



MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Freight Committee
From: CMAP Staff
Date: January 26, 2015
Re: Background on Regional Freight Planning

Freight is a critical asset for northeastern Illinois and a major area of focus for regional planning activities. This memo begins by outlining past efforts in regional freight planning, focusing on GO TO 2040's recommendations and the final report of the Regional Freight Leadership Task Force. It then briefly reviews ongoing efforts, including two studies to address truck operations issues identified in both those plans. Last, the memo provides a rough timeline for the development of the regional freight plan.

Where we've been: Past efforts in regional freight planning

Adopted in 2010 and updated in 2014, [GO TO 2040](#) is the official long-term transportation and land use plan for the seven counties of northeastern Illinois. GO TO 2040 addresses numerous topics related to [livable communities](#), [human capital](#), [efficient governance](#), and [regional mobility](#). Overarching themes include integrated transportation and land use planning, coordinated investments across public agencies, and investment in existing communities. The plan's transportation policy initiatives include reducing congestion, improving reliability, and promoting safety. Further, the plan calls for strategic, performance-based investments, an increased commitment to public transit, and support for a more efficient freight system.

GO TO 2040 provides clear, concise motivation for the region to focus on planning for its freight system:

Metropolitan Chicago's freight system links the region's industries and consumers to global markets. Highways, railroads, waterways, and airports all provide importance connection to the world. Yet each of these modes of transport is intertwined with the livability of the region.

[GO TO 2040](#), p. 306

In short, *a well-planned freight system is critical to support economic development and quality of life.* Within this framework, GO TO 2040 goes on to describe the current conditions of the freight system, and then lists five implementation action areas to help improve the efficiency of the freight system:

- Develop a national vision and federal program for freight.
- Support CREATE rail system improvements.
- Support regional trucking improvements, including truckways, truck routes, truck parking, and delivery time management.
- Organize and improve public policy relating to freight.
- Integrate freight needs and financing into infrastructure prioritization.

Each implementation action area is further developed with specific implementation items, including the recommended lead implementers. For example, under “Organize and improve public policy”, the plan calls on regional stakeholders to investigate the establishment of a “regional freight authority”. The full [implementation action areas](#) are available online and summarized in Appendix A of this document.

Regional Freight Leadership Task Force planning recommendations

In June 2013, the CMAP Board established the [Regional Freight Leadership Task Force](#) to explore the concept of a “regional freight authority” identified for study in GO TO 2040. Meeting over an eight-month period, the Task Force [recommended](#) in May 2014 against the establishment of a new standalone authority. Rather, the Task Force called on the region to incorporate a comprehensive, multimodal freight plan into the next comprehensive regional plan, and then pursue new funding sources from user fees to invest in the identified freight improvements. The final report identifies desired components of a regional freight plan:

- Specific lists of prioritized capital projects and operational programs.
- An implementation strategy for these improvements.
- A financial plan for these improvements, including estimated costs for projects and programs and potential funding sources to cover these costs. A financial plan should also explore the potential for some projects to be self-supporting via user fees.
- Policy discussion on other topics such as land use.

The Task Force report provides more insight into how a freight plan could tackle truck and rail issues. For trucking, the plan should identify geometric or capacity deficiencies, gaps in the trucking network, and also explore various operational improvements such as centralized truck permitting and off-hours deliveries programs. For rail, the planning process should include a “regional conversation” to evaluate the CREATE program, including its funding status and next phase of regional rail improvements.

Other freight-related activities

Since the publication of GO TO 2040, CMAP has published numerous studies to further articulate the relationship between freight and economic development. These documents include the [Freight Cluster Drill-Down Report](#), the [Freight-Manufacturing Nexus Report](#), and the [O’Hare Subregional Freight-Manufacturing Drill-Down Report](#), each of which included extensive outreach to CMAP committees and external stakeholders. Additionally, CMAP staff

developed a memo, [The Importance of Freight to Northeastern Illinois](#), on the connection between freight and economic development as part of the Regional Freight Leadership Task Force proceedings. CMAP staff has also developed [regional economic indicators](#) to track key trends in the region, including two metrics related to the freight [cluster](#) (intermodal lifts; total employment and specialization in freight).

Additionally, CMAP has investigated various tax policy issues relevant to the freight system, including a report on the [fiscal and economic impacts of local development decisions](#). Freight-related land uses offer some fiscal benefits to communities (e.g., property and sales taxes), but they also impose unique costs (e.g., maintaining local truck routes) and often do not provide the same level of local revenue as other land uses like office or retail. But, CMAP analysis indicates that manufacturers, R&D, and some other industrial users provide substantially stronger regional economic benefits than retail or office users. Municipalities balance many factors when making land use decisions, but may choose uses that have a stronger fiscal benefit than industrial buildings. These cumulative local land use decisions can greatly affect the health of the regional economy and the availability of industrial land near major transportation assets.

CMAP is also active in [freight policy](#) developments at the national and state levels. This work includes the development of legislative principles related to freight, commenting on the federal rulemaking process for freight, and participating in the Illinois State Freight Advisory Committee process. Additionally, CMAP actively monitors state legislation related to transportation topics, including freight, and analyzes the federal transportation reauthorization process.

Finally, CMAP's [Local Technical Assistance](#) (LTA) program has addressed freight-related topics as part of various local planning efforts. More specifically, three completed LTA plans included recommendations related to cargo-oriented development and nine included recommendations related to truck routing. Established in 2010, the LTA program provides assistance to communities across the region to undertake planning projects that advance the principles of GO TO 2040.

Where we are: Ongoing efforts in regional freight planning

Outside of the Freight Committee, CMAP is currently participating in several other freight-related projects. Staff is developing a number of brief [Policy Updates](#) on freight topics, starting with a [review](#) of Freight Analysis Framework data in October 2014. Future updates will address intermodalism, truck routing, and challenges facing the regional freight system. Additionally, staff is currently analyzing regional industrial building data, and also will initiate supply chain analyses for specific industry clusters. CMAP staff will continue to brief the Freight Committee on this work as it unfolds.

Both GO TO 2040 and the Regional Freight Leadership Task Force identify numerous issues related to truck operations, and there are currently efforts to address two of these issues through the LTA program:

- [Regional truck permitting](#) – Development of an action plan to investigate various approaches to streamline the truck permitting process in the region. This project includes participation from all seven counties in the region, the City of Chicago, and the Supply Chain Innovation Network of Chicago (SINC), along with technical participation from IDOT and others.
- [O’Hare subregion truck routing project](#) – Develop a truck routing plan for an 11-municipality area around O’Hare International Airport. This plan will include capital and operational recommendations to harmonize the truck routing in this important freight corridor.

The Regional Truck Permitting project began in late 2014 and the O’Hare truck routing project will begin in Spring 2015. CMAP staff will keep the Freight Committee informed of their progress.

Where we’re going: Rough outline for the development of the regional freight plan

Per current federal requirements, the next long-range regional transportation plan is due in October 2018. CMAP is just beginning a four-year planning process for all elements of the new regional plan, of which freight is one component. Much of the initial focus will be on technical requirements (e.g., collecting data, developing and validating the regional travel demand model), as these tasks can require years to complete. The identification of potential types of projects and programs for future study, potential research methodologies, and data gaps helps to establish what can or cannot be reasonably achieved by 2018.

GO TO 2040 is a policy-based plan and provides a starting point for the upcoming planning process. Staff will work with the Freight Committee to dig deeper into GO TO 2040’s policy recommendations in order to identify potential gaps, areas for further refinement, and emerging issues. The planning process between now and 2018 allows staff and the Freight Committee to ask more detailed questions, which will be structured and evaluated by the agency’s analytical tools and other resources. As this analysis unfolds, working with staff, the Freight Committee will be able to suggest how the region can better implement GO TO 2040 policies, as well as “make the case” for any new policy recommendations that may be recommended to the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee.

In broad terms, it is likely that the freight planning process will have four main components:

- Investigate the existing condition of the regional freight system.
- Investigate select policy-level issues through detailed reports.
- Evaluate projects and programs.
- Develop final recommendations for the freight plan.

Staff anticipates detailed study of existing conditions to begin in FY 2016 and is currently developing a scope of work for that effort, which it will share with the Freight Committee for technical comment.

Appendix A. GO TO 2040 Implementation Action Areas

GO TO 2040 includes detailed [implementation action area](#) tables for each of its twelve major recommendations. These tables list specific implementation items, identify lead implementers, and provide more detailed discussion. There are five implementation action areas for the plan's freight recommendation ("Create a more efficient freight network"), each with numerous implementation items. The items are summarized in the list below:

- Create a national vision and federal program for freight
 - Support the implementation of a national freight policy and freight networks
 - Expand federal policy to include a truly multimodal freight network
 - Provide dedicated, performance-based funding for freight improvements
 - Provide an engaged role for MPOs in freight planning and project selection
- CREATE rail system improvements
 - Build a larger national coalition to support the CREATE Program
 - Secure funding to complete the CREATE Program
 - Prioritize and implement the CREATE Program
 - Develop the next phase of rail improvements
- Regional trucking improvements: truckways, truck routes, delivery time management, and restrictions
 - Identify opportunities for dedicated truck corridor systems
 - Implement dedicated and managed truckways
 - Manage the transportation system to reduce peak-period congestion through congestion pricing
 - Catalog and update the region's truck routes
 - Address delivery times and parking restrictions
- Organization and public policy
 - Explore the establishment of a governance structure, such as a Freight Authority, to identify issues, guide investments and advocate on behalf of the region
 - Conduct further study to implement user fees
- Integrating freight needs and financing into infrastructure prioritization
 - Include freight-related performance measures in the project evaluation process
 - Enhance freight modeling capacity