

MEMORANDUM

To: MPO Policy Committee

From: Alex Beata, Director

Date: March 12, 2026

Subject: Corridor planning for congestion management

Action Requested: Information

CMAP will provide an update on the Congestion Management Process (CMP), with a focus on corridor planning for congestion management. During the committee meeting, the subject matter experts will provide an update on deliverables completed to date and upcoming work related to corridor planning for congestion management.

Overview of Congestion Management Process deliverables

Federal regulations require that urbanized areas with populations greater than 200,000 maintain a CMP that “provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy.”¹ The development, establishment, and implementation of the CMP is intended to be incorporated into the overall metropolitan transportation planning process.

To support the region's approach to the CMP, in September 2025, CMAP published the [Congestion Management Strategy Guidebook](#) as a resource for transportation agencies, local governments, and other planning partners responsible for reducing congestion and improving system performance. The guidebook outlines strategies aligned with regional transportation goals and provides a framework for decision-making.

Additionally, in November 2025, CMAP published the [Comprehensive Corridor Study Template](#), a companion resource to the guidebook. The template provides a standardized approach to plan for the implementation of the strategies laid out in the guidebook at the corridor level, with a focus on encouraging multiagency and multijurisdictional collaboration.

Corridor planning for congestion management

To advance implementation of the CMP, CMAP will begin a pilot study for corridor planning. The pilot seeks to provide planning partners the opportunity to apply the strategies outlined in the guidebook and corridor study template to the unique context of one of the region's

longstanding congested corridors. The pilot study will convene roadway agencies, transit service boards, community members, and other partners to identify key issues early in the planning process and gain consensus on corridor-level challenges and opportunities. Based on feedback from the CMP Resource Group, CMAP is focused on regional arterials for the initial pilot, using reliability measures to assess system performance.

In summer 2025, to identify potential arterial corridors for a pilot study, CMAP staff collected travel time data for facilities on the National Highway System. Staff calculated three reliability measures using data for weekday morning and afternoon peak periods in 2024. Staff then identified segments in the top 20 percent for each of the three reliability measures and then grouped these locations into contiguous segments based on logical termini.

Other factors besides reliability were important selecting a pilot corridor. To inform the prioritization of the corridors, CMAP staff collected data in the following areas:

- Reference information (e.g., jurisdiction, length, and AADT)
- Congestion data
- Planned or programmed improvements
- Planning considerations (e.g., asset condition, public transit, and freight activity)
- Prior CMAP technical assistance projects

The corridor identification process resulted in 16 priority corridors, predominantly located in Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Will counties. CMAP staff grouped these corridors into three broad typologies based on similar characteristics:

- Multi-use urban corridors: Corridors located in highly urbanized that serve a variety of modes, including many pedestrians and transit riders, and have limited right-of-way.
- Traditional suburban arterials: Corridors that have fewer right-of-way limitations and generally lower-density and more automobile-oriented land uses.
- Limited-access arterials: High-capacity roadways that have grade-separated interchanges at some locations and signalized intersections at others.

In fall 2025 and winter 2026, CMAP discussed these results with a resource group of regional transportation stakeholders, the Transportation Committee, and a series of one-on-one meetings with agency staff. Based on the results of that outreach, CMAP identified the **IL 50/Cicero Avenue corridor, from 55th Street to the north to 167th Street to the south**, as the location for the pilot corridor study. Spanning the City of Chicago and southwest suburban communities in Cook County, this corridor experiences recurring congestion, unreliable travel times, and a relatively high incidence of crashes. Further, there is potential for substantial land use change at large redevelopment sites along the corridor.

Next steps

CMAP is currently working through the procurement process to initiate the pilot Cicero Avenue corridor study, with technical work expected to begin in the second quarter of 2026. In the meantime, staff is engaging with municipal and agency representatives along the corridor to introduce the upcoming study.

In addition, CMAP plans to include the content related to this effort in the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This reference will highlight the need for congestion management on key arterial corridors as a planning priority for the region.

To advance a regional approach to congestion management, additional corridor studies may be pursued in the future following the Cicero Avenue pilot study, with a focus on the priority corridors identified through the corridor identification process.

¹ Congestion management process in transportation management areas, 23 C.F.R. § 450.322 (2025), <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-23/chapter-I/subchapter-E/part-450/subpart-C/section-450.322>.

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