

Principles for Sustainable Transportation Funding

HELPING COMMUNITIES PROSPER

Metropolitan Chicago's infrastructure, which has given the region its historic strategic advantage, is in need of critical investment. Chronic transportation funding shortages have led to a crisis point. Illinois requires a long-term funding solution to rebuild and modernize the transportation system that is fair, equitable, and flexible. Other states and regions are far ahead of the State of Illinois and metropolitan Chicago in raising revenues to support infrastructure projects with long-term benefits for livability, mobility, and the economy. In order to put taxpayer dollars to the best use and help every Illinois community prosper, **the following principles are essential to any transportation revenue proposal:**

Sustainable – A long-term solution that can adapt to rapid change

New transportation revenues must provide sufficient and sustainable funding to improve, enhance, and expand the system. Diversifying by having more than one source of funds in addition to increasing traditional sources such as the motor fuel tax would improve the reliability of funding. New funding, as well as existing fares and tolls, should grow sustainably—such as by indexing rates to inflation—to keep pace with the costs of operating and improving the system, which inevitably increase over time.

Fair – User fees paid by those who gain the most benefit from the system

Costs should be paid primarily by those who use the transportation system the most or derive the most benefit. This may include replacing traditional revenue sources with modern user fees such as a road usage charge (sometimes referred to as a “vehicle miles traveled fee”) and setting varying rates based on vehicles' impacts on the system. Some sources could capture revenues based on the benefits that users or businesses reap from specific improvements.

Equitable – Options that consider the ability of users to pay

Some revenue sources can have disproportionate impacts on low income residents. To promote equity, revenue enhancements should reduce the burden of increased costs on lower income individuals or offset such costs through other tax strategies.

Flexible – Performance-based criteria to support all modes of travel

Project selection criteria must be used to fund the projects of greatest impact. Such a performance-based approach can result in a geographically equitable distribution of funding while allowing all areas to access the funds they need for large, important projects. Revenue must also be allocated flexibly to improve not only the region's road network but also transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure to help the region achieve a well-integrated multimodal system. Supporting all modes also requires that all jurisdictions be permitted to fund transportation improvements that would benefit their residents and businesses, regardless of jurisdiction or ownership.



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The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is our region's comprehensive planning organization. The agency and its partners developed and are now implementing ON TO 2050, a new long-range plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

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