

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** CMAP Planning Coordinating Committee

**Date:** September 3, 2008

**From:** Andrew Williams-Clark, Associate Planner

**Re:** Regional Indicators Project

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At the September and October committee meetings, considerable time will be devoted to the regional indicators project. This memo explains the purpose of indicators, how they relate to CMAP's planning process, the process by which CMAP has arrived at recommendations for tracking indicators and the project's next steps. Committee feedback will be sought at the September meeting concerning the initial identification of tracking indicators. CMAP staff will seek the committee's recommendation of tracking indicators to the CMAP board and MPO Policy Committee at the October meeting.

**Background**

A discussion and movement concerning the importance of local indicator system development began in the 1960s, but indicator system development was stymied by resource constraints for the next 20 years. Beginning in the 1980s, several sociopolitical movements underscoring the need for reliable indicators began, including the devolution of social programs and the expansion of local institutions involved in social policy. In the 1990s, local indicator system projects exploded with the proliferation of personal computers and mapping software (GIS). Likewise, the automation of administrative information and the emergence of the internet made data collection, processing and distribution exponentially less burdensome.

In the past quarter-century, partnerships between public, private and nonprofit actors have developed indicator systems in cities and regions around the country. Several of the early pioneers have become today's veteran experts, including Indicators for Progress (Jacksonville, FL), Sustainable Seattle and the Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project (California). Finally, following a national forum co-convened by the Government Accounting Office and the National Academies, the Key National Indicators Initiative was created in 2003 to address the need for a national indicator system.

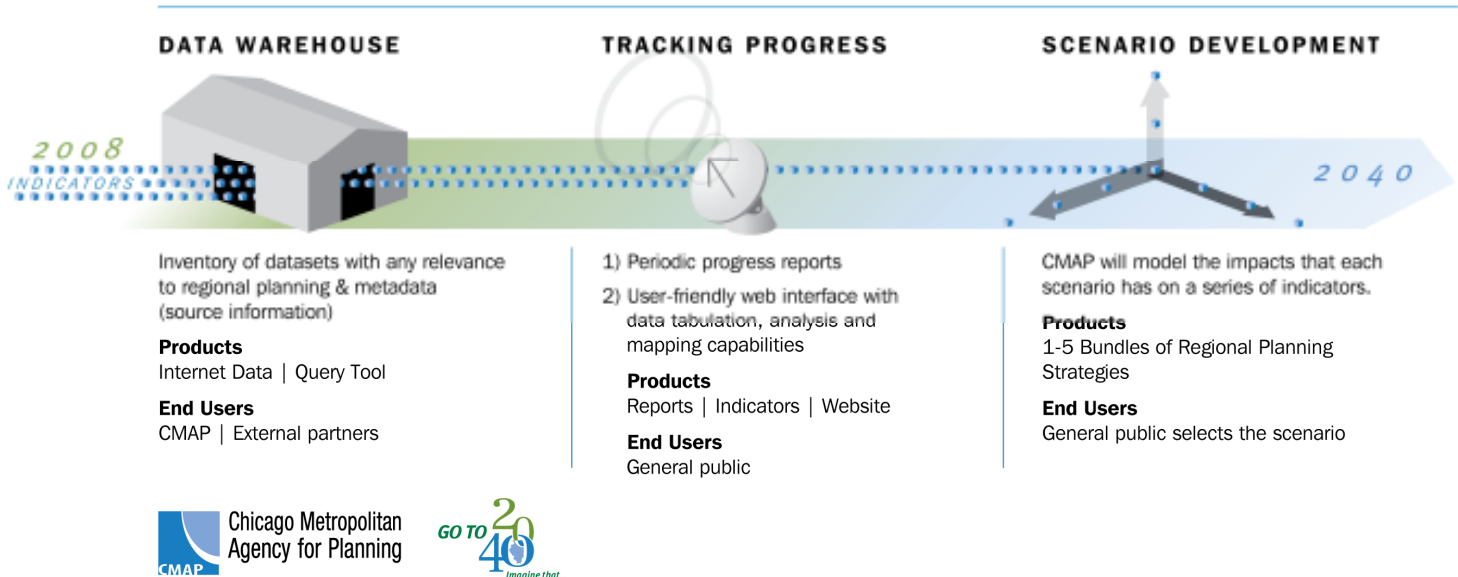
## Purpose

### Data Warehouse

CMAP's enabling legislation states that the agency "shall be the authoritative source for regional data collection, exchange, dissemination, analysis, evaluation, forecasting and modeling...create and maintain a timely, ongoing, and coordinated data and information sharing program...[with a] publicly accessible mechanism for data access and distribution." In this vein, CMAP is developing a data warehouse website that will allow the public to download tabular data with any relevance to regional planning from a central online location. This website will also provide standardized metadata on each dataset made available to the public.

### Regional Indicators Project

CMAP staff and working committees are working in partnership with the Chicago Community Trust to measure our progress toward achieving the Regional Vision for 2040.



### GO TO 2040 Plan

The centerpiece of the *GO TO 2040* planning process is a scenario evaluation process. This consists of the selection of a preferred course of action that will most effectively move the region toward the desired future vision. Therefore, a method for judging the effectiveness of different policies or investments to address the *GO TO 2040* Regional Vision was necessary. In this vein, CMAP staff have worked closely with the committees, Chicago Community Trust and other stakeholders to identify specific *tracking indicators* that are tied to statements or concepts in the Regional Vision. For example, where the Vision identified healthy, clean air as an important part of our desired future, a tracking indicator that measures air quality was developed.

It was never the objective of CMAP staff to identify a corresponding indicator for every statement in the Vision. However, staff endeavored to work with stakeholders to identify

several indicators associated with each of the broad Vision themes with equity and sustainability woven throughout.

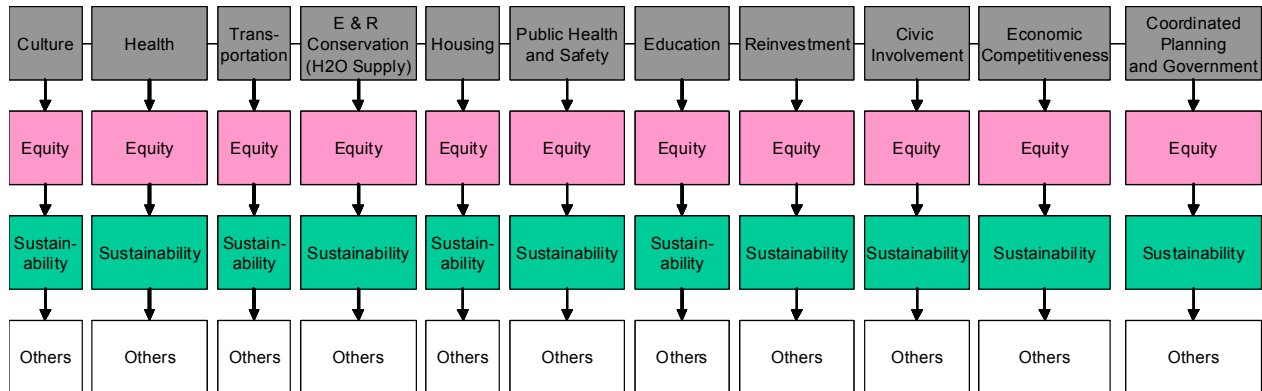
**Process**

In the winter of 2008, CMAP staff took an inventory of 109 different indicator projects from communities across the nation. These projects predominantly fall into one of a few categories: model indicator systems (National Neighborhood Indicators Project), thematic indicator systems (Sustainable Seattle), government accountability systems (CitiStat, Baltimore) and comprehensive key indicator systems (Boston Indicators Project). To get a better sense of best practice in terms of organization and indicators, staff focused on a “top ten” list of indicators projects. These were drawn from nationally recognized models and those receiving innovation awards from the Community Indicators Consortium, a national organization devoted to providing a space for the sharing of best practices between indicators projects.

<b>Top Ten Indicator Project Examples (no particular order)</b>	
Boston Indicators Project	<a href="http://www.bostonindicators.org">www.bostonindicators.org</a>
Community Vision, Osceola County, FL	<a href="http://www.communityvision.org">www.communityvision.org</a>
Georgia Community Indicators	<a href="http://www.dca.state.ga.us/commind/default.asp">www.dca.state.ga.us/commind/default.asp</a>
Jacksonville Quality of Life Indicators	<a href="http://www.jcci.org/statistics/qualityoflife.aspx">www.jcci.org/statistics/qualityoflife.aspx</a>
Minneapolis Sustainability Indicators	<a href="http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/indicators.asp">www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/indicators.asp</a>
Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project	<a href="http://santacruzcountycap.org">http://santacruzcountycap.org</a>
Santa Monica Sustainable City Plan	<a href="http://pen.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/epd/scp/goals_indicators.htm">http://pen.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/epd/scp/goals_indicators.htm</a>
Sustainable Cincinnati	<a href="http://www.sustainablecincinnati.org">http://www.sustainablecincinnati.org</a>
Sustainable Seattle	<a href="http://www.sustainableseattle.org">www.sustainableseattle.org</a>
Truckee Meadows Tomorrow, Nevada	<a href="http://www.quality-of-life.org">www.quality-of-life.org</a>

It is a widely recognized best practice that an indicator system should measure progress toward a vision developed through broad stakeholder engagement, such as the process used to develop the *GO TO 2040* Regional Vision. Staff conducted an analysis to determine how well the themes identified in the Vision matched up to the taxonomies and indicators used in the above projects. This analysis revealed that the vision themes could provide a suitable framework for organizing the indicator system.

While “quality of life” is identified as a vision theme, it is widely recognized that the phrase is highly nuanced and should therefore be deconstructed into component categories and indicators. However, it was determined that none of the Vision themes lent themselves nicely to measuring cultural vitality, as defined by the Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators Project. Therefore, “quality of life” was removed as an indicator category and replaced by “culture.” Finally, the Vision identifies “equity,” “sustainability” and “innovation” as major themes. It was determined that, wherever possible, indicators for each of these should be identified in all of the 11 major themes (below).



CMAP staff with subject area expertise began with lists of indicators from the top ten projects and proposed additional indicators where gaps were identified. In subject areas where the agency lacked expertise (education for example), CMAP staff worked in collaboration with the Trust to propose indicators. Beginning in March, CMAP staff presented an overview of the regional indicators project and led each of the working committees in brainstorming sessions to identify indicators in their respective areas of expertise. Based on these brainstorming sessions, CMAP staff worked in collaboration with the Trust to create a taxonomy of categories and subcategories within each Vision theme to organize indicators and datasets. Staff continued to facilitate discussions at the working committee level to refine indicators through May.

The Chicago Community Trust provided financial support to CMAP to contract with two independent firms for comprehensive investigation and evaluation of existing datasets to determine which will be most useful for measuring the indicators proposed by the working committees. URS was charged with investigating and evaluating indicators in the environment, natural resources and water supply theme, while MCIC was responsible for all other themes. Both of these firms were contracted through a competitive RFP process. Lists of indicators proposed by working committees, CMAP staff and the Trust were distributed to consultant firms beginning in March. CMAP staff also provided the firms with revisions to said lists on a weekly basis. On June 30, both consultant firms provided data inventories to CMAP, which provided a roadmap for data acquisition for the data warehouse as well as a starting point from which to begin prioritizing tracking indicators.

Staff members from CMAP's planning, technical assistance and external relations departments worked together to develop a workshop for the purpose of engaging county, municipal and other stakeholders in the prioritization of indicators. CMAP facilitated 10 of these workshops in each of the seven counties between July and August, drawing a total of just over 300 participants. Representatives from all seven county governments and over 100 different municipal governments participated, as well as representatives from RTA, Metra, PACE, and CDOT. In addition to several members of CMAP working committees, CMAP Board and Citizens' Advisory Committee members participated in the workshops. Stakeholders representing the State of Illinois from DCEO, IDOT, IDNR, and the General Assembly participated. Finally, federal stakeholders from three Illinois congressional districts, FHWA and USEPA also participated in the workshops. Input from these workshops will be

incorporated into the draft lists that will be distributed to the Planning Committee as soon as they are available. A draft report on the workshops, complete with analysis and results, is also forthcoming; however the top ten prioritized subcategories across all ten workshops are listed below.

<b>Indicator Workshop Results: Top Ten Indicator Subcategories by Dot Votes</b>					
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
1	Transportation	Public Transportation	Access to Transit	308	3.01%
2	Economic Competitiveness	Workforce	Jobs	264	2.58%
3	Housing	Holistic	Sustainability	256	2.50%
4	Housing	Cost	Total	222	2.17%
5	Environment	Water	Demand/Supply	215	2.10%
6	Transportation	Congestion Management	Congested Hours	204	1.99%
7	Economic Competitiveness	Income	Cost of Living	199	1.95%
8	Transportation	Congestion Management	Travel Time Index	197	1.93%
9	Environment	Open & Natural Space	Stewardship/Preservation	190	1.86%
10	Transportation	Alternative Modes	Walkability & Bikeability	181	1.77%

Beginning in July, CMAP began to develop lists of indicators suitable for tracking progress toward achieving the Vision. Based on the model of the Boston Indicators Project, which identified 186 indicators, it was determined early on that around 150 tracking indicators would be selected at the end of the process. It was also determined that tracking indicators must be measured by datasets that are available as regional aggregates and reliably updated. To have the most impact, it was also determined that each tracking indicator should have a broad stakeholder consensus around a positive trend line moving forward (increasing or decreasing is good or bad).

Having expertise in the areas of Reinvestment, Economic Competitiveness, Housing, Environment and Transportation, CMAP staff began to develop lists proposing approximately fifteen tracking indicators in each of these themes in July. Each of these lists had been proposed to the appropriate working committee for discussion and revision. Working committee input has been incorporated into the draft lists that are attached to this memo.

While the Human Services working committee initially proposed indicators for the themes of Education, Culture, Safety & Security, Health and Civic Involvement, it was ultimately determined that additional expertise was needed to develop appropriate tracking indicators for each of these themes. The Trust financially supported a parallel process for this purpose. For each of the aforementioned themes the Trust appointed a lead agency responsible for convening a broader advisory committee of stakeholders from around the region. While the long term goal of each of these groups is to evaluate strategies for *GO TO 2040*, a preliminary step was to

identify priorities for tracking indicators by the end of August. Their recommendations will be incorporated into the draft lists that will be distributed to the Planning Committee as soon as they are available.

The Land Use working committee proposed a taxonomy of indicators for Coordinated Planning & Government, however this theme confounded the consultant charged with identifying datasets. Unfortunately, a dearth of information is available to measure these indicators. As such, CMAP staff propose to conduct a survey of all municipal and county governments within the region every five years moving forward. With only 300 respondents, such a survey would mitigate resource burdens, while it would allow CMAP to track coordination, implementation and policy innovation over time. Early results of an analogous survey already conducted by CMAP to document environmental stewardship and importance around the region show great promise. The indicators on the lists that will be distributed to the Planning Committee shortly, will reflect both the datasets available at this time and information that could be gathered from the proposed survey.

### **Results**

As noted, CMAP staff have developed recommendations for tracking indicators in the following themes that take into account input from the working committees, workshop participants and other stakeholders: Reinvestment; Economic Competitiveness; Housing; Environment, Natural Resources & Water Supply; and Transportation. These are attached to this memo as an appendix. In early September, CMAP is working with the Chicago Community Trust to identify a proposed set of indicators in human services areas based on input from lead agencies, advisory committees, working committees, workshop participants and other stakeholders. These recommendations will not be available to the committee on the day of the meeting. However, the taxonomy of categories and subcategories developed for these themes in the spring is attached as an appendix. CMAP staff anticipate sending a draft list of tracking indicators for all themes to the Planning Committee within one week of the September meeting.

### **Next Steps**

The committee will have significant time devoted to discussion and approval of indicators at both the September and October meetings. Staff request that the committee approve a revised list of tracking indicators at the October meeting. Staff have requested that the Transportation Committee recommend approval of the tracking indicators to the MPO Policy Committee at its September meeting. The MPO Policy Committee will vote to approve the tracking indicators at its October meeting, whereas the CMAP board will vote at its November meeting.

Research on a number of topics for the *GO TO 2040* plan will continue through the remainder of the planning process. It is possible that new and improved indicators in some areas will arise as a result. Therefore, staff would recommend that the tracking indicators approved in the fall be able to be modified prior to the adoption of the plan. Any recommendations for changes to indicators will be revisited through the CMAP committee structure before dissemination of any additional data or analysis to the public.

Following CMAP Board approval in November, CMAP staff will prioritize data acquisition tasks and begin to develop visualizations and analysis of the tracking indicators for distribution to stakeholders and the public. Staff tested visualizations using an interactive PDF technology called Flex at the indicator workshops. Based on participant feedback, it was determined that this technology would benefit stakeholders tremendously. To learn more about Flex PDF, committee members should visit the Regional Indicators Project website at [www.goto2040.org/indicators.aspx](http://www.goto2040.org/indicators.aspx). Ultimately, CMAP's objective in developing data visualizations is to provide our stakeholders with the most up to date information, using the best available technology.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Discussion.

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