



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning

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Chicago, IL 60607

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cmap.illinois.gov

MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

Thursday, January 8, 2026

9:30 AM

Cook County Conference Room
433 West Van Buren Street, Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60607

Members of the public who attend in-person can pre-register for a visitor's pass at info@cmap.illinois.gov until Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. or should plan to arrive early to check-in with the building's information desk for access.

You can also join from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85990958636?pwd=dQ1amZkvYPcly59uT3pmWLCBZNO6ax.1>

Conference Call number: 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 859 9095 8636 Passcode: 634859

CMAF provides the opportunity for public comment. Individuals are encouraged to submit comment by email to info@cmap.illinois.gov at least 24 hours before the meeting. A record of all written public comments will be maintained and made publicly available.

The total cumulative time for public comment is limited to 15 minutes, unless determined otherwise by the Chair. Public comment is limited to three minutes per person unless the Chair designates a longer or shorter time period. Public comments will be invited in this order: Comments from in person attendees submitted ahead of time; comments from in-person attendees not previously submitted; comments from virtual attendees submitted ahead of time; and comments from virtual attendees not previously submitted.

To review CMAF's public participation policy, please visit <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/committees>.

If you require a reasonable accommodation or language interpretation services to attend or join the meeting, please contact CMAF at least five days before the meeting by email (info@cmap.illinois.gov) or phone (312-454-0400).

1.0 Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Gia Biagi called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

Present: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, CTA Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

Noting a physical quorum of the committee, Chair Biagi reported requests were received from Pace Representative Erik Llewellyn and Kendall Co Representative Scott Gengler, to attend the MPO Policy Committee meeting virtually in compliance with the Open Meetings Act requirements.

A motion was made by CMAP Representative Matthew Brolley, seconded by Tollway Representative Karyn Robles, to allow the remote participation of members in compliance with the Open Meetings Act requirements. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Not Present: CTA Representative, Kendall Co Representative and Pace Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

Gia Biagi served as IDOT Representative, Craig Turner served as CDOT Representative, Frank Beal served as CMAP Representative 1, Matt Brolley served as CMAP Representative 2, Tara Orbon served as Cook Co Representative, Molly Poppe served as CTA Representative, Stephen Travia served as DuPage Co Representative, John Paul Diipla served as FHWA Representative, Karyn Robles served as Illinois Tollway Representative, Tom Rickert served as Kane Co Representative, Scott Gengler served as Kendall Co Representative, Shane Schneider served as Lake Co Representative, Scott Hennings served as McHenry Co Representative, Lynnette Ciavarella served as Metra Representative, Erik Llewellyn served as Pace Representative, Jill Leary served as RTA Representative, Thomas Evenson served as Class I Railroads Representative

Staff present: Bill Barnes, Vickie Barrett, Alex Beata, John Carpenter, Christopher Casteneda, Teri Dixon, Kama Dobbs, Elizabeth Ginsberg, Jane Grover, Kasia Hart, Laura Hatt, Aimee Lee, Maren Lutterbach, Martin Menninger, Jen Miller, Tom Murtha, Richard Norwood, Russell Pietrowiak, George Rivera, Kyle Schulz, Ryan Thompto, Jennie Vana, Blanca Vela Schneider, Claire Williams

Others present: Garland Armstrong, Holly Bienemann, Eric Czarnota, Rithvika Dara, Dawn Dina, Jackie Forbes, Michael Fricano, Brandon Geber, Mike Klemens, Gretchen Klock, David Kovarik, Heidi Lichtenberger, Matt Pasquini, Leslie Rauer, Tod Schmidt, Joe Surdam, Megan Swanson, Michael Vanderhoof

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

There were no changes to the agenda.

3.0 Approval of Minutes

3.01 Minutes from October 8, 2025

[25-366](#)

Attachments: [MPO and CMAP Board joint meeting minutes 10.8.25](#)

A motion was made by CDOT Representative Craig Turner, seconded by Kane Co Representative Tom Rickert to approve the October 8, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Not Present: CTA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

4.0 CMAP Announcements

4.01 Executive director's report

[25-363](#)

Executive Director Erin Aleman highlighted the success of the November State of the Region event, which drew nearly 1,000 attendees and marked both CMAP's 20th anniversary and the launch of the Century Plan, the region's new longrange vision scheduled for adoption in October 2027. CMAP will begin broader public engagement in early 2026, including outreach to councils of government, elected officials, and regional stakeholders, supported by site visits and other activities.

She also reported on the recent passage of the Transit Governance and Funding Reform (NITA), noting that while the legislation represents a significant milestone, substantial implementation work will occur through the summer. CMAP will continue to support regional partners as appointments and governance structures are established.

Erin Aleman informed the committee that CMAP's federal recertification review will take place at the end of January, with FHWA and FTA conducting an onsite assessment. Public comments will be accepted from January 13 through February 10 via an online form.

CTA Representative Molly Poppe arrived at 9:41 a.m.

The Executive Director also provided an update on regional safety initiatives, including continued progress under the Safe Travel for All program. A recorded webinar on funding traffic safety improvements, developed with the DuPage Division of Transportation, is now available on CMAP's website. She also noted recent federal grant awards: McHenry County received more than \$2 million for a roundabout project at a highcrash location, and the Village of Evergreen Park received \$200,000 for a pedestrian and cyclist safety demonstration.

Erin Aleman furthermore called attention to the proposed merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk

Southern, which would create the nation's first transcontinental railroad and carries significant implications for northeastern Illinois. Tom Evenson of Union Pacific provided additional context, noting that the regulatory review process is expected to continue into early 2027 and will include opportunities for public comment. He offered to meet individually with members to discuss the proposal.

Director Aleman concluded by reminding members that annual dues letters have been distributed and that dues support the required 20 percent nonfederal match for CMAP's work. She also shared that she received the Motorola Solutions Foundation Excellence in Public Service Award from the Civic Federation.

The executive director's report was received and filed.

4.02 CMAP Board update

[25-364](#)

CMAP Board Member Matt Brolley provided an update on recent Board activities. He reported that at the November Board meeting, members authorized a revolving line of credit (LOC) with BMO Bank and adopted a policy governing the use of the LOC. The Board also approved updates to the CMAP procurement policy.

Member Brolley noted that the Board received updates on both the Century Plan and the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan for Greater Chicago. In addition, Legislative Affairs staff briefed the Board on the passage of Senate Bill 2111.

The CMAP Board update was received and filed.

4.03 Council of Mayors' Executive Committee report

[25-365](#)

Executive Director Erin Aleman presented the Council of Mayors Executive Committee report on behalf of Mayor Schielke. The Council, which includes representatives from each of the eleven Regional Councils of Mayors, last met in September and had a substantive discussion on emerging ecommerce trends and their impacts on municipalities. The Council of Mayors is scheduled to meet again in the upcoming week to appoint members to two project selection committees as well as to the Unified Work Program Committee, an important mechanism for ensuring municipal perspectives are incorporated into regional decision-making.

Director Aleman concluded by noting that the Council's upcoming meeting will also focus on data centers and municipal considerations related to their development.

The Council of Mayors' Executive Committee report was received and filed.

5.0 Items for Approval

5.01 Appointment of chair and vice-chair of the CMAP Transportation Committee

[25-378](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Appointment of chair and vice-chair of the CMAP Transportation Committee](#)

Executive Director Erin Aleman asked the committee to approve the appointment of Tara Orbon from the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways as Chair of the Transportation Committee and Scott Hennings from the McHenry County Division of Transportation as Vice Chair.

MPO Policy Committee Chair Gia Biagi thanked outgoing Transportation Committee Chair Kevin Carrier for his more than two years of service, noting that he stepped in when the position was vacated early. She highlighted his steady leadership, preparation, and engagement.

A motion was made by DuPage Co Representative Stephen Travia, seconded by Lake Co Representative Shane Schneider to approve the appointment of Tara Orban as chair and Scott Hennings as vice-chair of the CMAP Transportation Committee. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, CTA Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

5.02 Draft FY 2027 Unified Work Program (UWP)

[25-377](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Draft FY 2027 Unified Work Program \(UWP\)](#)
[Draft FY 2027 Unified Work Program \(MPO\)](#)

Kama Dobbs, Principal, presented the draft FY2027 Unified Work Program (UWP), which outlines the transportation planning activities required of CMAP as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The UWP describes the planning tasks to be completed, identifies the responsible agencies, establishes timelines, and provides an activitylevel budget for the federal metropolitan planning funds that support this work.

Kama Dobbs explained that the UWP is carried out through two components: the annually developed core program, which covers ongoing federally required planning activities, and the competitive program, a fiveyear cycle used to fund onetime studies that complement core work. For FY27, the combined programs total just under \$35 million. Of this amount, \$28.3 million is preliminarily allocated to CMAP for personnel and expenses, with final amounts to be set following CMAP Board approval of the agency's comprehensive budget in February. Approximately \$6.6 million is proposed for partner agencies, representing a 5.6 percent increase over the prior year; CMAP's allocation reflects a 2.8 percent increase.

Kama Dobbs reviewed the draft core program budget, which was developed from proposals submitted by 15 external agencies and by maintaining CMAP activity levels consistent with the previous year. As in past cycles, the majority of funding supports development and implementation of the region's longrange Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and public participation activities.

She then summarized the competitive program, noting that three eligible applications were received for FY27, requesting roughly \$1 million across fiscal years 2027 through 2029. In addition to the new applications, \$241,500 for Metra remains programmed for FY27 from the prior fiveyear cycle. Detailed project descriptions are included in the draft UWP provided in the meeting materials.

Following CMAP Board approval of the comprehensive budget in February, the UWP will be updated to reflect final personnel and expense allocations. The revised document will be presented for final approval at the March meeting of the MPO Policy Committee before transmittal to IDOT and USDOT.

A motion was made by McHenry Co Representative Scott Hennings, seconded by Kane Co Representative Tom Rickert to approve the Draft FY 2027 Unified Work Program. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, CTA Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

5.03 2026 Roadway Safety Targets

[25-359](#)

Attachments: [Memo Board - 2026 Roadway Safety Targets](#)

Victoria Barrett, Program Lead, presented the proposed 2026 Roadway Safety Targets for approval. She noted that preliminary 2025 data indicate modest declines in statewide fatalities and crashes compared to 2024, though she emphasized that these reductions remain insufficient and underscore the need for broad, systemic change through the Safe System approach.

Victoria Barrett then provided an overview of the federal Transportation Performance Management (TPM) program, which requires states and MPOs to set annual performance targets related to traffic safety. CMAP receives draft targets from Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) each September, conducts an internal review, and brings recommendations through the Transportation Committee before presenting them to the MPO Policy Committee and CMAP Board for concurrence.

She reviewed the five federally required safety performance measures and the methodology used to establish the 2026 targets. Because 2023 and 2024 data were not yet available, the targets are based on 2018-2022 averages. For measures with increasing trends, IDOT applied a 2 percent policy-based reduction to the five-year average; for measures with decreasing trends, a least-squares trend line was used. In each case, IDOT selected the more aggressive of the two methods.

Victoria Barrett summarized the resulting 2026 statewide targets:

Fatalities: 1,077.5

Fatality rate per 100 million VMT: 1.061

Serious injuries: 7,215.5

Serious injury rate per 100 million VMT: 7.595

Non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries: 1,289.3

She noted that while serious injuries have been declining, fatalities remain above pre-pandemic levels, and the targets reflect a shared commitment by IDOT and CMAP to pursue meaningful safety improvements.

She also emphasized that by supporting IDOT's targets, CMAP is not assuming responsibility for achieving a specific share of reductions, rather committing to integrate the targets into the metropolitan planning process and to program projects that advance statewide safety goals.

Victoria Barrett concluded by outlining next steps, including continued development of regional

performance metrics informed by the Safe Travel for All Safety Action Plans and ongoing collaboration with regional partners to establish transparent, action-oriented safety goals.

A motion was made by Tollway Representative Karyn Robles, seconded by DuPage Co Representative Stephen Travia to approve the proposed 2026 roadway safety targets. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, CTA Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

5.04 ON TO 2050/2023-2028 TIP Conformity Analysis and TIP Amendment

[25-375](#)

Attachments: [Memo - TIP Conformity Memo 26-03](#)

Russell Pietrowiak, Program Lead, presented the ON TO 2050-2023-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Conformity Analysis and TIP Amendment 2603, included in the meeting packet. He explained that because the CMAP region is designated as a nonattainment area for ozone under the Clean Air Act, CMAP must demonstrate that all nonexempt TIP projects conform to the region's motor vehicle emissions budget through a regional emissions analysis.

For this amendment, two new nonexempt projects and revisions to eight previously conformed projects required updated modeling. Pietrowiak reported that the analysis confirms the region remains below the established emissions budgets for both volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides, meeting all federal requirements.

The amendment was released for a 30day public comment period ending December 18, during which no comments were received. The conformity findings, modeling process, and regulatory compliance were also reviewed and reaffirmed at the Tier 2 Interagency Consultation meeting on December 6.

A motion was made by CMAP Board Representative Frank Beal, seconded by CMAP Board Representative Matt Brolley to approve the ON TO 2050/2023-2028 TIP Conformity Analysis and TIP amendment 26-03. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, CTA Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

5.05 Transit data sharing agreement

[26-002](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Transit data sharing agreement](#)
[Transit Agreement 2025.11.12](#)

Erin Aleman, Executive Director, presented the updated Transit Data Sharing Agreement for approval. The agreement is part of the Federal Transportation Performance Management framework, which supports financial planning, programming, and performance target setting for MPOs, state DOTs, and transit agencies.

The update primarily codifies practices already in place, including requirements related to data timeliness and agency responsibilities under federal rules. The agreement was codeveloped with all participating agencies and was recommended for approval by the Transportation Committee at its most recent meeting.

A motion was made by Metra Representative Lynnette Ciavarella, seconded by RTA Representative Jill Leary to approve the ON TO 2050/2023-2028 TIP Conformity Analysis and TIP amendment 26-03. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, CTA Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

6.0 Information Items

6.01 2025 CMAP Annual Report

[25-373](#)

Attachments: [Memo 2025 CMAP Annual Report](#)
[2025 CMAP Annual Report](#)

Executive Director Erin Aleman presented CMAP's 2025 Annual Report, Solving for Tomorrow Today, highlighting the agency's accomplishments over the past year. She noted that the report reflects two decades of collaboration across jurisdictions to address complex regional challenges and deliver meaningful results for the residents of northeastern Illinois.

Erin Aleman explained that the Illinois Regional Planning Act requires CMAP to produce an annual report and submit it to the General Assembly. Printed copies will be distributed once available. She emphasized that this year's report showcases CMAP's 20-year history, including major milestones such as the agency's creation in 2007, the completion of two comprehensive regional plans, and other significant achievements.

She highlighted the success of CMAP's first-ever State of the Region event held in November, which celebrated the agency's 20th anniversary and launched the Century Plan. The annual report underscores the Century Plan as a long-term, guiding vision for the seven-county region, shaping future policy direction in transportation, the environment, and the regional economy. Director Aleman emphasized that the plan will serve as a "North Star," helping build consensus and secure bold commitments for the next 20 to 30 years.

Erin Aleman also noted that the report highlights landmark transit legislation passed this year, describing it as a bold statewide commitment to strengthening transit beyond simply addressing funding gaps.

The 2025 CMAP Annual Report was presented.

6.02 Introduction of CMAP's Proposed FY 2027 Work Plan

25-374

Attachments: [Memo FY2027 Draft CMAP Work Plan](#)
[FY2027 Draft CMAP Work Plan](#)

Executive Director Erin Aleman introduced CMAP's proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Work Plan, explaining that while the Unified Work Program outlines federally funded planning activities, the comprehensive work plan serves as the overarching guide for CMAP's agencywide priorities. Erin Aleman noted that CMAP has historically relied on a single, large-scale comprehensive plan, most recently ON TO 2050, to articulate the region's vision and policy direction across transportation, housing, water, and other systems. This year, CMAP is transitioning to a multi-plan framework that will allow the agency and its regional partners to develop a new long-term vision for northeastern Illinois supported by a series of complementary strategic plans.

Erin Aleman stated that the new regional vision will guide planning activities over the next eight to ten years, with future initiatives tailored to transportation, climate, and economic priorities. In addition to these regional plans, CMAP's work is structured by a five-year strategic direction, the annual budget, and a portfolio of more than 30 strategic program areas. These program areas include multi-year projects that advance long-term regional goals and ensure continuity in CMAP's work. Agencywide services - such as communications, engagement, finance, and human resources - are also incorporated into the work plan.

Director Aleman highlighted several key activities planned for FY27, including continued support for local governments through the annual call for projects and technical assistance; expanded data-driven planning for transportation and capital investments; and ongoing work through the Safe and Complete program to help communities develop local road safety, bicycle, and pedestrian plans. CMAP will also continue supporting collaborative programming for the Illinois Highway Safety Improvement Program and advancing regional safety policies.

Erin Aleman noted that CMAP will continue its work on economic competitiveness, including development of a regional economic framework and support for the Greater Chicagoland Economic Partnership. Related efforts include coordinated land use strategies to expand housing options across the region, with active projects underway in Lake, Kane, and McHenry counties.

She added that FY27 will include completion and adoption of the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan, including evaluation and prioritization of regional capital projects. Climate work will also continue as CMAP tailors the broader regional Climate Action Plan to the specific needs of northeastern Illinois, including strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.

Executive Director Erin Aleman concluded by noting that CMAP will continue supporting implementation of the Northern Illinois Transit Authority Act and the Corridor Development Office for the I-290 and Blue Line corridor.

The proposed FY 2027 work plan was presented.

6.03 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update

[25-386](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\) update](#)
[Draft RCP Constraint List 2026.01](#)

Ryan Thompto, Principal Policy Analyst at CMAP, provided an in-depth update on the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), with a focus on the fiscal constraint analysis and the proposed list of Regional Capital Projects (RCPs). He noted that the region is entering the final phase of plan development, with strategy identification nearing completion, drafting underway, and work progressing toward finalizing RCPs and conducting air quality conformity analysis. He outlined the upcoming timeline, including a return to the committee in March with a summary of strategies, completion of conformity analysis in late spring, release of the draft plan for public comment in June, and anticipated Board and MPO consideration for adoption in the fall.

Thompto provided historical and policy context for the regional transportation planning process, explaining that while much of the work is driven by federal requirements, the underlying purpose is to manage competing priorities and limited resources in a large and complex region. He described the guiding principle of prioritized investment, emphasizing the need to make transparent, data-driven trade-offs to ensure that limited transportation dollars deliver the greatest benefit to people and communities across northeastern Illinois. He noted that this is especially critical given the region's aging infrastructure, significant state-of-good-repair needs, and rising construction costs.

He reviewed the origins and role of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), including the federal requirement for a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3C) planning process, and explained how Illinois integrated transportation planning with broader land use and economic planning through the creation of CMAP. He highlighted CMAP's responsibilities in managing the RTP, the Transportation Improvement Program, allocation of certain federal funds, maintenance of travel models and data resources, and facilitation of inclusive public engagement.

Turning to the financial plan, Thompto explained that federal regulations require the RTP to demonstrate that sufficient funding can be reasonably expected to be available to support planned investments. He recalled that an earlier draft presented in October showed investment needs far exceeding projected revenues and noted that subsequent discussions with partners helped refine priorities and narrow the project list. He reported that the current draft fiscal constraint is balanced at approximately \$570 billion in revenues and expenditures over the plan period and reflects only the proposed constrained list of RCPs. Updates to revenue assumptions include changes authorized in state legislation, revised sales tax forecasting methodologies, and placeholder estimates for interest earnings.

Despite these adjustments, Thompto emphasized that baseline revenues remain insufficient to operate, maintain, and improve the existing system, and that additional enhancements and capacity expansions depend on the implementation of new, reasonably expected revenue sources. He reviewed five categories of such revenues included in the plan, including sales tax modernization, a new regional revenue source, freight delivery fees, expanded tolling associated with reconstruction projects, and a transition from the motor fuel tax to a road usage charge. He referenced CMAP's recently published white paper on advancing a road usage charge in Illinois and noted that a feasibility study would be a next step.

Thompto also described the financial risk assessment underway, explaining that it is intended to

evaluate uncertainties related to economic conditions, policy changes, and implementation challenges over the 20-plus-year planning horizon. He noted that the assessment increases transparency, supports better decision-making, and helps identify strategies to reduce exposure to risk and improve the plan's resilience.

With respect to the RCPs, he reviewed the project identification and evaluation process, including solicitation of candidate projects, technical evaluation, and one-on-one meetings with implementing partners to discuss priorities and readiness. He explained that CMAP has begun meeting with agency leadership to confirm priorities and that this outreach will continue over the coming months. He outlined the goal of finalizing the constrained project list in time for the March MPO meeting to allow air quality conformity analysis to proceed.

CMAP reviewed the structure of the project portfolio, distinguishing between the unconstrained list of illustrative projects and the constrained list of near-term and long-term projects eligible for federal funding. He also highlighted the designation of priority projects and programs that perform well across multiple evaluation criteria and advance regional goals.

Finally, Thompto discussed proposed updates to the RTP amendment process, noting feedback from the RCP Resource Group regarding unclear procedures when project scope, cost, or assumptions change after plan adoption. He described proposed changes to establish multiple amendment categories, clarify timelines and expectations, and introduce a variance policy for limited, time-sensitive situations, with the goal of improving transparency, consistency, and flexibility while continuing to meet federal requirements.

Thompto concluded by reiterating that all materials remain in draft form and that continued engagement with partner agencies will inform refinements before the plan is brought forward for public review and eventual adoption.

Following the presentation, Tara Orbon (Cook County) asked a clarifying question regarding the relationship between the constrained and unconstrained lists of Regional Capital Projects (RCPs) and eligibility for federal funding. She noted that projects must be on the constrained list to be eligible for federal funds and sought confirmation that this includes eligibility for final Phase 1 design approval. She referenced the current definition of RCPs, which now includes lane additions, and asked how this applies to projects already in local programs that may include added capacity on portions of the system.

Tara Orbon further inquired about what level of information CMAP would need if an agency has a project that meets the RCP thresholds but does not currently see it reflected on the list. In particular, she asked whether full construction cost estimates are required if a project has not yet completed Phase 1 engineering.

In response, Ryan Thompto clarified that agencies would need to provide the same type of information requested during the initial call for candidate projects, including high-level scope, project limits, and planning-level cost estimates. He emphasized that detailed engineering-level data is not required at this stage. He also explained that while agencies may proceed with Phase 1 engineering without being designated as an RCP, final Phase 1 approval cannot be granted unless the project is included on the constrained list, unless an amendment is pursued. Additionally, he noted that earlier planning studies that are not part of the Phase 1 process do not require inclusion on the constrained

list and may move forward independently.

The RTP update was presented.

6.04 Freight in northeastern Illinois update

26-001

Attachments: [Memo - Freight in northeastern Illinois](#)

Alex Beata, Director of the Regional Policy and Implementation Division, and Tom Murtha, Senior Planner, presented a high-level overview of the regional freight system, its scale, usage, and economic importance to northeastern Illinois. Alex Beata explained that the presentation was intended to provide context for future freight policy discussions and to highlight the magnitude of freight activity in the region, its economic impacts, and CMAP's ongoing freight planning work.

Beata described northeastern Illinois as the freight hub of North America, noting the region's extensive multimodal network, including more than 30,000 miles of highways, nearly 4,000 miles of freight rail lines, approximately 20 intermodal yards, three ports connecting to the Great Lakes and Mississippi River systems, two major cargo airports (O'Hare and Midway), an extensive pipeline network, and more than one billion square feet of industrial land supporting warehousing, logistics, and fulfillment. He emphasized the region's historic role as the meeting point of eastern and western railroads and its continued significance in national freight movement.

He reported that more than \$1 trillion in goods and over 700 million tons move through the region annually, with some expressways carrying more than 40,000 trucks per day. He noted that approximately one in three rail cars nationally pass through northeastern Illinois, that about half of all intermodal activity touches the Chicago region, and that significant waterborne and air cargo activity occurs through facilities such as the Dresden Island lock and dam and O'Hare International Airport. Alex Beata also discussed long-term growth trends, including a nearly 30 percent increase in intermodal lift activity since 2000 and projected growth of nearly 40 percent in truck vehicle miles traveled by 2050.

Tom Murtha then reviewed the economic impacts of freight activity, noting that the core freight industries-rail, trucking, and marine-support more than 124,000 jobs across approximately 13,000 establishments, with additional employment in freight-related industries bringing the total to more than 200,000 jobs. He explained that freight activity supports a significant portion of the region's economy, including manufacturing and other goods-producing industries, and that approximately one-quarter of regional jobs depend on the efficient movement of goods. He also highlighted the region's strong value-added role, noting that while more tonnage is brought into the region than exported, the dollar value of outbound goods exceeds inbound value by approximately \$100 billion.

Alex Beata concluded by outlining CMAP's ongoing freight planning and technical assistance efforts, including the Regional Freight System Assessment, freight studies and data development, truck routing and grade crossing analyses, work with the Illinois International Port District, and the integration of freight priorities into CMAP's legislative and advocacy agendas. He encouraged members to review the Regional Freight System Assessment project materials and invited questions from the committee.

Thomas Evenson, Class I Railroads representative, thanked CMAP staff for their focus on and attention to the freight industry, noting that the railroads invest hundreds of millions of dollars annually in their Illinois networks, including approximately \$100 million by Union Pacific alone. He

expressed appreciation for the continued partnership with CMAP, counties, municipalities, and IDOT in strengthening the regional freight network through initiatives such as CREATE. He also stated that the proposed UP-NS merger is expected to further strengthen Chicago's role as the nation's freight hub by improving terminal efficiency for both passenger and freight operations.

The update on freight in Northeastern Illinois was presented.

6.05 Legislative update

[25-379](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Legislative update](#)

Kasia Hart, Principal, Intergovernmental Affairs, provided a federal and state legislative update. On the federal side, she reported that FY26 appropriations discussions have resumed following the government reopening, with the continuing resolution set to expire January 30 and significant differences remaining between House and Senate THUD (Transportation, Housing and Urban Development) proposals. She also noted that congressional committees are advancing work on surface transportation reauthorization, with expected draft language in the coming months and early signals pointing to program consolidation, increased state authority, and permitting reform; CMAP is actively engaging with the delegation and advancing regional reauthorization principles.

On the state side, Kasia Hart highlighted the signing of SB 21111, the Comprehensive Funding and Reform Package, which includes approximately \$1.5 billion in transit investment. She described the legislation as a major milestone while emphasizing the significant work ahead to stand up the new agency and implement system improvements. She noted key upcoming dates, including the June 1 effective date and the timeline for new board appointments, and concluded with an overview of the General Assembly's near-term schedule.

The legislative update was presented.

7.0 Other Business

There was no other business before the committee.

8.0 Public Comment

This is an opportunity for comments from members of the audience.

Garland Armstrong provided public comment remotely, offering congratulations to Scott Hennings on his appointment as Vice Chair of the Transportation Committee and expressing appreciation for his leadership in McHenry County. Garland Armstrong also raised concerns regarding potential impacts of increased freight activity on Metra service, including delays, station accessibility, noise, and challenges for riders with disabilities, particularly in communities such as Elmhurst. He urged advance communication and coordination to ensure commuters are well prepared.

9.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2026.

10.0 Adjournment

A motion was made by CMAP Representative Frank Beal, seconded by CDOT Representative Craig Turner to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: CDOT Representative, CMAP Representative 1, CMAP Representative 2, Cook Co Representative, CTA Representative, DuPage Co Representative, IDOT Representative, Kane Co Representative, Kendall Co Representative, Lake Co Representative, McHenry Co Representative, Metra Representative, Pace Representative, RTA Representative and Tollway Representative

Absent: CoM Representative and Will Co Representative

Non-Voting: Class I Railroads Representative and FHWA Representative

Absent (NV): FTA Representative

The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Maren Lutterbach