

SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE GROWTH WITH LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION SHIFTS

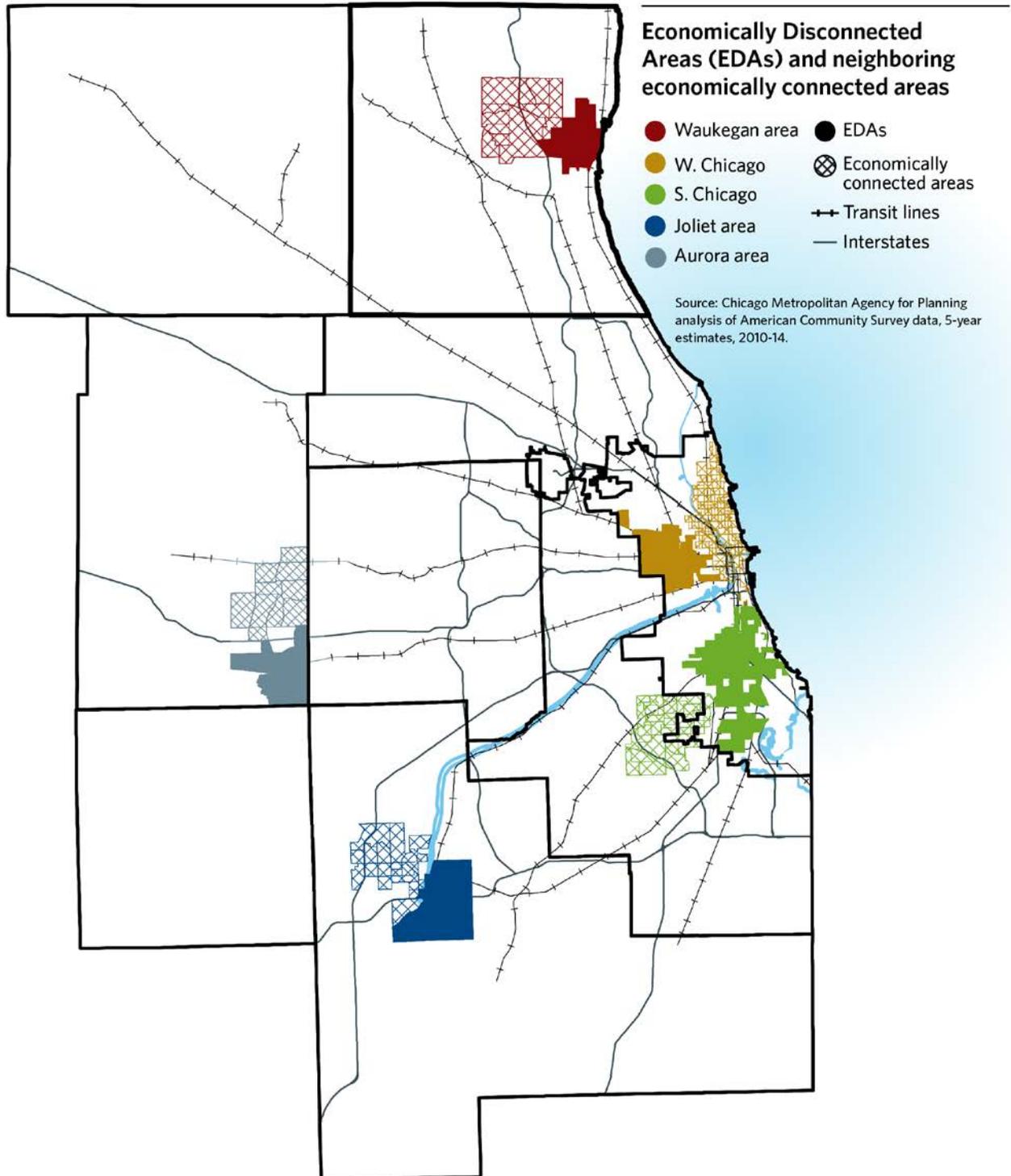
This Policy Update is the third in a series examining the region’s Economically Disconnected Areas (EDAs) and their transportation and commute challenges. The [first Update](#) groups EDAs that are geographically, demographically, and economically similar and discusses trends across them. The second explores commute patterns and travel trends for workers residing in EDAs, identifying the clusters where commute disparities are highest. This Update illustrates several case studies to highlight the role transportation and land use play in linking EDA and economically connected area residents to jobs.

Transportation infrastructure, access to employment, and socioeconomic factors each affect the daily commute patterns of the region’s residents. For residents of EDAs—parts of the region with concentrated low incomes, limited English proficiency residents, and/or minority residents—daily commutes can be particularly long. This affects job retention and success, as well as overall work quality. One of the recommendations in CMAP’s [Inclusive Growth strategy paper](#) is to improve commute times and options for residents in EDAs that face long commutes, which will require shifts in transportation, land use, and economic development planning and policy.

This Policy Update illustrates several case studies that highlight the role transportation and land use play in linking EDA residents and residents of economically connected areas to jobs. To reduce commute disparities, local land use decisions should emphasize development patterns that maximize the effectiveness of local transit and transportation options. Further, integrated land use and transportation decision-making allows local governments to maximize benefits of investments and better meet community and resident needs. Finally, the region requires a sustainably funded transit system to improve and modernize the system, as well as provide strong commute access to the region’s economic centers.

Case studies

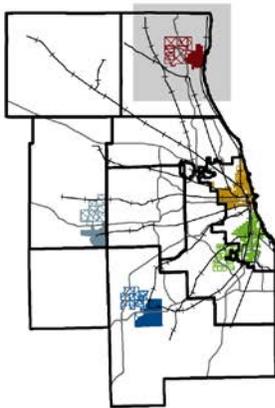
This Policy Update conducts a comparative analysis of travel patterns in EDA clusters and nearby economically connected areas. Five case studies are selected for analysis, including EDA clusters in the Waukegan area, west Chicago, south Chicago, and the Joliet and Aurora areas, as shown below. To produce comparable commute times, several EDA clusters have been refined to create contiguous areas. The case studies identified are core concentrations of EDA tracts, often near cities or significant employment centers. The case studies together represent different geographic realities across the Chicago region, including various levels of transit and employment access.



Case Study 1: Waukegan Area

EDAs in the Waukegan area are majority Hispanic, and neighboring economically connected areas are majority white. Disparities exist between residents in these areas across various economic outcomes, including educational attainment and income. Despite relatively low educational attainment rates, residents in these EDAs participate in the labor force at rates similar to residents living in nearby economically connected areas. However, a roughly \$43,000 gap exists between them in average median income.

Most workers in both EDA and economically connected clusters travel to work by car. Workers living in EDAs are more likely to carpool than drive alone: 22 percent of workers in these tracts carpool to work relative to seven percent of workers from neighboring economically connected areas. Residents in these EDAs also have significantly lower average commute times than their economically connected neighbors—25 and 28 minutes, respectively. The average commute time of this EDA cluster is also among the lowest commute times in the region. These trends are in part driven by low transit availability: the EDAs and the economically connected areas score average transit availability scores of three and two out of five, respectively, on CMAP’s Transit Availability Index.



Case Study 1: Waukegan area

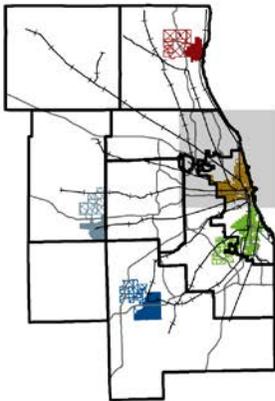
Economically Disconnected Areas	Economically connected areas
58% Hispanic	66% White
14% unemployed	9% unemployed
\$41,000 average median income	\$84,000 average median income
72% drive alone, 22% carpool	88% drive alone, 7% carpool

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of American Community Survey data, 5-year estimates, 2010-14.

Case Study 2: West Chicago

EDAs in west Chicago differ from nearby north Lakefront communities. A \$49,000 gap exists in average median income between the primarily white north Lakefront communities and west Chicago's majority black EDAs. Large disparities also exist in educational attainment, unemployment and labor force participation, as well as in commute and travel patterns.

Residents in EDAs in west Chicago are less likely to commute to work with public transit than their Lakefront neighbors. Despite high access to public transit (with a five out of five average transit availability score), 28 percent of workers in these EDAs commute via transit and 65 percent commute by car. These workers may be traveling to jobs in areas with limited transit availability, requiring a commute by car. A relatively larger share of Lakefront commuters travel to work using public transit (39 percent) and only 43 percent travel to work by car. A significant share of residents in the more affluent north Lakefront tracts also walk or bike to work. Though a larger share of Lakefront commuters travel to work by public transit, Lakefront commuters have lower average commute times relative to residents in west Chicago's EDAs.



Case Study 2: W. Chicago

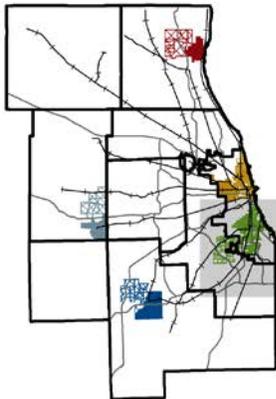
Economically Disconnected Areas	Economically connected areas
70% Black	69% White
20% unemployed	6% unemployed
\$30,000 average median income	\$79,000 average median income
56% drive alone, 28% transit	39% drive alone, 37% carpool, 16% walk or bike

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of American Community Survey data, 5-year estimates, 2010-14.

Case Study 3: South Chicago

Geographic location affects residents' access to employment, transportation, and other services, impacting economic opportunity. A comparative analysis of EDAs in south Chicago and the nearby southwest suburbs illustrates this gap. Large disparities in homeownership, unemployment, and income exist between these two communities. The two geographies also differ demographically: more than 98 percent of residents in the EDAs are residents of color relative to 25 percent of residents in the southwest suburban economically connected area.

Workers from EDAs in south Chicago are more likely to travel to work using public transit, driven by low income and high access to public transit. Residents in the southwest suburbs cluster have higher incomes and limited transit availability, and primarily drive to work. EDAs and economically connected areas here have average transit availability scores of five and four, respectively. Both geographies have high commute times, 39 and 32 minutes respectively, though a sizeable 7 minute difference exists between them.



Case Study 3: S. Chicago

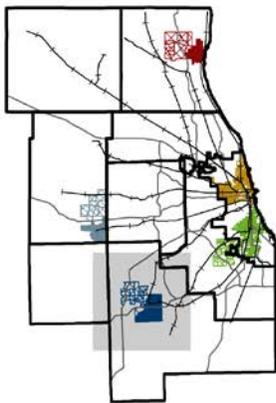
Economically Disconnected Areas	Economically connected areas
92% Black	75% White
27% unemployed	11% unemployed
\$29,000 average median income	\$67,000 average median income
54% drive alone, 34% transit	81% drive alone, 9% transit

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of American Community Survey data, 5-year estimates, 2010-14.

Case Studies 4 and 5: Joliet and Aurora Areas

As in the previous case studies, demographic and economic disparities exist between EDAs and economically connected communities in the Joliet and Aurora areas. The EDAs in the Joliet and Aurora areas are majority Hispanic, unlike the nearby majority white economically connected areas. Significant income gaps also exist, with gaps of roughly \$31,000 and \$49,000 in the Joliet and Aurora areas, respectively.

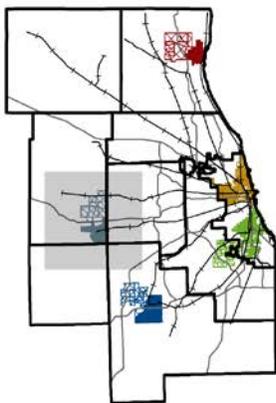
Despite these differences, similarities exist in travel patterns. At least 90 percent of commuters travel to work by car for all selected geographies, partly driven by low transit availability. All clusters illustrated in the Aurora and Joliet areas have average transit availability scores of either two or three on the transit availability index. However, all clusters enjoy average commute times lower than the regional average at 25 and 28 minutes for the EDAs and economically connected areas in the Joliet area, respectively, and 25 and 28 minutes respectively for the EDAs and economically connected areas in the Aurora area.



Case Study 4: Joliet area

Economically Disconnected Areas	Economically connected areas
44% Hispanic	64% White
19% unemployed	9% unemployed
\$36,000 average median income	\$67,000 average median income
80% drive alone, 10% carpool	88% drive alone, 8% carpool

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of American Community Survey data, 5-year estimates, 2010-14.



Case Study 5: Aurora area

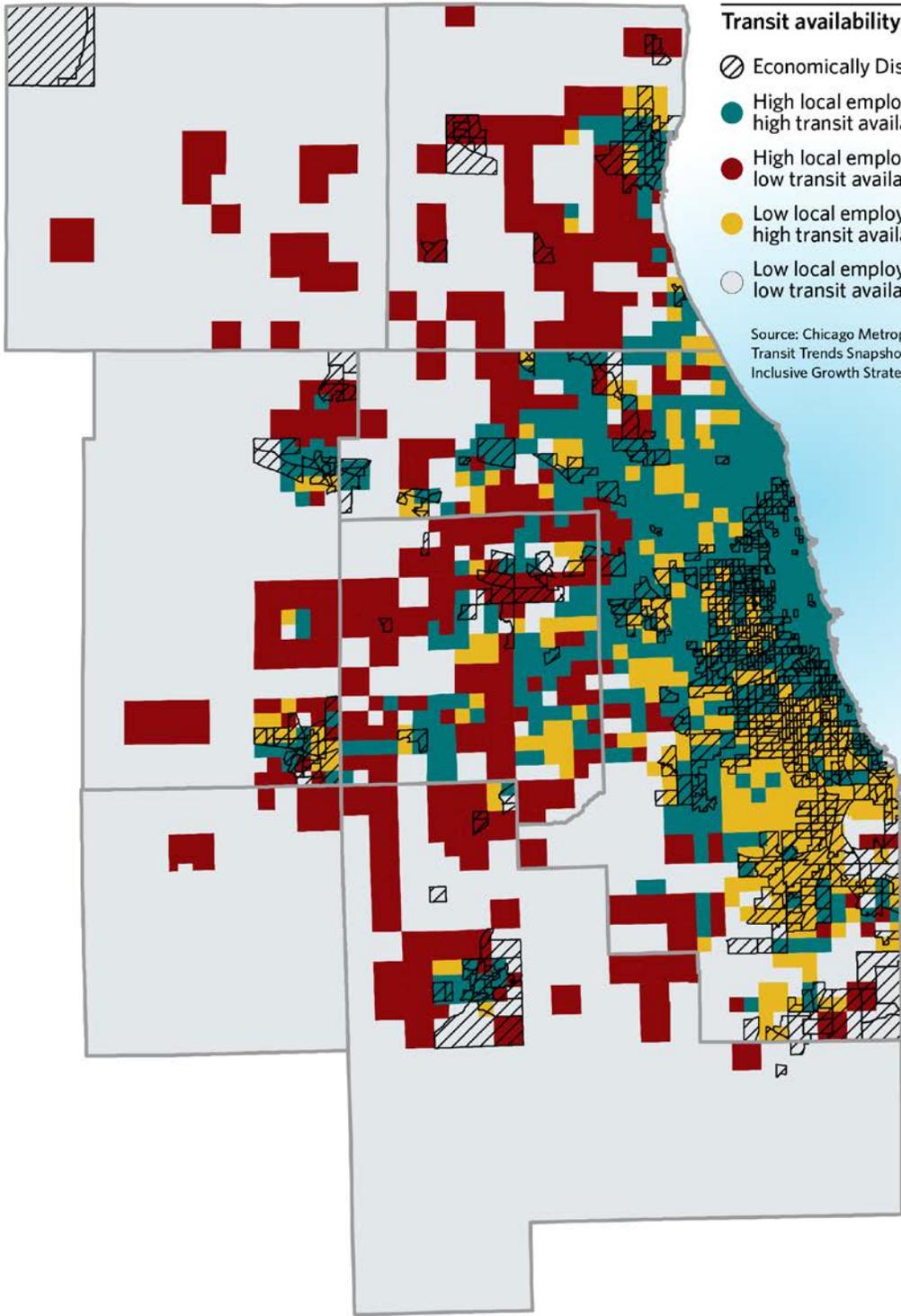
Economically Disconnected Areas	Economically connected areas
65% Hispanic	85% White
12% unemployed	7% unemployed
\$45,000 average median income	\$94,000 average median income
78% drive alone, 17% carpool	87% drive alone, 6% carpool

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of American Community Survey data, 5-year estimates, 2010-14.

Connecting employment, transportation access, and land use in the case studies

The west- and south Chicago case studies illustrate the economic benefits of transportation and supportive land uses. Within EDAs and some commute destinations, housing and employment exists at densities sufficient to support frequent transit service. For many residents of economically connected areas, supportive land use also includes strong and job-dense employment centers within or very near these communities. In affluent Lakefront communities, transportation assets provide a direct link to employment centers and other economic opportunities, such as the Chicago downtown area. An overwhelming 71 percent of workers living in the Lakefront case study are employed within their home geography. In contrast, eight percent and nine percent of workers living in the west Chicago and south Chicago EDAs, respectively, are employed in their home cluster geographies. As a result, almost two-thirds of workers from these EDAs drive to work. This poses a significant cost burden in these areas where average median income is about \$29,000.

The map below shows the overlap between transit availability and job density in the region. In many cases, EDAs have low local employment. Job opportunities for low-income, minority, and limited English proficiency workers are often in diffuse locations across the region, and are frequently located outside of their communities. Residents of EDAs in west and south Chicago have good access to transit, but many travel to jobs in disparate areas with limited transit availability.



Transit availability and local employment

- ⊘ Economically Disconnected Areas
- High local employment, high transit availability
- High local employment, low transit availability
- Low local employment, high transit availability
- Low local employment, low transit availability

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
 Transit Trends Snapshot, 2017 and
 Inclusive Growth Strategy Paper, 2017.

In EDAs in suburban areas, such as in Waukegan, Joliet, and Aurora, residents have less access to public transit. However, with relatively higher incomes, these workers are able to live closer to employment opportunities or more easily afford a vehicle, circumventing the poor access to transit within the nearby employment centers. In neighboring economically connected areas, residents also commute primarily by car though their average commute times are generally longer. These residents may be choosing homes that are farther from employment, but offer more amenities, are in stronger school districts, or have other quality of life benefits.

Overall, more affluent residents generally have more choice in balancing [housing](#), transportation, and employment preferences. First, more affluent residents are better able to afford living in very close proximity to employment centers. The majority of workers living in economically connected areas in the identified case studies (51 percent) are employed within their home cluster geographies. This contrasts the low 11 percent of workers living and working in the EDAs identified above. Higher income residents often have greater housing and transportation choices to achieve their desired quality of life, meaning that they may choose to live close to transit or work. Prior CMAP [research](#) has indicated that higher income residents, particularly in suburban parts of the region, take transit at higher rates than moderate and low income groups.

Strategies to promote inclusive growth and improve transportation for low income residents

The interplay between land use, transportation, and the regional economy is key to promoting inclusive growth and minimizing disparities in outcomes between EDAs and economically connected areas, as well as across EDA clusters. The following highlights land use, transportation, and regional economy strategies that increase community and resident connectedness to opportunities and promote inclusive growth.

Integrate land use and transportation planning

Development and local land use patterns greatly impact regional mobility. A high-quality transportation system requires supportive housing and employment densities to enable the efficient and effective provision of transportation services. Strong coordination between transportation and land use decision-making can increase transit supportive densities, facilitating commutes and leveraging the region's transit system. That is, the economic benefits of transit cannot be actualized without land use that supports the system and increases connections for residents.

Planners and policy makers should emphasize compact development patterns that support the transportation system's ability to link residents to opportunities, including access to high quality transit services that link workers to jobs. Additionally, coordination between local governments and transit agencies should be strengthened to address topics such as parking in station areas, transit-oriented development, and transit service. CMAP [research](#) indicates that increasing employment densities near transit stations may have even more impact on transit commutes than increasing housing densities, showing the need to plan for a full mix of uses in areas with high transit availability. To support low income residents, this planning should also emphasize creating affordable [housing](#) options in high transit availability areas.

Make transit a competitive option

A strong transit system improves travel for all users, and creates more options to improve commutes for lower income residents. The region's transit agencies are pursuing many strategies to improve existing service, and ON TO 2050 will outline recommendations to enhance and expand these efforts. Focusing on speed, frequency, and reliability will retain and attract riders, as will focusing this high quality service on congested routes. Leveraging new communication and data processing technology can improve traveler information and service routing, as well as supporting improved paratransit services. The region's stakeholders should also advocate for increased [funding](#) for transit to reduce the state of good repair backlog, and to modernize, enhance, and selectively expand the system.

Link EDAs to jobs, training, and education

As illustrated in the case studies above, many residents of EDAs have limited transportation options that efficiently connect them to economic and other opportunities. This is particularly true for residents living in EDAs in the city of Chicago, where access to transit options does not preclude lack of connectivity.

Transportation stakeholders should identify new options that connect individuals and communities to training and education opportunities, as well as employment areas that provide available and attainable jobs that offer pathways for upward mobility. Transit providers should identify opportunities to provide more frequent transit service and longer hours of service to EDAs, and particularly leverage innovations in bus service such as real time GPS tracking and routing, street design changes, traffic signal priority, automation, and improved power systems. In EDAs with more disparate, hard to serve commutes, transit stakeholders should explore options and develop pilot studies such as employer-sponsored shuttles and develop pilot studies to capitalize on emerging transportation technologies such as ridesourcing. As transit options are expanded, fares are increased, or new technology is implemented, transportation funding programs, such as [CMAQ](#) or [STP](#), should emphasize projects that increase connectivity for EDAs, capitalizing on the individual and regional growth benefits that connecting low-income and minority residents to opportunities provides.

Reinvest in disinvested areas

Efforts to integrate land use and transportation planning and to ensure equitable access to high quality transportation options must be complemented with broader efforts to reinvest in disinvested areas. The case studies illustrate that many EDA residents do not work within or near their communities because these communities have limited employment opportunities. Disinvested areas and often-overlapping EDAs are often characterized with historical loss of jobs or population, high vacancies, high tax rates, and/or low property values. This combination can limit the real and perceived potential for market-driven investment. In concert with these communities, local and regional stakeholders should prioritize technical assistance, redevelopment resources, transportation investments, and other resources to grow employment, quality housing options, and other assets in disinvested areas. CMAP and other stakeholders should also identify innovative state and regional options to promote reinvestment in these areas, such as addressing underlying tax rate issues or leveraging revenues from the broader [community](#).

Improve municipal capacity

Improving transportation, planning for quality housing, promoting economic development, and pursuing the tricky task of reinvesting in historically disinvested areas requires improving local stakeholders' knowledge and resources. Efforts to ensure inclusive growth must include efforts to build local capacity to plan for land use and transportation as well as providing local services. For example, accessing regional and federal transportation resources often requires local match for transportation funding as well creation of a Phase 1 engineering study. Developing a comprehensive plan and follow-up studies like a downtown or corridor plan requires staff expertise and time, as well funding for the study. Many municipalities with significant EDAs lack staff, financial, or technical resources to address these needs. CMAP and partners should further target existing resources like the CMAP Local Technical Assistance program, as well as developing new initiatives that can provide additional funding or training, promote service sharing and other best practices, and otherwise direct capacity-building assistance to communities in need.

Looking ahead

Promoting inclusive growth can increase the Chicago region's economic competitiveness, producing stronger and more sustained periods of growth. The transportation system plays a vital role in connecting residents and communities to economic opportunities. To succeed, residents and communities require transportation options that easily link to jobs with potential for upward mobility, education and workforce training programs, as well as other services and amenities.

Initial [ON TO 2050](#) recommendations support coordinated planning, investments, and decision-making to promote inclusive growth. As explored above, local and regional stakeholders should pursue a comprehensive set of strategies to address the economic, transportation, community, land use, and quality of life aspects of inclusive growth.

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