation has caused local governments to experience reduced funding and increased uncertainty. State funds play a crucial role in local government budgets, but the State has not modernized its tax system nor developed a long-term plan to pay for its obligations. The map below illustrates the differences in state revenues distributed to municipalities in 2015.

---

<sup>8</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, "Evaluation of State Transportation Revenue Sharing with Local Governments"





Communities with a low tax base and limited options for increasing revenue through most types of development often face a sustained or recurring cycle of disinvestment. Many areas with lower tax disbursements overlap with Economically Disconnected Areas (EDAs), which perpetuates inequities and reduces opportunities for people and places to thrive. Achieving regional growth that includes EDAs may hinge on their residents and businesses having access to programs and services that many municipalities sometimes take for granted. Communities where revenues are low relative to their needs may struggle to fund basic municipal operations and infrastructure without imposing high tax rates, which further discourage commercial and



residential development and cause the local tax base to grow more slowly than the cost of public services. This cycle of disinvestment is self-reinforcing and also often drives the adoption of high tax rates that can be a significant burden on low-income residents.

[graphic: storymap with EDAs and change in property tax base layer]

In Cook County, property tax classification is an additional factor that drives up commercial and industrial property tax rates, hurting disinvested communities in particular. This may discourage business investment in Cook County in favor of opportunities elsewhere. By using a higher assessment ratio for businesses than residences, this system allocates a higher share of the property tax burden to businesses -- a policy that does not exist in the collar counties -- deterring reinvestment and hindering resulting growth in the property tax base. In many communities, high commercial and industrial tax rates present a barrier to attracting development, even when infrastructure and infill opportunities are plentiful. By reforming its classification system, Cook County could grow the tax base over time and reduce the tax burden on residents, mitigating potential increased residential rates.<sup>9</sup>

Regionally, the current tax system does not always support the multijurisdictional nature of many industrial and office employment areas, which often cluster geographically and cross jurisdictional lines.<sup>10</sup> The infrastructure that serves these centers can extend through many communities and is maintained by a complex web of jurisdictions. The region's municipalities need additional tax structure and transportation funding options to support the service and infrastructure needs of these locally and regionally desired land uses.

Local governments do have options to better support their communities through local action, particularly through imposing user fees to support specific services and infrastructure. Since 2013, for example, Downers Grove has generated revenue for stormwater improvements by imposing a fee weighted toward properties that have the greatest impact on that system.

[profile about stormwater utility fee implementation]

Finally, the State of Illinois has not taken steps to modernize the tax system for current technologies and economic patterns. Its reliance on motor fuel taxes to fund the Illinois transportation system is becoming outmoded as vehicle efficiency improves and fuel consumption drops. Illinois also has a narrow sales tax base focused on tangible goods and few services, which is inefficient in an economy with increasing market demand for consumer services. See the Mobility chapter for an assessment of the shift from purchases of goods to

---

<sup>9</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, "Property tax burden in the Chicago region", 2017, [http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset\\_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/property-tax-burden-in-the-chicago-regi-2](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/property-tax-burden-in-the-chicago-regi-2)

<sup>10</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, "Freight land use clusters in northeastern Illinois," August 26, 2016, [http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset\\_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/freight-land-use-clusters-in-northeastern-illinois](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset_publisher/UIMfSLnFfMB6/content/freight-land-use-clusters-in-northeastern-illinois)



purchases of services since 1997 and a discussion of the potential to reform the sales tax to support transit infrastructure as well as municipalities.

*The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.*

### ***Develop new funding solutions to support the multijurisdictional nature of development and infrastructure***

The state and region should evaluate and pursue revenue sources, infrastructure cost sharing, realignment of existing revenues, and tax policy shifts that take into account the multijurisdictional nature of retail, office, and industrial development. Movement of goods and people that supports the region's economy must efficiently traverse multiple municipal boundaries and transportation networks. Yet many impediments could be surmounted, for example, through dedicated funding for local truck routes, tax base sharing to support retail agglomerations, prioritizing funding for improving commute options, increased local contributions for some infrastructure expansions, and other options. This work should build on CMAP's and partners' growing understanding of asset management, fiscal impacts, and subregional and regional markets to identify innovative revenue solutions or better align existing revenues to support infrastructure needs.

### ***Reform tax policies to sustain economically beneficial land uses and support local infrastructure***

CMAP should continue to facilitate a regional perspective on the interaction of tax policy, land use, the economy, and successful communities. Assistance for local jurisdictions to improve planning processes and coordination can help, but it does not address systemic issues. Via policy changes such as phasing out assessment classification in Cook County,<sup>11</sup> broadening the sales tax base, changing state revenue sharing disbursement criteria, and identifying new options to support office and industrial development, a reformed tax system could reduce market distortions and better support desired development and goals of the region's communities.

*The State of Illinois* should expand the sales tax base in a manner that helps communities create a more balanced land use mix, improves horizontal equity, minimizes economic distortions, and mitigates the cascading nature of sales taxes.

*Cook County* should phase out the property tax classification system to reduce commercial and industrial properties' current burden, which deters development and creates pressure for higher taxes overall.

---

<sup>11</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, "Cook County property tax classification effects on property tax burden", 2013, [http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset\\_publisher/UJMfSLnFfMB6/content/cook-county-property-tax-classification-effects-on-property-tax-burden](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/updates/all/-/asset_publisher/UJMfSLnFfMB6/content/cook-county-property-tax-classification-effects-on-property-tax-burden)



*The State of Illinois* should reform state revenue sharing disbursement criteria to reduce wide divergences across municipalities and allow each municipality to support its own desired mix of land uses.

*CMAP* should coordinate with partners to promote tax policy changes to support better land use outcomes, including to conduct public education as well as legislative outreach.

*The State* should engage in fiscally sustainable practices to ensure a stable business climate and guarantee the reliability of state support to the region, including for local governments, transit agencies, and not-for-profit service providers

### ***Local governments should implement user fees***

User fees and full cost pricing can help communities recoup the cost of providing road, parking, water, sewer, and other infrastructure. User fees should build on asset management, capital improvement planning, and other initiatives to ensure that infrastructure spending is a high priority to meet local needs and provide the strongest benefits. Among the region's many examples of user fees and full cost pricing, some communities are addressing the increasing costs of stormwater management with dedicated taxes, stormwater utility fees, or special service areas. Similarly, a number of communities have used *CMAP's* LTA program to plan for and price their parking garages and metered spaces, making more effective use of tangible and fiscal assets.

All public utilities should adopt full cost pricing so they can sustainably fund operations and ongoing maintenance. While some municipalities may choose to discount some services to meet local priorities, instead matching revenues to the cost of services will help the region's communities achieve stable funding and greater resilience. These initiatives should provide options that account for the affordability needs of lower-income residents.

*Local governments* should develop stormwater utility fees to assess the true cost of stormwater infrastructure and improve flood control infrastructure.

*Local governments* should implement user fees to fund transportation infrastructure improvements, such as local motor fuel taxes or fees to address freight needs.

*Local governments* should assess infrastructure costs to calibrate fees and taxes on development, parking, water, sewer, and other needs, both to cover current expenses and to create stable funding for the long term.

*Communities* that face significant affordability barriers to full cost pricing of water and other utilities should consider consolidating services with a neighboring community to reduce overall costs and provide options for low income residents.



### ***Increase the motor fuel tax and replace with a vehicle miles traveled fee***

Of the many states that have enhanced their transportation revenues in recent years, most enacted a motor fuel tax increase. The State of Illinois should increase its MFT by at least 15 cents in the near term and index the overall rate to an inflationary measure to offset the long decline in purchasing power of the current 19-cent rate that has been in effect since 1990. Similarly, the federal gas tax, set at 18.4 cents per gallon in 1993, should be increased and indexed to an inflationary measure, improving solvency of the federal Highway Trust Fund without requiring non-transportation revenue infusions. These revenues no longer reflect the way people travel or the many types of vehicles on the road.

Over the long term, however, the state and the federal government should replace their MFTs with a mileage-based user fee that taxes actual use of the system, as with a fee for vehicle miles traveled (VMT). For the Illinois MFT, instituting a fee of 2 cents per mile and indexing it to an inflationary measure would provide a sufficient, stable revenue source.

This revenue source would benefit from a streamlined national solution that allows each state to collect VMT fees from out-of-state drivers. In implementing a new revenue source, the state should also take the opportunity to lower the burden on lower-income drivers by integrating measures not available in the current MFT structure.

*The State of Illinois* should increase the MFT by at least 15 cents per gallon and index the overall rate to an inflationary measure.

*The State of Illinois* should begin necessary steps, including implementing pilot projects, to replace its MFT with a VMT fee of at least 2 cents per mile indexed to an inflationary measure.

*The federal government* should increase the federal gas tax rate, index it to an inflationary measure, and in the long-term replace it with a mileage-based user fee such as, for example, VMT.

*The federal government* should work with states to develop a national solution to implementing VMT fees at the state level.

*The State of Illinois* should explore innovative mechanisms and technologies to efficiently collect VMT fees, including potential private-sector collection.

## **Provide technical assistance to build communities' capacity**

All municipalities and other units of government play an essential role in developing their local goals and vision for the future. Cumulatively, such choices shape quality of life for all residents,



help our businesses thrive, and determine whether broad regional goals are met. Thus, municipalities are the front line for implementing ON TO 2050 through local plans, regulations, infrastructure investments, programs, and services. Many of these groups act with limited staff and funds, however, or may not have the knowledge, training, or technical resources to achieve their goals and support a favorable quality of life. Leaders throughout the region should champion efforts to build local capacity, ensuring that each grant, planning process, or other form of assistance also enhances the ability of municipal staff and officials, community organizations, nonprofits, and others to govern their vital day-to-day decisions.

Building capacity in the communities of northeastern Illinois will help improve local quality of life and create greater economic opportunity. For this reason, efforts to strengthen EDAs and disinvested areas are especially important to support inclusive growth, which will benefit those communities and the regional economy as a whole.

CMAP and partners should pursue ON TO 2050 implementation strategies for building such capacity, with a focus on each community's need for expertise and systems that promote resilience and growth. Although the advent of CMAP's LTA program in 2011 has resulted in nearly 200 projects, helping municipalities, other local governments, and nonprofit organizations to create or update their plans, the implementation of these local plans could be more consistent. LTA can build on its strengths to provide enhanced offerings that help the region's local governments overcome barriers, become more fiscally sound, and elevate the quality of services. CMAP will need to pursue diversified funding to support the LTA program and initiatives related to capacity building, service sharing, consolidation, stormwater management, and water planning, potentially leveraging state or county resources.

[Profile with LTA community.]

Other implementers also provide important technical assistance. Some counties, for instance, take an active role in municipalities with less capacity, such as the Invest in Cook program through which that county provides technical and financial assistance for local projects in disinvested areas that align with its Long Range Transportation Plan. It takes a coordinated approach by identifying performance-based transportation investment opportunities, then leveraging Cook County government capacities to help local governments and ensure successful implementation. This approach can be replicated by other counties for high-priority infrastructure projects in lower capacity municipalities and for coordination of projects spanning multiple jurisdictions.

*The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.*

### ***Build on successes of the Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program***

Currently, CMAP's LTA program provides technical assistance to local governments, nonprofits, and intergovernmental organizations to address local issues at the intersection of



transportation, land use, and housing and advance the principles of the region's comprehensive plan. Since its creation in 2010, the program has completed over 165 projects, including comprehensive plans, neighborhood plans, bicycle and pedestrian plans, parking management studies, ordinance updates, and sustainability plans. In addition to continuing current approaches, CMAP should augment its technical assistance offerings to help municipalities implement ON TO 2050 recommendations. In particular, communities with lower capacity may need assistance beyond what CMAP currently offers.

To help lower capacity communities remove barriers to implementation of local and regional goals, CMAP can leverage LTA resources and partnerships. For example, many local governments lack connections with critical nonprofit, government, and private sector implementers that have relevant expertise, authorities, and other required resources. Yet making these connections can help strengthen planning efforts, establish enduring partnerships, and help ensure implementation. Trainings, workshops, and other follow-up assistance can also support implementation by familiarizing plan partners with key objectives and clarifying the roles of staff and officials for specific actions.

*CMAP* should build implementation-focused training modules into LTA projects as appropriate at strategic points during each local planning process to build communities' capacity and prepare them to accomplish their goals.

*CMAP* should identify critical implementers early in plan processes and help project partners to strengthen connections with these entities.

*CMAP* should provide a series of small scale assistance products (such as planning priority studies, trainings, workshops, and process assessments) that incrementally build capacity.

*CMAP* should continue to provide assistance to small and low capacity communities, and develop new ways to determine locally critical needs and strategic goals, move initiatives forward, and improve local resources, systems, and capacity to implement goals.

*CMAP* should, on a limited basis, provide direct financial assistance for local plan implementation activities.

*CMAP* should partner with other entities such as MPC, professional organizations, universities, and civic organizations that can access and provide professional expertise to assist with provision of the full set of resources required to build capacity, such as legal, accounting, and finance advisement necessary for consolidations and certain intergovernmental agreements.



***CMAP should arrange supplemental staffing to help selected municipalities identify resources for increasing capacity***

It is often a challenge for municipalities -- especially those without adequate staffing -- to allocate resources for special projects, plan implementation, training, networking, and other capacity building activities. In such cases, they may require targeted assistance to build new processes and grow available resources. CMAP should coordinate with COGs, counties, the civic community, and foundations, to create a pilot program of supplemental planning staff support for the region's lower capacity municipalities. Such a program could take many forms, with program activities determined in consultation with each municipality, after determining their priorities and needs.

***Build municipal, non-profit, and private sector capacity in disinvested areas***

Addressing the myriad of challenges in disinvested communities requires concentrated, comprehensive resources. While investment and assistance from state and regional entities is a critical piece of forging a new path for disinvested communities, building the capacity of communities, institutions, businesses, and residents of disinvested areas can sustain long lasting change. Lack of staff, funding, technical knowledge, and other resources can limit the ability of municipalities with a high proportion of disinvested areas to interrupt the cycle of disinvestment or meet broader community goals. As new technical assistance programs are developed and implemented, CMAP should continue to give priority to low capacity communities that contain EDAs. CMAP and partners like the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago should identify and implement strategies that can build a connection between lower capacity municipalities and the financial institutions that can direct low cost loans and other financial resources to these areas.

Capacity building is also required for the private sector. Small businesses in low market areas could benefit from education on and connections to educational and financial resources. Creating a pipeline of local developers and business owners is also important. Beyond large scale, national firms, few developers have the requisite combination of skill, interest, and capacity to build projects in disinvested areas. Given this, the region needs more programs like the Chicago Urban League's Chicago Contractor Development Program (CCD) or the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) set-aside in the HOME Program to grow and strengthen small-scale developers and contractors.<sup>12</sup> Many mission-driven affordable housing developers -- like Preservation for Affordable Housing (POAH) or Hispanic Housing Development Corporation -- also provide capacity-building opportunities for smaller firms by intentionally including emerging firms and subcontractors in their projects.

*CMAP and partners like the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago should work to bring banks and lending institutions together with municipalities to ensure that weak market*

---

<sup>12</sup> Chicago Urban League, "Chicago Contractor Development Program," 2016. See <http://www.thechicagourbanleague.org/page/463>.



communities have access to capital and financial services that support economic development.

*Municipalities* should build relationships with financial institutions to access the resources they provide under the Community Reinvestment Act.

*Municipalities* should build their expertise on available capital and financial resources, develop a plan to attract those resources, assist businesses and residents in applying for these resources.

*CDCs, non-profit housing developers, and larger municipalities* should seek progressively employ and cultivate smaller scale, minority and women-owned businesses to build their capacity.

*Foundations and advocacy groups* should continue to explore grants and other funding opportunities to help small-scale developers bridge funding gaps.

*CMAP and partners* should target technical assistance, trainings, and other assistance to municipalities in low income or low market areas.

## **Prioritize training for local government officials and staff**

Professional staff, elected officials, appointed officials, and citizens involved in making local government decisions have varying levels of training and specialization in municipal operations and public administration. For highly trained specialists, programs and offerings to keep current and at the leading edge of their fields are very important, and many of the professional organizations present in the region do an excellent job providing continuing education. For others, such as new staff or newly elected or appointed officials, opportunities to learn about fundamentals and best practices are more crucial.

Local planning and governance are increasingly challenged by fiscal and staffing constraints, which require strengthening public services even while reducing their costs. Applicable trainings can help stretch local governments' resources by enhancing expertise despite potentially dwindling staff and increasing responsibilities. During development of ON TO 2050, many municipalities rated professional development as a priority and acknowledged its importance in achieving community goals. In addition to preparing staff and elected or appointed officials to undertake and complete comprehensive or capital improvement plans, trainings on key elements of ON TO 2050 will help them understand which strategies best suit their community.



Some local governments are not able to offer ongoing trainings, which is especially challenging due to frequent turnover of elected and appointed officials. Particularly to overcome this loss of institutional knowledge -- including the importance of planning across jurisdictions -- the region needs large-scale support of training for elected and appointed officials on local government operations, economic development, and long-range planning.

[Profiles: an Official that values professional development]

*The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.*

### ***Provide guidance on how local governments can implement ON TO 2050***

CMAP should create topical ON TO 2050 implementation materials and pair them with trainings and workshops for local government staff and officials. Such guidance may in part be built from ON TO 2050's Local Strategy Maps, which translate the plan's broad regional recommendations into community-level actions. For example, the Regional Urban Flooding Susceptibility Index illustrates areas at higher risk of flooding in the region. CMAP could develop training for local governments on how to interpret, apply this information, and provide guidance on how to incorporate it into local planning efforts with sample recommendations and regulatory language. Other trainings could cover implementation areas such as asset management that, while not in the form of Local Strategy Maps, are particularly relevant to local governments and strongly support ON TO 2050 goals.

Several MPOs have created programs to help partners implement regional plan goals at the local level, assisting municipalities in the short term while building long-term capacity. For example, Philadelphia's Delaware Valley Regional Planning Council (DVRPC) paid specific attention to lower capacity communities in creating its Municipal Outreach Program, including guidebooks, outreach, and training.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Provide professional development opportunities that efficiently meet the needs of staff and officials***

Given the time constraints of public service and personal lives, local government staff and officials often do not allot time and resources for professional development. Yet those who do regularly engage in continuing education are more familiar with best practices, and they are more capable of providing and improving services. Local governments should develop mechanisms to ensure that staff actively pursue relevant training. To respect the limited time of staff and officials, entities that conduct trainings should cover high value topics in engaging, time-efficient formats.

---

<sup>13</sup> Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, "Municipal Outreach Program," <http://www.dvrpc.org/MunicipalOutreach>.



To reduce costs and increase collaboration, training providers and local governments themselves should coordinate professional development opportunities so multiple communities can train jointly, based on geographic proximity or shared interests. Larger municipalities or counties should share or leverage their existing programs to help smaller jurisdictions. For example, if one county has a successful leadership training program for internal purposes, it could be expanded to include other local governments.

*Local governments* should regularly schedule trainings for staff and officials, and seek to train jointly with neighboring governments.

*Local governments* should create professional development plans for staff and officials and support completion of relevant training.

*MMC* should perform an inventory of available trainings aimed at building expertise relevant to delivery of municipal services and identify topical or geographic gaps in coverage.

*CMAF, MPC, and MMC* should regularly engage professional organization representatives to assess needs, discuss collaboration opportunities, and broaden networks of potential attendees.

*CMAF* should collaborate with partners such as IML, COGs, and the National League of Cities to ensure ON TO 2050 priority topics are included in partner trainings offered to the region's elected and appointed officials.

*COGs and counties* should engage community colleges to provide input on continuing education programs that serve the needs of government employees.

*Counties* should evaluate the potential to include municipalities in their training initiatives or provide those trainings on a fee for service basis.

*Professional organizations* should coordinate on training and education offerings for local government staff and officials.

***Local government staff should network to share experiences, develop solutions, and promote best practices***

Networking with peers within the region provides opportunities to share successful strategies and strengthen relationships that lead to partnerships. Many peer groups of public sector employees meet regularly to discuss challenges, needs, and subregional priorities. Typically, these informal meetings coalesce around staff with similar job functions, drawing participants from nearby communities. Local governments should encourage such activities, which can establish valuable knowledge networks that improve staff capacity to achieve community goals.



More formal networking events should also be convened within the region, aimed either at job function, such as MARC's Managers' Roundtable Luncheons, or to bring groups together that are dealing with common challenges, such as DVRPC's Strategies for Older Suburbs Roundtable Series.<sup>14</sup>

*Local governments* should encourage staff to seek out and establish relationships with their peers in the region and, in particular, with peers at neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions.

*CMAP, MPC, MMC, COGs, and partners* should encourage peer networking and host events that allow local government staff to coordinate efforts to achieve common objectives.

## **Data driven and transparent investment decisions**

The region has many needs, yet its limited resources impair essential investments in infrastructure and improvements to programs and services. Funding should be focused on those programs, services, and infrastructure that best achieve the region's goals. However, budget processes and infrastructure investment practices are not always set up for data-driven approaches, and data is not always available to utilize performance based investment criteria. Decisions at all levels of government need to be based on transparent practices that direct public investments based on performance goals and data.

## **Base investment decisions on data and performance**

The State of Illinois and local governments have been forced to stretch their resources to meet communities' and the region's needs. Constrained public resources require state and local governments to improve their financial and budget administration practices and develop innovative approaches to investment decisions. Yet investments are often predicated on arbitrary formulas rather than measures of need or impact. Funding and programming decisions based on performance make better use of limited resources. These approaches identify performance goals, combining data analysis and stakeholder feedback to choose projects within a limited budget.

These approaches cannot be undertaken if the necessary data is unavailable or incomplete. This includes data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies that collect data, which is crucial to understanding regional and local demographic and socioeconomic conditions. With regard to infrastructure investments, the data necessary to assess

---

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see Mid-America Regional Council, "Local Government Services," <http://www.marc.org/Government/Local-Government-Services.html> and Delaware Regional Planning Commission, "Strategies for Older Suburbs Roundtable Series," <http://www.dvrpc.org/SOS/Roundtable>.



transportation system needs, such as freight and goods movement data and data from other private transportation providers, is often unavailable. In addition, significant work remains to be done to gather asset data across transportation, water, stormwater, and other infrastructure.

The extent of data available to manage assets has improved. Many local governments are adopting asset management systems that implement a process to operate and maintain their capital assets through analysis to identify a structured sequence of maintenance actions to achieve a desired condition at a minimum cost. Asset management can be used to develop capital improvement plans or identify when additional revenue may be needed to maintain system condition.

While some local governments lack the capability to institute asset management, some progress has been made by roadway jurisdictions for pavement management systems.<sup>15</sup> Because of the large scale of the assets and expenditures for roadways, implementing such systems is an important first step toward improving how governments manage capital assets. The following diagram illustrates how asset management works.

[General graphic about asset management]

State and local governments make a wide range of investments beyond physical infrastructure, many of which can benefit from transparent, data-driven programming. State and local government programs, including economic development incentives, should be based on outcomes and performance of the investments. Many economic development incentives, such as state and local tax abatements and credits, are provided without evaluating whether the provision of the incentive is in line with established goals. In addition, detailed information on such incentives is often unavailable, which prevents data-driven decision making.

**The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.**

***Use a data-driven, performance-based approach to making public infrastructure and service investments***

In an era of constrained resources, the State of Illinois and local governments need to ensure that investments in infrastructure and public services are based on their performance relative to established goals and targets, rather than on arbitrarily derived formulas. Since the passage of MAP-21, the federal government has also emphasized the importance of data-driven investment in transportation infrastructure. Yet agencies integrating performance-based processes may not always have data available to fully implement them.

---

<sup>15</sup>[http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/595578/TC\\_memo2\\_AssetManagement\\_20161111.pdf/4dee2f38-2a22-4f2b-9b1c-0b259b5b1aed](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/595578/TC_memo2_AssetManagement_20161111.pdf/4dee2f38-2a22-4f2b-9b1c-0b259b5b1aed)



To improve decision making, therefore, municipalities, counties, and other local governments should implement systems for managing their infrastructure and capital assets. Specifically with regard to transportation, CMAP and the state can provide a variety of funding and technical resources to help local governments implement pavement management systems. This approach should also be considered for evaluating services to ensure that investments are in line with priorities.

*CMAP* should continue to advance a performance-based approach to programming STP-Local, CMAQ, and TAP.

*The region* should explore ways to improve the uniformity of data collection and analysis as part of asset management systems and to encourage increased data sharing.

*Municipalities, townships, and counties* should implement asset management systems to facilitate better-informed investment choices, such as systems to manage pavement condition or water infrastructure.

*CMAP, with assistance from IDOT,* should help local governments create asset management systems, starting with efforts to pilot local implementation of pavement management.

*The State, transit agencies, CMAP and other entities* should program infrastructure funding based on performance, rather than by formula.

### ***Support a modern census and other economic data collection activities***

Having access to rich data about the region and its residents was a critical part of ON TO 2050 development. CMAP, its partners, and many other public and private entities use data from the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as other federal agencies that collect and analyze demographic and socioeconomic data, to analyze strategies and policies that drive planning and investment activities. The federal government should ensure that its data collecting agencies are equipped with adequate resources and administrative capacity. Moreover, those federal agencies should continue to modernize their activities to provide access that is timely, thorough, and secure.

### ***State and local governments should improve budget and financial administration practices***

Improved asset condition data can aid state and local governments' long-term financial planning. Among local governments, there is an unmet need in the region for greater familiarity with financial management policies and land use choices that take a long-term perspective for improving resilience to difficult economic periods. A broad range of actors, including CMAP and its partners, can help build local expertise on recommended measures through materials and trainings. Partnerships with civic and professional organizations could be leveraged to develop trainings that build familiarity with best practices and assist with local application.



*State and local governments* should continue to improve budgeting practices to ensure they are transparent, data-driven, and fiscally sound.

*State and local governments* should implement practices such as short and long-range financial forecasting to improve policies and decisions.

*CMAP and partners* should develop materials and trainings to help municipalities and counties understand how their land use choices affect local revenues.

*Civic and professional organizations* should provide expert guidance on best practices in budgeting and financial planning for government units to incorporate long-term perspectives and communicate effectively with stakeholders.

### ***Promulgate stronger standards for the transparency and accountability of tax incentives for economic development***

Proper evaluation of any program relies on two essential components: clear, relevant, ascertainable data, and internal procedures to assess outcomes and make decisions. The transparency of data and information on economic development incentives varies across metropolitan Chicago. Public agencies collect and publish a significant amount of information regarding incentives, but these data systems are often inadequate to determine the effectiveness of an investment. In particular, disclosure standards can differ by the unit of government and the type of incentive, leaving information too fragmented or inconsistent to determine the total incentives going to a project. Regularly evaluating and publishing incentive data allows communities to make prioritized investments in their economic growth and resilience. Rather than extending incentives into perpetuity, the State of Illinois and local governments should pursue performance-based approaches that base decisions to extend, improve, or terminate incentives on rigorous analysis. Such analysis should account for the incentive's full costs and benefits, progress in achieving its public purpose, and trade-offs relative to other government activities.

*The State and local governments* should require a regular audit of all tax abatements, diversions, and credits for economic development.

*The State and local governments* should make comprehensive data on incentives for economic development available in a downloadable, analyzable format.

*The State and local governments* should implement and maintain sunsets on all tax abatements, diversions, and credits for economic development, to allow for periodic reevaluation.



*The State and local jurisdictions should enhance data on tax credits and incentives provided at all levels of government and consistently evaluate the expenditures and outcomes of incentive programs such as sales tax rebates, EDGE, TIF, property tax abatements, Enterprise Zones, and others.*

***Make the collection, sharing, and analysis of public and private sector transportation data a regional priority***

To make data-driven decisions, the region's transportation providers require such information from all elements of the network, public and private. It is particularly important to leverage data to better understand nonmotorized, freight, and TNC travel, each of which has been difficult to measure and analyze. More data on the behavior of cyclists and pedestrians may become available with increasing deployment of sensing technology within public rights-of-way and the ability to connect those sensors wirelessly. The region has greatly advanced its understanding of truck travel through the use of new data sources and monitoring systems, but data on rail movements is limited.

While CMAP has made progress in collecting new data on rail performance in recent years, this information is aggregated to a high level and would not allow the prospective evaluation of individual rail projects. Private rail operators must demonstrate sufficient public benefits before tax dollars are invested in private projects. Appropriate data from the freight rail industry -- including speeds, volumes, and reliability of freight trains along specific corridors and at key rail-rail crossings -- is necessary for this type of analysis. Existing and emerging private providers have broad impacts on the transportation network, impacts that need to be part of investment decisions. Local governments and transit agencies should work with TNCs and other private transportation providers to obtain the data necessary to make sound decisions. While private companies clearly have the right for their sensitive data to be kept secure, the public likewise must be able to assess whether its limited infrastructure dollars are being invested wisely. CMAP has a proven history of safeguarding sensitive data, and will continue to have a major role as a regional data aggregator to promote data consistency and availability throughout the region.

Public agencies also need to invest in their own data analysis, storage, and sharing capabilities. Such agencies, particularly lower capacity ones, may be less able to collect and manage transportation data as it increases in volume and complexity. Private companies are offering an increasing number of data collection, analysis, and visualization services, which reduce the need for public agencies to invest in internal data management expertise, but increase the dependency of public agencies on third-party tools. Public agencies should own data provided by private agencies via contract or concession agreement. In turn, the public sector has its own valuable datasets, including information on real-time system performance, condition, and incidents. The public sector must navigate competing mandates to provide open access to government data and protect the privacy of residents.



*CMAP* should promote responsible data stewardship among partner agencies such as the City of Chicago, RTA, transit providers, counties, and communities to help cost-effectively collect, process, share, and store transportation data.

*The public sector* should identify ways to leverage provision of more detailed data and analysis to private companies while still protecting riders' privacy.

*Private sector partners* should share data that substantially aids planning for emerging mobility services, transit, and the road network.

*Municipalities and transportation agencies* should contractually require data sharing as a condition for access to public infrastructure (roadways, loading areas, etc.) or subsidies.

*CMAP and partners* should improve data on non-motorized modes of transportation.

*Private rail partners* should provide substantive documentation of and data supporting the public benefits of future CREATE projects and allowing assessment of potential rail improvements that could benefit passenger movements.

## **Improve access to public information with technology and transparency**

Access to information is necessary for effective discourse and accountable decision making by governments on the state, regional, and local levels. To guide important local decisions, stakeholders -- including residents and businesses -- need access to information about our region. In addition, while data and analysis on state and local government appropriations and spending are crucial for understanding investments made in the region, such information is often not made available during budget approval processes.

Technology provides the best pathway to disseminate relevant data and information about the region and its communities to officials, community members, and other stakeholders. Improvements to technology can implement best practices in transparency and help data management evolve. When scoping transparency efforts, it is important to consider who will actually use publicly accessible data and how users will use the data.

Technology improvements will help improve local governments' ability to increase their capacity and better achieve their goals. The return on investment for adopting new technology will vary across the region, particularly in areas with lower capacity to utilize it, but could introduce opportunities for consolidating or sharing services.

**The following outlines strategies and associated actions to implement this recommendation.**



### ***Commit to increasing access to budgetary information and relevant analysis***

Providing data, analysis, and other information is important to improve the transparency of budgetary and legislative processes. The State, as well as counties, municipalities, and local governments, should improve upon financial and budget information that is currently available. The State and larger units of government with capacity to do so should provide greater access to budget analysis throughout their budget processes, as well as policy and fiscal analysis of legislation, to allow stakeholders to review and analyze the material.

### ***Leverage technological improvements to improve efficiency, service quality, and transparency***

New technology holds the potential to help local governments improve their public services and provide for greater transparency. However, many local governments lack the resources necessary to improve their technological capabilities or utilize existing technology.

*Local governments* should better leverage new technology, like mobile applications, reporting tools, and information systems, while continuing to modernize their processes as technology evolves.

*Local governments* that lack resources to obtain the newest technology should pool resources with other local governments.

CMAP should continue to provide and expand GIS trainings and data analysis workshops to better support local government technical expertise.

### ***Aggregate data from local governments and make accessible in a singular location***

CMAP provides some types of regional data through its data sharing hub, community snapshots, and other tools. However, additional aggregated data about the region's communities could help with work that occurs outside jurisdictional boundaries, such as businesses and developers making development decisions or infrastructure investments.

*Counties and COGs* should consider create a data repository that houses data on their subregion's communities as well as the subregion as a whole.

*Counties and COGs* should work with economic development agencies, stormwater agencies, and other users to ensure that the aggregated data has applicability across purposes.

