

An aerial photograph of a town, likely in northeastern Illinois, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, a large parking lot, and a river or lake in the background. The town is surrounded by greenery and trees.

# Strengthen Communities

## Realize the potential of the Regional Planning Act

HB3784 (Rep. Will Davis, Rep. Elizabeth “Lisa” Hernandez, Rep. Robert “Bob” Rita, Rep. Brad Stephens, Rep. Dan Ugaste, Rep. Eva-Dina Delgado, and Rep. Martin Moylan)

### Strengthen communities, invest in CMAP

An investment in the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is an investment in the 284 municipalities and 7 counties the agency serves. The proposed legislation appropriates \$2 million to CMAP to support the planning functions and programs required in the Illinois Regional Planning Act to:

- Build capacity and deliver technical assistance to local governments
- Collect, exchange, share, analyze, evaluate, model, and share data
- Develop the comprehensive regional plan that addresses transportation, land use, housing, natural resource management, water supply, flood control, economic development, and more (ON TO 2050)
- Foster meaningful and equitable engagement
- Inform and shape land use and transportation policies
- Plan for a coordinated and integrated regional transportation system
- Plan for safe and equitable transportation investments
- Produce official forecasts for growth

This investment will strengthen CMAP’s valuable planning work in partnership with counties and municipalities in northeastern Illinois. An appropriation to CMAP to meet the demand for planning services realizes the potential of the Regional Planning Act’s directive *that funding shall be provided to CMAP to support those functions and programs.*

### Communities face unmet needs

**More than half of the 284 municipalities in northeastern Illinois do not have on-staff planning professionals and many cannot secure the resources required** to strategically plan for economic growth, collectively coordinate infrastructure improvements, and collaboratively plan for future development. Even fewer have recently adopted plans that guide their local priorities and fundable projects. Local governments in the region need additional resources to support essential planning activities that drive growth, enhance transportation and safety, improve quality of life, and access critical funding.

## CMAP responds to the call

In 2024, CMAP received 122 applications in response to its annual call for [technical assistance](#) project proposals but was only able to award a quarter of those projects to its local partners. CMAP helps to fill the gap for many communities, but the local need exceeds the agency's ability to provide planning assistance.

Since 2012, CMAP has conducted a biennial municipal survey to understand local government needs and priorities. In 2024, we heard from a record 246 municipalities (an 86 percent response rate), further echoing our regional partners' desire to collaborate with CMAP.

## Expand funding to support community needs

CMAP derives most of its funding from the federal government for the activities associated with being a federally designated metropolitan planning organization. These funds can only be used for eligible transportation related uses and our ongoing engagement has revealed that local governments' needs go beyond the limits of this federal funding.

Reliable funding from the Illinois General Assembly would allow CMAP to expand its support to counties and municipalities and be more responsive to their planning needs.

## CMAP's levers: what we do



### Plan regionally and locally

CMAP works with our partners to develop and implement the region's 30-year comprehensive plan (ON TO 2050). This guides transportation investments and other regional priorities.



### Influence change

CMAP collaborates with our partners to influence and advance policies that make northeastern Illinois a stronger, more resilient place to live. We convene and engage on issues where no consensus agenda presently exists. We facilitate dialogue with government partners, community organizations, stakeholders, and the public. And we inform and engage diverse audiences in planning, consensus building, and decision making.

CMAP also produces a wide variety of data, including community snapshots at the regional, county, and municipal levels. We research, analyze, forecast, model, and share data to help communities assess complex regional issues.



### Invest strategically

CMAP manages competitive funding processes to carry out our required federal and state planning functions. We provide planning services to communities to get them in the pipeline for local infrastructure projects funded through the Transportation Improvement Program — strengthening local partners' access to funding to design and build critical community infrastructure projects.

### Questions?

John Carpenter, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs  
[jcarpenter@cmap.illinois.gov](mailto:jcarpenter@cmap.illinois.gov)

Visit [cmap.illinois.gov](http://cmap.illinois.gov) for more information



Chicago Metropolitan  
Agency for Planning