

DRAFT Executive Summary of the CMAP Board Strategic Report on Visioning, Governance and Funding

Background

In the Spring of 2005, local government, business, and community leaders recommended to the Governor and the General Assembly the creation of a new public agency to coordinate comprehensive planning in northeastern Illinois. The legislature unanimously approved the Regional Planning Act (House Bill 3121), which Governor Blagojevich signed into law in August 2005. This legislation created the Regional Planning Board -- now known as the Board of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) -- and stated that “a streamlined consolidated planning agency is necessary in order to plan for the most effective public and private investments in the northeastern Illinois region and to better integrate plans for land use and transportation.” The Board began meeting in October 2005 and has made substantial progress toward consolidating within CMAP the two agencies that had, respectively, been responsible for planning of transportation and land use: The Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC).

Vision

The CMAP Board's vision is to provide the framework that will help our region connect its land use to the transportation systems, preserve its environment, and sustain its economic prosperity. The agency must be responsive to the region's residents, working cooperatively with municipalities and counties that maintain authority for local land-use decisions. CMAP is integrating specialized expertise in a number of areas -- research and analysis, transportation, land use, environment, housing, economic and community development, and human services -- to preserve and enhance quality of life for current and future generations. CMAP will accomplish this vision by:

- Providing high-quality information and analysis to facilitate regional decision making.
- Developing a comprehensive vision for the region's future through long-range regional plans and strategies.
- Building consensus on diverse regional issues that will lead all of our partners to work toward achieving the long-term vision.
- Exerting leadership through technical assistance provided to communities, other regional partners, state and federal government, and the private sector, helping them address growth in a way that is consistent with the region's vision.

Mission

For CMAP to be relevant, our mission must be to coordinate the efforts of policy makers across the region and provide them with the best technical assistance and analysis available. By taking the following measures, we will improve the way decisions about investment and land use are made in northeastern Illinois:

- CMAP will create a comprehensive plan, as required by the Regional Planning Act, to outline a vision for the region's future and the strategies necessary to realize that vision. It is vitally important to fully integrate this work by breaking down barriers, which often have artificially separated traditional planning functions that should naturally intersect.
- CMAP will do more than just create plans. If the region is not implementing those plans, then no matter how good the planning effort, our agency will not have accomplished its mission. CMAP will carefully identify regional priorities and work with our local, county, state, and national partners to ensure that those objectives are met.
- CMAP will continue to convene, support, and facilitate coordination among local jurisdictions. We will promote best practices not only from other parts of the country and the world, but also from right here in northeastern Illinois. We will work with our partners to provide incentives for decision makers to plan sustainable communities and to plan across political boundaries. CMAP will build on regional cooperation that has already occurred and play a leadership role on issues that have significant regional impacts.
- CMAP will develop a transportation financial plan in cooperation with the Metropolitan Planning Organization. This plan will address the adequacy of funding to meet identified needs for regional transportation agencies in all transportation modes and the allocation of funds to regional priorities, also recognizing the importance of funding to maintain our existing infrastructure.

The region is now at a crossroads, as long-term growth is clearly coming. As yet undetermined is whether that growth will constitute *progress* rather than an erosion of residents' quality of life. Through collaborative planning, decision makers must together shape these trends instead of passively letting them shape our communities. Nor are these challenges confined to the geographic boundaries of the seven counties that comprise CMAP; in fact, they impact the entire state of Illinois and cross state boundaries.

With comprehensive and coordinated planning as outlined in the report, CMAP will address the region's most significant challenges. To accomplish this, CMAP will need a stable, dedicated source of funding, which will be part of a comprehensive legislative package that we and our partners will prepare for the General Assembly's next session. As the new agency continues to evolve, we will work shoulder-to-shoulder with those partners and sponsors to successfully implement the Regional Planning Act.