



MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Board

From: CMAP Intergovernmental Affairs Staff

Date: November 2, 2022

Re: 2023 Federal and State Advocacy Agenda

Each legislative session, CMAP develops strategic advocacy agendas for state and federal policymakers. For your review and discussion, staff presents the draft 2023 Federal and State Advocacy Agenda. To date, staff has presented drafts of the agenda and received input from the Council of Mayors, Transportation Committee, the Regional Economy Committee, and the Climate Committee.

Staff is providing a combined federal and state agenda for the next two-year session. This allows stakeholders at all levels of government to be aware of action needed at the state and federal levels to advance successful implementation of ON TO 2050. Furthermore, many of the elements of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) require a combination of federal and state action to maximize IIJA's benefits for the region.

Staff identified priorities for the agenda through review of previous agendas, conversations with staff, and discussions with external stakeholders. Of the items included in the agenda, the priority for federal action will be maximizing the amount of IIJA dollars that flow to northeastern Illinois. CMAP's work to convene implementers to identify priority projects for discretionary funds and develop a shared priority project list is a key element of this strategy.

On the state side, staff will prioritize securing funding to support full implementation of the Regional Planning Act, CMAP's enabling statute, and increase capacity and planning support for the state's MPOs. MPOs have taken on a critical leadership role to facilitate coordination on IIJA competitive grants, and more sustainable, predictable funding will allow MPOs to grow their capacity to take advantage of this opportunity while meeting local planning needs.

CMAP's 2023 Federal and State Advocacy Agenda also aligns with the agency's strategic direction, which focuses on improving transportation, climate, and regional economic

competitiveness in northeastern Illinois. Within these three areas, staff has identified policy priorities within the following sub-areas:

Transportation

- CMAP supports sustainably funding transportation
- CMAP supports increased support for safe and complete streets
- CMAP supports improved access to funding resources and information

Climate

- CMAP supports stronger policies that can reduce emissions and congestion
- CMAP supports planning for a stronger and more resilient climate

Regional Economic Competitiveness

- CMAP supports stronger inclusive economic growth and reducing economic disparities
- CMAP supports increased opportunities for comprehensive planning and economic development
- CMAP supports improvements that help people and goods move efficiently
- CMAP supports improvements to local and regional tax policy

Staff will use this agenda to pursue key ON TO 2050 recommendations, and to guide and inform policymakers in Springfield and Washington D.C. Staff will use this approved agenda as the Board's guidance for any actions needed in Springfield or Washington D.C.

ACTION REQUESTED: Information

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DRAFT 2023 Federal and State Advocacy Agenda

Introduction

In the time since the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) last updated its federal and state advocacy agendas, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated socioeconomic trends and reinforced longstanding challenges for northeastern Illinois. The pandemic disrupted local economies, deepened inequities, and changed the ways the region's nearly 8.5 million people travel each day. But it also spurred innovative approaches and collaborative solutions in the face of uncertainty.

ON TO 2050, the region's long-range plan, and its update in fall 2022, continue to provide northeastern Illinois with a roadmap to steer the region through these enduring challenges and guide it toward new opportunities. CMAP's long-range plan forecasts needs and identifies improvements to transportation, the environment, the economy, and other issues affecting quality of life in the agency's seven-county region.

Despite the pandemic and its disruptions, northeastern Illinois remains one of the world's greatest economic centers with a diverse workforce, vast multimodal transportation system, and abundant natural resources. Yet, the region faces challenges with adequately funding transportation, a changing climate, and an increasingly competitive global economy with starker economic disparities.

The [three principles of ON TO 2050](#) — inclusive growth, resilience, and prioritized investment — are more relevant now than when the plan was adopted in 2018. Federal and state legislative members provide critical support to ensuring those principles are realized in the decades to come.

CMAP's 2023 federal and state advocacy agenda details policy positions and priorities that can help the region address challenges and opportunities at each level of government. The positions and priorities, described below, align with CMAP's strategic direction that focuses on improving transportation, climate, and regional economic competitiveness in northeastern Illinois.

Transportation

The passage of the federal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA) presents a tremendous opportunity to modernize transportation and advance solutions that can address Illinois' most pressing mobility issues exacerbated by the pandemic.

IIJA provides enormous funding opportunities to improve the safety of all travelers while addressing challenges — outdated street design, freight and traffic congestion, air quality, and resilience — that threaten the region's ability to grow inclusively by 2050 and beyond. At the same time, the pandemic has [shifted work commutes and travel patterns](#), causing congestion on the region's roads to return and transit ridership to drop. The region will need comprehensive

solutions that can sustain the future of transportation and strengthen the second largest transit system in the country.

Federal and state legislative members can help shape the region's future. Consistent with our responsibilities as the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), CMAP is working with our federal and state partners to build consensus and prioritize projects that can address the region's safety, emissions, and resilience challenges.

CMAP, like other MPOs, needs increased flexibility and improved access to federal funding. Additional steps can be taken at the state level to complement these new and significant funding opportunities from IIJA. The following lists the transportation policy positions and priorities that CMAP supports on both the federal and state levels.

CMAP supports sustainably funding transportation

Federal actions

- Increase the federal motor fuel tax rate and index it to the rate of inflation each year.
- Develop innovative funding mechanisms, such as a national per-mile road usage charge and a federal freight transportation fee in the long term.
- Require the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop a report that recommends ways to modernize highway funding formulas and better align them with state and MPO performance measurement goals.
- Provide greater flexibility for states and regions to impose user fees by removing federal restrictions on tolling the interstate system and removing interstate system restrictions on commercial activity.

State actions

- Develop a comprehensive strategy to identify, enact, and create sustainable revenue sources for the region's transit system.
- Implement exploratory pilot projects that examine replacing the state motor fuel tax with a road usage charge (of at least 2 cents per mile) and indexed to the rate of inflation.
- Pilot different congestion pricing frameworks to assess whether different options enhance sustainable travel and limit the financial impact on drivers of low income.
- Institute a regional fee on trips provided by transportation network and rideshare companies and allow for anonymous trip data to be shared with third-party transportation researchers and planners.
- Provide incentives to employers that can encourage their employees to reduce the miles they travel by vehicle and require employers of a certain size within the Regional Transportation Authority's service area to participate in a transit benefit fare program. These fare programs typically allow employees to pay for transit and parking using pre-tax dollars.

CMAP supports increased support for safe and complete streets

Federal actions

- Expand MPOs' programming authority for funding available under FHWA's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). HSIP provides federal aid to help significantly reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- Through expanded HSIP programming authority, reflect the responsibilities of FHWA's Safety Performance Management goals and establish a permanent 15-percent set aside for safety improvements that address vulnerable road users like bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Identify dedicated resources that provide local governments with comprehensive support for implementing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions.

State actions

- Expand capacity at the Illinois Department of Transportation to address traffic safety concerns in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion. This includes creating a new safe and complete streets coordinator position or similar role.
- Create a competitive grant program to incentivize municipalities to dedicate more road space to non-vehicle users, design self-enforcing streets, and institute other measures that can calm traffic and improve traffic safety.
- Give municipalities greater ability to make safety related improvements by reducing the barriers municipalities encounter when seeking to lower speed limits.
- Allow additional municipalities to pilot automated technology to promote traffic safety equitably. Pilot programs would need required analysis. This would include an equity analysis that assesses impacts of automated technology on communities of color, as well as evaluations of the technology's effectiveness with reducing speeding and opportunities to dedicate potential revenues to safety improvements.
- Identify dedicated resources that provide local governments with comprehensive support to implement [ADA provisions](#).

CMAP supports improved access to funding resources and information

Federal actions

- Fully fund new programs authorized by IIJA. Programs include the Healthy Streets program for resilience improvements and the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment program for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Increase transparency and coordination with regions around new resilience formula funding, such as IIJA Carbon Reduction and PROTECT. A more transparent, coordinated approach would ensure these programs are not being transferred or flexed to fund projects with minimal improvements to resilience and carbon reduction.
- Establish a pilot program that gives greater authority to large MPOs to directly fund and select projects through a funding mechanism that allows regions to address carbon reduction, resilience, and safety.
- Encourage the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to provide a formal schedule that details when competitive grant awards will be announced once application windows close. Additional improvements could provide successful grantees a target date for a completed grant agreement. All these improvements should be made available through a public dashboard online to identify and address delays in the time between grant awards and contracts.

State actions

- Institute performance-based planning and project selection measures for investments funded through IIJA and make these metrics publicly available.
- Modernize processes for making transportation funding decisions. This should prioritize demonstrable system needs, align with federal funding and regional plans, and promote transparency.
- Ensure revenues from motor vehicle fuel taxes can support holistic transportation system needs.

Climate

The growing threat of climate change continues to test the resilience of northeastern Illinois. Over the past decade, CMAP's seven-county region [reduced greenhouse gas emissions by a mere 9 percent](#), setting a pace that will fall short of ON TO 2050's goal to cut regional emissions by 80 percent by 2050. To prevent the most severe impacts of climate change, the region will need to reduce emissions by 5 percent every year through 2050.

But progress has been made at a state and federal level. The Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act puts Illinois on a path toward a 100 percent clean energy future by 2050 through investments in renewable energy and clean energy job creation. The state's Reimagining Electric Vehicles Act introduced new incentives to strengthen Illinois' competitiveness as a hub for electric vehicle manufacturing. The federal infrastructure law commits an unprecedented level of investment toward clean energy and resilience.

But more work remains to be done. And transportation is a key component to a sustainable and resilient region going forward. Today, the transportation sector is the largest source of emissions in Illinois, increasing the need for policies that can mitigate congestion and protect northeastern Illinois' communities from greater climate risks.

Policies that enhance support for transit and other transportation modes that can ease congestion and reduce carbon emissions are critical actions toward a more sustainable northeastern Illinois. Yet, the effects of the pandemic continue to compound concerns. The region's transit agencies (Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace) already are bracing for an expected budget shortfall of \$730 million by 2026 largely due to ridership drops in the wake of the pandemic. The following lists the climate policy positions and priorities that CMAP supports on both the federal and state levels.

CMAP supports stronger policies that can reduce emissions and congestion

Federal actions

- Increase funding for transit available under the Highway Trust Fund and increase other transportation system user fees.
- Prioritize and direct current funding streams to mass transit systems with the greatest infrastructure needs and highest number of passengers. Increase federal support for the operating costs of these systems.
- Revise federal requirements to eliminate the funding disparity between transit projects and highway projects. This could include increasing the federal share under the Federal

Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts grant program from 60 to 80 percent for projects that extend the transit system.

- Provide greater flexibility to use toll revenues to address strategic goals with multimodal transportation and carbon reductions. Greater flexibility could include providing high-speed, more reliable transit service to improve expressway corridors.
- Adopt aggressive emission standards for post-model-year 2026 to accelerate the transition of low- and zero-emissions fleets.
- Create a uniform "Buy America" waiver process across USDOT's agencies, including FHWA and FTA, for projects that are proven to improve air quality substantially.

State actions

- Provide resources and incentives for local governments to complete the community energy, climate, and jobs plans as described in the state Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. The job plans are intended to support local governments with developing comprehensive approaches to combining and funding local energy, climate, and jobs programs.
- Invest equitably in electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the northeastern Illinois region to maximize access.
- Establish state transportation emissions reduction goals that align with federally required greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and Illinois' carbon reduction strategy.

CMAP supports planning for a stronger and more resilient climate

Federal actions

- Allow MPOs to use the Resilience Improvement Plan established by IIJA to qualify for the 90 percent federal share for formula funds within the urbanized area covered by the plan.
- Increase funding eligibility and coordination for water, wastewater, and stormwater improvements and planning to regions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should leverage the ability of regional planning agencies to assist disadvantaged communities with accessing federal and state funds.
- Modernize policies related to flooding. This could include making risk information available for property sales. It also could include reforming the National Flood Insurance Program to develop long-term solutions, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Risk Rating 2.0 system, for properties that either are at high risk of flooding or have experienced repetitive losses because of flooding.
- Encourage the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to provide regular updates of its precipitation reports, Atlas 14, to ensure future planning and investment decisions can withstand the impacts of extreme weather events.
- Increase investments that maintain the health, recreational attractiveness, and economic benefits of Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes by providing stable, long-term funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The initiative accelerates efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes — the largest system of fresh surface water in the world.

State actions

- Dedicate new and sustainable revenues to support state and regional water planning and enhanced coordination among the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois State Water Survey, Illinois Water Inventory Program, and regional partners.
- Coordinate and standardize requirements for community water supplier reporting. Improve the sharing of data across agencies and partners to better support integrated water resources management.
- Promote equity in water infrastructure investments supported by the state revolving loan fund. This could include capacity within communities of low income to promote access to loans.
- Update statewide design standards to reflect green infrastructure techniques and precipitation trends.

Regional Economic Competitiveness

While the pandemic has reinforced many of the region's economic challenges, it also has provided new opportunities to advance inclusive growth and build on the northeastern Illinois' reputation as the premier freight hub in North America.

When supply shortages happened at the start of the pandemic, northeastern Illinois' multimodal transportation system continued to move goods to different parts of the country. Freight truck travel in the region declined modestly (10 percent), remaining elevated over nationwide declines (13 percent) in summer 2020. Northeastern Illinois moves about \$3 trillion in goods each year by truck, rail, water, and air freight. The region is the intersection for commercial activity in the country — home to ten interstate highways, six of the nation's seven largest railroads, and one of the world's busiest cargo airports.

The [2020 Census figures](#), meanwhile, showed northeastern Illinois adding population and becoming more diverse, while our workforce continued to age with the baby boomer generation entering retirement age and birth rates declining. The region's essential workers, who are disproportionately people of color, continued to rely on transit to reach their jobs at all hours of the day during the height of the pandemic, even as the region's travel habits were shifting because of remote work. These trends emphasize the need for policies that can ensure northeastern Illinois remains economically competitive in more inclusive and thriving ways.

CMAAP's federal and state partners can help the region better prioritize strategic and sustainable development practices, strengthen housing coordination, encourage regional innovation, improve access to high quality jobs, and promote investment in communities that have felt the brunt of disinvestment for decades. Local governments will continue to play an essential role in our region's post-pandemic recovery, increasing the need for regional collaboration and shared service delivery to foster a stronger and more resilient economy. The following lists the economic policy positions and priorities that CMAAP supports on both the federal and state levels.

CMAP supports stronger inclusive economic growth and reduced economic disparities

Federal actions

- Amend the national highway goals in 23 U.S.C. § 150 to add a measure for how well the transportation system connects people to jobs and services.
- Create a demonstration grant to provide reduced fares for riders of low income to help close transit equity gaps.
- Ensure federal investments from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) are comprehensive and strategic through increased coordination with MPOs, especially in regions without an “Economic Development District.”
- Continue American Rescue Plan Act EDA programs and funding levels that support regional economic development. This includes the Build Back Better Challenge, the Good Jobs Challenge, and the Economic Adjustment Assistance program.
- Support place-based housing mobility solutions, including funding for efforts led by regional housing authorities.
- Increase funding for re-employment, skilling, and reskilling programs authorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act that can enhance, implement, and expand career pathway programs.

State actions

- Authorize local jurisdictions to create a pilot program to test [income-based fines](#), escalating fines, or other alternative traffic enforcement structures that consider a driver’s ability to pay that may be below the statutory minimum.
- Expand reporting of traffic violation fines and ticketing outcomes to allow for analysis with an equity lens.
- Provide funding for local governments to study implementation of innovative partnerships, including shared-services models.
- Further enable public-private partnerships for regional infrastructure, including providing resources for innovative financing, advancing design-build strategies, and promoting workforce equity.

CMAP supports increased opportunities for comprehensive planning and economic development

Federal actions

- Require FHWA and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide MPOs with comprehensive technical assistance and support for the newly authorized regional housing coordination plan process. Ensure MPOs have maximum flexibility to fund everything that is individually eligible within the housing coordination process.
- Make programs like the Thriving Communities Initiative permanent through the reauthorization process so that investment decisions across transportation, land use, and housing have long-term federal support from HUD and USDOT.
- Provide targeted assistance and funding through programs like the Thriving Communities Initiative to build communities’ capacity. This includes support for Phase 1 engineering, a major barrier that many disadvantaged communities face when planning local projects.

- Create a joint office between USDOT, HUD, and EDA to provide comprehensive support to regions with federal funding opportunities that address transportation, housing, and economic development.

State actions

- Provide annual funding to support implementation of the Regional Planning Act and comprehensive planning for the state's MPOs
- Increase data sharing and transparency by state and local agencies, especially in instances that could aid in the COVID-19 recovery. This can help inform policymaking with data-driven decisions and regional collaboration.
- Require a [regular audit of all tax abatements](#), diversions, and credits used for economic development to assess their economic and fiscal impacts.
- Grant research partners access to additional information about sales tax rebate agreements (including agreement text and amounts of rebated taxes) through data-use agreements that protect proprietary business data
- Institute tax increment financing (TIF) data reporting standards to allow planners and researchers to assess TIF expenditures, impacts, and the effectiveness of TIF across the region.

CMAP supports improvements that help people and goods move efficiently

Federal actions

- Establish a separate Office of Multimodal Freight within USDOT that comprehensively assesses freight system needs with high quality data sets. This can help inform competitive and formula freight programs based on need and significant national impact.
- Require rail carriers to describe and disclose how existing and future passenger rail service would be impacted in the event of a merger between rail carriers.
- Prioritize grade crossing improvements that will address increased freight traffic and delays due to rail mergers approved by the Surface Transportation Board. These projects should be prioritized for programs that can mitigate the negative impact of freight activities, including the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing Elimination Program.
- Create a transparent data collection program for grade crossings that is regularly updated with quality public data and supports communities most impacted by freight movement.

CMAP supports improvements to local and regional tax policy

State actions

- Modernize the sales tax to increase funding for transportation, reduce economic distortions, and give municipalities more options to generate sufficient revenue from existing and desired development. This can include policies that broaden the state sales tax base to cover additional services.
- Increase state revenue allocation to local governments and reform state revenue disbursement criteria to reduce disparities across municipalities.
- Allow non-home rule municipalities to impose certain kinds of user fees to provide services and better maintain infrastructure.