



CMAP BOARD

MEETING MINUTES - FINAL

Wednesday, March 11, 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 March 10, 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/82917643166?pwd=T5D697gzTxXjvaPBrescB9BeRxuTB1.1>

Conference Call number: 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 829 1764 3166 Passcode: 056489

CMAP 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 CMAP'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 CMAP 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 Bennett called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Present: Gerald Bennett, Frank Beal, Matthew Brolley, Jada Curry, Nina Idemudia, John Noak, Richard Reinbold, Nancy Rotering, Joanna Ruiz, Carolyn Schofield, Anne Sheahan, Matthew Walsh, Jung Yoon and Kouros Mohammadian

Absent: Gary Grasso and Paul Hoefert

Noting a physical quorum of the Board, Chair Bennett reported requests were received from Members Nina Idemudia, John Noak, Anne Sheahan and Jung Yoon to attend the meeting virtually in compliance with the Open Meets Act. A vote is needed to approve their virtual attendance.

A motion was made by Member Nancy Rotering, seconded by Member Carolyn Schofield, to permit Members Nina Idemudia, John Noak, Anne Sheahan and Jung Yoon to participate in the meeting in accordance with Open Meetings Act requirements. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Gerald Bennett, Frank Beal, Matthew Brolley, Jada Curry, Richard Reinbold, Nancy Rotering, Joanna Ruiz, Carolyn Schofield and Matthew Walsh

Absent: Gary Grasso and Paul Hoefert

Non-Voting: Kouros Mohammadian

Not Present: Nina Idemudia, John Noak, Anne Sheahan and Jung Yoon

Staff present: Erin Aleman, Bill Barnes, Vas Boykovskyy, John Carpenter, Austen Edwards, Elizabeth Ginsberg, Ryan Gougis, Kasia Hart, Aimee Lee, Maren Lutterbach, George Rivera, Kyle Schulz, Ryan Thompto, Jennie Vana, Blanca Vela-Schneider, Elizabeth Scott, Ismet Sulamc, Claire Williams

Others present: Garland Armstrong, Eric Czarnota, Heidi Files, Neil James, George Kandathil, Gretchen Klock, David Kovarik, Brian Larson, Heidi Lichtenberger, Megan Miller, Leslie Rauer, Vicky Smith, Joe Surdam, Adalee Wasikonis

(Non-voting CMAP Board Member Kouros Mohammadian arrived at 9:39 a.m. CMAP Board Member Nina Idemudia arrived at 9:40 a.m. CMAP Board Member Matt Walsh arrived at 9:46 a.m.)

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

There were no changes to the agenda.

2.01 Executive Director's report

[26-050](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Executive Director report](#)

Executive Director Erin Aleman provided several agency updates. She reminded the Board that CMAP's Technical Assistance Program will open its annual call for projects on March 30, closing April 17. This year includes a new node-oriented development assistance category focused on strengthening activity centers - such as recreation areas, healthcare districts, higher education campuses, and downtowns - through improved walkability and coordinated land use and transportation planning. CMAP will host virtual open houses on April 2 and April 8 for interested communities.

Aleman reported on ongoing regional housing work, including a recent Housing Lake County Summit, thanking local leaders for their participation. She noted the strong engagement and the development of a pro-housing toolkit to help reduce barriers to affordable housing. Similar work is underway in

McHenry County in partnership with the Urban Land Institute, including an assessment of local housing readiness. CMAP also released a housing rehabilitation toolkit to support reinvestment in existing homes as a strategy to increase housing supply and affordability.

She also highlighted CMAP's new Transportation Resiliency Improvement Plan (TRIP), developed to strengthen the region's infrastructure against extreme weather. Once approved by the Federal Highway Administration, the plan will make CMAP and local partners eligible for higher federal match ratios. Recommendations are already being incorporated into the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan.

Erin Aleman then summarized recent legislative activities and provided an update on HB 4689, a bill proposing that CMAP lead a regional water governance assessment. She clarified that while CMAP has substantial experience in water supply planning, the agency would require dedicated funding for any additional responsibilities. Aleman also referenced the Governor's BUILD proposal, which includes housing, zoning, and permitting reforms intended to support missing middle housing production. She noted that CMAP is monitoring the proposal while recognizing the challenges presented by diverse local land use authority across the region.

Chair Gerald Bennett addressed the state's proposed zoning and housing reforms, stressing that while additional housing is needed, he strongly opposes any legislation that removes or overrides local zoning authority. Bennett noted that CMAP and local governments have spent decades planning for housing, encouraging infill development, and aligning land use with community goals. He stated that housing challenges stem primarily from costs, including construction and property taxes, rather than zoning barriers. He shared that the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is seeking a task force to discuss the potential impacts of the Governor's proposal and ensure local voices are included as bills move forward.

Erin Aleman concluded by previewing the meeting agenda, including an update on the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan, and a panel discussion on economic trends, workforce and site readiness, and regional strategies to strengthen long-term competitiveness. She also highlighted an upcoming Century Plan event on the future of industrial development in Oswego.

The Executive Director's report was presented.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Group Vote

A motion was made by Member Matt Brolley, seconded by Member Jada Curry, to approve agenda items 3.01 through 4.01 under the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Gerald Bennett, Frank Beal, Matthew Brolley, Jada Curry, Nina Idemudia, John Noak, Richard Reinbold, Nancy Rotering, Joanna Ruiz, Carolyn Schofield, Anne Sheahan and Matthew Walsh

Absent: Gary Grasso and Paul Hoefert

Non-Voting: Kouros Mohammadian

Not Present: Jung Yoon

3.0 Approval of Minutes

3.01 Minutes from February 11, 2026

[26-051](#)

Attachments: [2.11.26 CMAP Board meeting minutes draft](#)

Agenda items 3.01 through 4.01 were approved under the Consent Agenda.

4.0 Other Items for Approval

4.01 Report on Line of Credit (LOC) utilization

[26-065](#)

Attachments: [Memo - LOC report - March 2026](#)

Agenda items 3.01 through 4.01 were approved under the Consent Agenda.

REGULAR AGENDA

5.0 Executive Session

5.01 Executive Session to review closed session minutes pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(21)

[26-052](#)

The Board did not enter into Executive Session.

The agenda item was withdrawn.

5.02 Action on the recommendation regarding closed session minutes

[26-053](#)

A motion was made by Member Frank Beal, seconded by Member Nancy Rotering, to approve the staff's recommendation to release the closed session minutes. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Aye: Gerald Bennett, Frank Beal, Matthew Brolley, Jada Curry, Nina Idemudia, John Noak, Richard Reinbold, Nancy Rotering, Joanna Ruiz, Carolyn Schofield, Anne Sheahan and Matthew Walsh

Absent: Gary Grasso and Paul Hoefert

Non-Voting: Kouros Mohammadian

Not Present: Jung Yoon

6.0 Information Items

6.01 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update

[26-057](#)

Attachments: [Memo - RTP update](#)
[Draft RTP priority investments](#)
[Draft RTP constraint list](#)
[Draft RTP objectives and strategies](#)

Ryan Thompto, Principal Policy Analyst, provided an update on the development of the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the region's long-range blueprint guiding transportation investments for the next 25 years. He noted that CMAP is in an intensive phase of work as it prepares to release the draft plan for public comment in June. Thompto highlighted progress on strategy development, project prioritization, and the financial plan. Draft RTP strategies were included in the Board packet, and CMAP continues extensive engagement with regional partners. He noted that discussions with implementing agencies have been highly collaborative, particularly regarding rising transportation costs and the need to phase or refine projects to meet fiscal constraints.

The current draft fiscally constrained project list - which identifies projects eligible for federal funding and approvals - was shared with the Board. Required air quality conformity analysis will begin later this month.

Thompto then focused on a new feature of the RTP: a proposed list of priority investments. This list responds to federal certification review recommendations, stakeholder input, and feedback from civic and community groups. It aims to sharpen regional priorities, elevate multimodal investments, and better position the region for federal discretionary funding. The list includes 15 priority investments spanning major corridors as well as programmatic categories such as transit station accessibility and connected bicycle/pedestrian networks.

Thompto noted that the list has been well received by the Regional Capital Projects Resource Group but acknowledged that CMAP has also received significant public comment on one project in particular - the North DuSable Lake Shore Drive reconstruction - which has been included as a constrained project in the two previous regional plans. He emphasized that while projects on the priority list represent regional priorities, specific design and implementation decisions remain with the responsible agencies.

He concluded by outlining next steps. Following feedback from the Board and the MPO Policy Committee, CMAP will complete the required conformity analyses and incorporate results into the draft RTP, which will be presented to the Board in June for release to public comment. Final adoption of the RTP is planned for October 2026.

The RTP update was presented.

6.02 The Century Plan update

[26-066](#)

Attachments: [Memo - The Century Plan update](#)

Deputy for Strategic Advancement Kyle Schulz facilitated a panel discussion examining the region's competitive position, economic opportunities, and challenges that will shape CMAP's Century Plan. Panelists included Cathriona Fey (Illinois EDC), Rachel Barker (Brookings Institution), and Doug Pryor (Will County Center for Economic Development and Vice Chair of the Greater Chicagoland Economic Partnership).

Panelists discussed the region's core strengths, including diversified industry sectors, extensive logistics and transportation assets, access to water, climate stability relative to peer states, and continued improvements in state-level business incentives. They noted growing interest in the region from water-intensive industries such as data centers, food and beverage production, and advanced battery manufacturing, while emphasizing that power availability and utility timelines have become major constraints for projects.

The region is also seeing growing investment in emerging sectors, including quantum technologies, battery and clean energy storage, pharmaceuticals, and electronics manufacturing. Panelists noted that Chicagoland's recent designation as a national quantum hub reflects years of regional investment rather than a single recruitment effort.

Turning to workforce trends, Barker highlighted artificial intelligence (AI) as a major unknown that will reshape labor markets. She emphasized that regional competitiveness will depend on embracing AI innovation rather than avoiding it, and on stronger coordination across workforce development,

higher education, and economic development systems to respond quickly to future disruptions.

Board members engaged in an extended dialogue with panelists, focusing on the region's deficits, barriers, and structural challenges. Members asked the panel to identify the region's vulnerabilities alongside its strengths. Pryor noted that population stagnation and an aging workforce pose long-term competitiveness challenges, particularly if the region cannot supply enough housing for younger workers. Both Pryor and Barker emphasized that the region's longstanding economic inequities also limit economic potential and workforce participation. Fey highlighted power availability, aging industrial infrastructure, and limited shovel ready sites as major barriers to business attraction. She explained that extended timelines to secure adequate electric capacity are causing Illinois to lose projects. She also emphasized that communities often struggle to provide the needed building stock or utility infrastructure for modern industrial investments.

Board members raised concerns about utility costs, grid capacity, and affordability, noting that rising electricity costs impact both residents and businesses. They asked whether the pace of data center development is outstripping infrastructure and questioned who bears the cost of new substations and grid improvements. Panelists acknowledged the challenges, noting that utilities are attempting to adjust, but that national demand growth is unprecedented and will require coordinated planning.

Multiple Board members raised concerns about housing supply and affordability, citing compelling evidence that limited housing stock is hindering economic growth. Members noted that employers evaluate housing availability in their site selection decisions, and the region is increasingly losing opportunities because housing construction is not keeping pace with job growth. Several members highlighted the direct connection between zoning, land use, and housing supply, and urged CMAP to continue elevating housing as a core economic competitiveness issue.

Panelists echoed these concerns, confirming that companies regularly inquire about housing availability during recruitment processes. Fey shared that Illinois EDC increasingly encounters communities that feel unable to accommodate workforce demands due to insufficient local housing. Several Board members referenced studies showing that the region has already lost substantial economic output due to housing shortages.

Members also discussed the need for more inclusive approaches to development, the importance of community voices, and the need to consider equity in economic planning. They raised the question of whether corporate-led workforce housing could become part of future projects; panelists noted this concept is discussed nationally but has not yet materialized at meaningful scale.

Questions also addressed opportunities in Southland communities, with mayors emphasizing the availability of land and interest in capturing industrial growth. Fey encouraged continued coordination with regional economic development organizations to ensure such opportunities are visible in state level site marketing.

In response to inquiries about future power capacity, Fey noted recent state action to lift the moratorium on next generation nuclear development, though timelines remain long. She stated that interim solutions, including energy-storage technologies and private onsite power generation by large industrial users, are becoming increasingly common.

Board members concluded by emphasizing the need for balanced planning - addressing

infrastructure, regulations, incentives, and long-term community impacts - to avoid repeating past cycles of overbuilding or policy-driven distortions. They stressed that the Century Plan should guide the region toward smart, equitable, and strategically competitive growth.

The Century Plan update was discussed.

6.03 Legislative update

[26-062](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Legislative update](#)

A substantial legislative update was provided in the Board's agenda packet; no verbal presentation was given during the meeting.

(CMAP Board Member Frank Beal left the meeting at 10:51 a.m.)

The Legislative update was presented.

7.0 Other Business

There was no other business before the CMAP Board.

8.0 Public Comment

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

Garland Armstrong commented on the need for greater attention to the housing challenges faced by people with disabilities. He urged CMAP and panel participants to engage directly with disability communities and organizations (such as Access Living) to understand the barriers individuals face in securing accessible, independent housing rather than institutional placements. Armstrong emphasized that ADA considerations must remain central to planning discussions and highlighted the broader national need for accessible, affordable housing.

9.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2026.

10.0 Adjournment

A motion was made by Member Nancy Rotering, seconded by Member Matt Walsh, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Gerald Bennett, Frank Beal, Matthew Brolley, Jada Curry, Nina Idemudia, John Noak, Richard Reinbold, Nancy Rotering, Joanna Ruiz, Carolyn Schofield, Anne Sheahan and Matthew Walsh

Absent: Gary Grasso and Paul Hoefert

Non-Voting: Kouros Mohammadian

Not Present: Jung Yoon

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Maren Lutterbach using Microsoft Copilot M365.