

MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Board

From: CMAP Regional Policy Implementation (RPI) division

Date: February 11, 2026

Subject: Regional Transportation Plan update

Action Requested: Information

General update

The 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) public questionnaire will close at the end of January. Since its launch at the beginning of this year, CMAP has received more than 1,770 responses from residents across all seven counties of northeastern Illinois. These perspectives offer valuable insights into how residents experience the transportation system, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they would like the region to pursue. After the questionnaire closes, CMAP will review, synthesize, and integrate findings into the draft RTP, which will be made available for public comment during summer 2026.

Financial plan update

Since October, CMAP has been working to update the RTP's fiscal constraint by refining revenue and expenditure forecasts. These activities have consisted of ongoing coordination with implementers on project prioritization efforts and making methodological adjustments that account for recent policy changes. This includes incorporation of the transit revenue package passed by the Illinois General Assembly during veto session, and alignment with the Blue-Ribbon Commission on Transportation Infrastructure Funding and Policy's unanimously approved draft recommendations. As a result of these efforts, staff will share a revised fiscal constraint.

CMAP continues to work with our consultant partners to complete the Financial Plan's risk assessment. Once complete, the risk assessment's sensitivity analyses and scenarios — which explore key financial assumptions, such as the availability of future revenue streams, cost escalation rates, and project delivery schedules — will reveal the conditions under which the fiscal constraint may be at risk. By providing greater transparency into the strengths and limitations of a long-range forecast, this exercise will inform the RTP strategies that can fortify the region's ability to responsibly implement its transportation priorities and support better decision-making in the face of uncertainty.

Next steps for [transitioning to a road usage charge](#)

A key assumption that enables the region to constrain the RTP is the inclusion of reasonably expected revenues (RERs) in the financial plan. As with past financial plans, expenditures for 2027-2050 are projected to exceed the baseline revenues that will be available, underscoring the need for additional revenues to support the transportation system over the planning horizon and beyond. The risk assessment exercise further illustrates how these RERs can be important strategies that mitigate the region's risk to uncertainties, including funding shortages that may be beyond the region's control.

Due to improvements in vehicle fuel efficiency that are contributing to year-over-year reductions in the number of gallons of fuel purchased, the motor fuel tax (MFT) is losing its efficacy as a primary funding source for transportation. Although Rebuild Illinois improved this dynamic by doubling the MFT rate and indexing it to inflation in 2019, MFT revenues are projected to continue growing at a slower rate than transportation costs. For this reason, in line with ON TO 2050 and prior CMAP planning efforts, the financial plan includes the replacement of the MFT with a road usage charge (RUC).

The transition to a RUC would represent a significant shift in the way Illinois pays for transportation. However, it would also be an important step towards a more solvent and efficient system. To support the inclusion of a RUC as a RER, and to discuss the path forward, CMAP has published *Advancing a road usage charge in Illinois*, a whitepaper that presents a framework for future RUC implementation considerations and RUC-related policy questions to explore. The whitepaper recommends a RUC feasibility as the next tangible step towards an innovative, reliable, and context-appropriate RUC program in Illinois.

Regional capital projects

The latest draft of the [Regional Capital Projects \(RCP\) Benefits Report](#) is available on the RCP engagement website. We continue to work with project sponsors and the RCP resource group to review the project information presented in the report and identify the most regionally beneficial RCP candidates to be highlighted as regional priorities in the RTP.

Using the metrics and project information presented in the RCP Benefits Report, feedback from project sponsors, and the balance of transportation revenues and expenditures anticipated to be available to the region through 2050, CMAP drafted a list of RCPs recommended for fiscal constraint in the RTP. The proposed list of fiscally constrained RCPs is attached.

CMAP is also working with the RCP resource group to update the RTP amendment process to provide a better balance of flexibility and transparency as the need for changes to the RTP arise. A memorandum presenting the proposed amendment process for the 2026 RTP is available on the RCP engagement [website](#).

ACTION REQUESTED: Information