CMAP's Priorities for the 96th Illinois General Assembly

January 2009

The following are CMAP's priorities for this state legislative session. The intention is to communicate our priorities to members of the General Assembly and our other partners, and to guide staff in monitoring and responding to bills that are introduced throughout the session. Since the legislative process is dynamic, the priorities are likely to evolve as the session gets underway.

Support a State Capital Plan

CMAP has been an early and vocal advocate for the need to pass a capital program in Illinois. This should continue in 2009. Infrastructure (including transportation, water treatment, schools, housing, and open space) is the engine of economic prosperity. As a state and as a region, we are in serious danger of squandering our global competitive advantage. For a capital bill to be passed, accountability and transparency are essential -- without either one, the other isn't possible.

As long ago as December 2006, the CMAP Board issued a clear statement of principles about the need for a capital program that is based on accountability and transparency. Those five principles are:

- *Make it Significant.* It must be large enough to meet forecasted needs.
- *Make it Comprehensive.* No part of the transportation network can be neglected without affecting the whole. Non-transportation infrastructure cannot be ignored. This includes water treatment, schools, housing, and open space.
- *Make the Project Selection Process Transparent and Results-Driven.* Select projects based on regionally approved evaluation criteria that produce agreed-upon results.
- *Support it with New Revenue.* The funding source must be sustainable and capable of supporting both pay-as-you-go funding and new bonding authority.
- *Set Funds Aside for Planning.* The public deserves to know that their dollars are being spent wisely, effectively, and according to a well thought-out plan.

CMAP is advocating for a state capital plan that encompasses the five principles as outlined above.

Restore Funding for Water Supply Planning

In 2006, Governor Blagojevich issued Executive Order 2006-01 calling on the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to define a comprehensive program for state and regional water supply planning and management and develop a strategic plan for its implementation consistent with existing laws, regulations and property rights. The IDNR subsequently approached CMAP to lead one of two priority planning initiatives.

For the past two years, significant progress has been made towards developing the region's first water supply plan:

- CMAP created the 35-member Regional Water Supply Planning Group (RWSPG) for plan and policy deliberation and recommendations,
- CMAP and the RWSPG are promoting education and outreach on the topic of water resources to the region's leaders and 8.5 million residents,
- A new water-demand study for the 11-county planning region was just completed; findings reveal important consequences for the region's growing population to the year 2050,
- The RWSPG is making planning decisions to manage demand and improve efficiency of water-use: 14 water-use conservation measures have been adopted for the regional plan,
- CMAP, with the input of the RWSPG, designed and administered two mail-questionnaire surveys: 1) a census of water utilities was taken to learn about operations, needs, and conservation programs, and 2) the general public was sampled to learn about the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors regarding water and water-use conservation. Survey data will help CMAP and the RWSPG target education, outreach, and plan implementation strategies.

As CMAP and the RWSPG entered into the third and final year of this first phase of regional water supply planning, the funding was cut from the state budget. It is critical for work to continue and for the regional plan to be finished. The region's 8.5 million residents can ill afford for momentum to be lost and work left uncompleted. Similarly, the IDNR, Illinois State Water Survey, and Illinois State Geological Survey are integral partners in the new state and regional water supply planning initiatives. A loss of funding now will squander the investment made to date in ensuring adequate and reliable supplies of clean water at reasonable cost for all users.

CMAP is advocating for funding to be restored for state and regional water supply planning in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources FY 2010 budget.

Fund the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act

The General Assembly has recognized the importance of comprehensive planning by passing two significant pieces of legislation. In 2005, the Regional Planning Act was enacted creating CMAP as an agent to fundamentally change the way planning occurs in Illinois. We are underway in developing metropolitan Chicago's first truly comprehensive plan, called *GO TO 2040*. The plan will guide growth for Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties for the rest of this century. In addition to land use and transportation, *GO TO 2040* also addresses the full range of quality-of-life issues, including the natural environment, economic development, housing, and human services such as education, health care and other social services.

A key to the success of *GO TO 2040* will be the implementation efforts on a local level. However, many municipalities do not have adequate resources to prepare or implement local comprehensive plans. As a precursor to the Regional Planning Act, the Illinois Legislature passed the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act in 2002. In addition to defining the elements of a comprehensive plan, the Act calls for planning grants and establishes the Local Planning Fund to develop and implement local plans. However, funds were never appropriated to it.

CMAP is advocating for funding to be appropriated to administer grants as outlined in the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act.

Address the Foreclosure Crisis

CMAP has been working on several initiatives to support municipalities and their response to the foreclosure crisis by providing municipalities the tools to mitigate the impact of abandoned properties on their communities. CMAP and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus have been working to support Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI) in developing a sound legislative package to address the abandoned property component of the foreclosure crisis in the state of Illinois during the spring 2009 legislative season. The legislation is intended to accomplish three goals: (1) provide municipalities and the state with better information about foreclosures, including contact information for responsible parties; (2) speed the transfer of vacant, abandoned property so that they can be returned more quickly to productive use; and (3) provide municipalities additional tools to require that responsible parties perform and pay for basic property maintenance.

CMAP is advocating for strengthened municipal authority, as outlined above, to help municipalities address the abandoned properties problem precipitated by the foreclosure crisis.

Ability to Leverage Innovative Financing

CMAP believes that new and existing State programs and services should be funded by revenue sources that are adequate, sustainable, fair, transparent, and easy to administer. It is important to recognize that the State continues to face large funding shortfalls, most particularly $44 billion in unfunded pension liabilities and $24 billion in retiree health care liabilities. These continuing liabilities create a ripple effect across all parts of the State budget. Meanwhile, certain revenue sources, perhaps most notably state motor fuel tax receipts, have been in decline since 2005; furthermore, a potentially large untapped revenue capacity exists across a variety of tax types, user fees, and the privatization of certain government services and assets.

The decision to authorize the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a possible financing tool rests with the state. Currently, 24 states have significant PPP authority, but Illinois has not enacted that authority. PPPs can include the ability to enter into "design-build" contracts, accept and respond to unsolicited proposals from the private sector, or take advantage of innovative federal financing proposals. CMAP believes the privatization of public assets or the contracting of traditional public services to private entities should continue to be investigated as a supplement to current financing strategies, notwithstanding the possible benefits of entering into design-build contracts in response to implementing the forthcoming stimulus package. While encouraging greater private investment in infrastructure projects may help to minimize the financial burden imposed on public entities, these opportunities should be evaluated along clear criteria and guidelines to ensure that the public interest is protected. In addition, CMAP supports the further investigation and careful piloting of certain market mechanisms, such as congestion pricing, for a more efficient provision of public services.

CMAP is advocating for the state to enact enabling legislation to leverage private sector investment where appropriate.