

# Regional Impact Assessment Demonstration

Project Name:	Regional Impact Assessment Demonstration (a.k.a. Developments of Regional Significance).
Description:	<p>Establish a prototype regional review process that defines the regional context and implications of large scale land use and transportation proposals. This is a function of the regional planning agency explicitly called for in its enabling legislation.</p> <p>The product of this demonstration is a “preliminary assessment” of the regional planning implications of a proposed action. The Transportation Committee agreed to investigate recent multiple interchange proposals in this context.</p>
Project Objectives:	<p>This is a demonstration exercise intended to establish an evaluation protocol that discerns whether, how and to what extent a proposed capital, operational, regulatory or policy change will affect existing or planned community and environmental conditions. It is intended to fulfill a role similar to that of the NEPA scoping process at the federal level.</p> <p>A consistent method for gathering, interpreting and processing relevant information will permit CMAP to objectively comment on the consistency of the proposal with the regional plan and to recommend appropriate additional evaluation or remedial planning steps.</p>
Project Deliverables:	<p>Each “preliminary assessment” report will be organized as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A project “literature-review” documenting the proposal’s history and background, a bibliography of relevant documents and previous public decisions.</li><li>2. A qualitative assessment of the likely comprehensive planning implications of the action. This should conclude by proposing one or more anticipated outcomes that can be subjected to further analysis if desired.</li><li>3. The results of a search for digital data resources that can be systematically analyzed in order to conduct the proposed tests. This step will also reveal any new data collection necessary to adequately assess the proposal’s impact.</li><li>4. A recommendation for conducting (or not conducting) additional planning analyses to substantiate the hypothesized regional impacts. The recommendation</li></ol>

	should include an estimate of appropriate time and resources needed to complete the analysis and the set of likely outcomes resulting from CMAP action on the project.
Project Stakeholders	<Original stakeholder arrangement deleted. Jill will supply>
Timetable and Staffing	A senior CMAP staff person with appropriate “subject matter expertise” will be assigned to author the preliminary assessment according to the above template. The timetable for completion of the report will be determined by the urgency of the issue and the workload priorities of the assigned staff person.

## Potential Regional Pilots and Examples

One way to discern criteria for what constitutes a DRI is to state why we’re concerned about the development from a regional standpoint.

It also separates DRIs from RCP recommendations in which the focus is comprehensively argue for regional benefits associated with pursuing major projects and policies in a coordinated manner.

### ***Physical planning problems***

A physical planning problem results when there is inconsistency or lack of coordination between the demands of urban land use and the provision of public infrastructure.

#### **A new interchange is proposed on the Expressway/Tollway System**

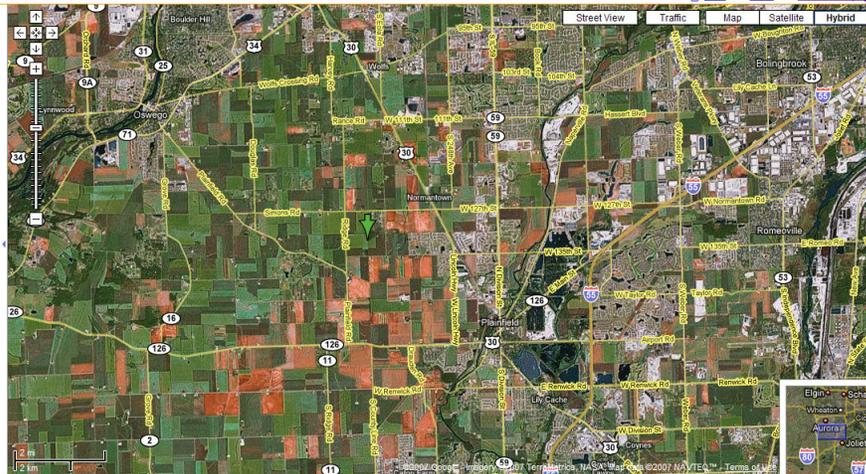
New interchanges are DRI because they significantly change the accessibility of adjacent parcels of land. A change in a parcel’s accessibility often results in new or accelerated development potential.

Actual example: Several new interchanges are being programmed along I-55 in Will County. Taken together, they will contribute to establishing the pattern of land development in the entire corridor

#### **A new development is proposed for a large agricultural tract**

The conversion of agricultural land to urban use at the edges of the metropolitan area is a DRI because it irrevocably changes the land’s production capacity from a rural to urban function. In addition to disruption to the established ecology of the area, there is a sudden demand for urban infrastructure investment with the attendant social commitment to maintain that investment for generations to come.

Actual example: “Grande Park is an 884-acre community where families will experience a truly grande lifestyle located just three miles west of Route 59 in Plainfield.” The numerous examples of development at this scale occurring in the context shown below, in effect, define the shape, volume and prevailing density of the regional planning problem.



**Low density residential development is proposed in the vicinity of a proposed major transportation facility**

Inclusion of a transportation facility in the regional transportation plan is only the beginning of long project schedule that may take decades to realize and may also result in the project being abandoned. In the meantime, land use changes occur incrementally in response to market conditions and subject to local parameters indicated to achieve limited goals. The result may be a land use type that is incompatible with proximity to a major facility resulting in additional mitigation costs and lost opportunities for more efficient use of the transportation investment.

Actual example: Prairie Crossing

**Business development is proposed in an area without close access to regional transportation facilities.**

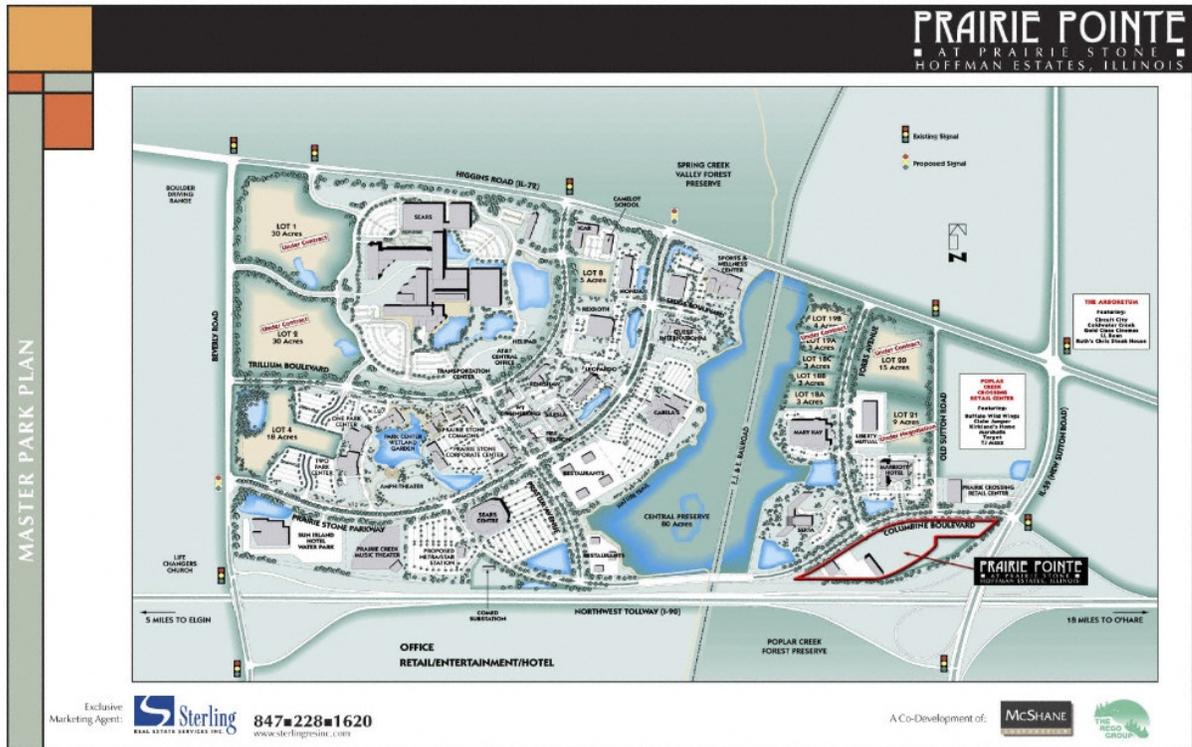
***Economic development problems***

An economic development problem is one where the public policy incentives being applied to attract and retain business are not commensurate with the social burdens and benefits resulting from the associated economic activity.

**Financial incentives are offered in exchange for a particular outcome.**

One way to achieve a competitive business advantage is to reduce cost associated with production. Establishing a new business park in a suburban community is appealing to developers seeking lower land costs. Local governments similarly are attracted by the opportunity to quickly diversify their property tax base. It is only after business success is realized and employment has established itself in the area do transportation deficiencies become apparent.

Do Prairie Stone Tax abatements allow a change in the proposed mix of development from what was originally offered.



Do Boeing relocation incentives outweigh the social benefit of their presence?  
 Do Tax Increment Financing Districts mortgage the future of general revenue programs?

**Proposed employment profile does not match housing offerings in vicinity**

Many municipalities are anxious to reduce the property tax burden on local residents. “Clean” commercial uses such as large retail and office space generate a demand for lower-wage labor.

Does this lower-wage labor pool have convenient access to the employment opportunities being created?

**Changes in the provision of public service creates an economic hardship to individuals**

CTA service reductions.

**Revenue driven tax increases result in reduced economic development potential**

The benefits and burdens of property tax burden in Chicago.

**Downturns in business cycles result in compromised results**

Neumann Homes bankruptcy leaves community with substandard amenities.

## ***Environmental Stewardship problems***

### **Water supply**

The investment in extended or expanded water supply infrastructure based primarily on real estate market conditions. “If the developer/municipality is willing to pay for the extension of Lake Michigan, then a State permit will be granted”.

### **Wastewater treatment**

The investment in extended or expanded wastewater infrastructure is based primarily on real estate market conditions. “If the municipality supports a development, they are obliged to support adequate wastewater capacity”.

### **Stormwater management**

Permits for new development with high impervious are based on local mitigation commitments with no consideration of cumulative or areawide effects.

### **Urban activity harms natural assets**

BP expansion degrades Lake Michigan water quality  
Expanding urban transportation facilities degrades air quality.