

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** MPO Policy Committee

**From:** CMAP Staff

**Date:** March 6, 2025

**Subject:** 2026 Regional Transportation Plan Emerging Priorities Report

**Action Requested:** Information

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### Purpose

The development of the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) follows a performance-based framework that helps to identify strategies to achieve regional priorities. This framework consists of four key elements – goals, objectives, performance measures, and strategies. The attached *Emerging Priorities* report serves to address the goals and objectives of the RTP. Notably, this report will not be appended to the final RTP and can change during the report's development. Rather, it will be used to inform the policy discussions that are ultimately reflected in the final RTP. As such, the *Emerging Priorities* report represents a crucial first step in the RTP development process to build consensus around the outcomes the region wants to achieve.

The goals and objectives outlined in the report reflect and reaffirm the priorities of ON TO 2050. They are also informed by early-stage plan development activities, which have included a review of adopted transportation plans throughout the region, presentations and discussions with stakeholders, and internal policy research. As such, the report reflects longstanding transportation priorities while incorporating recent trends and emerging challenges.

The *Emerging Priorities* report proposes the following goal areas and objectives:

- **Goal: Strengthen connections between people and places**
  - Improve reliability and manage congestion
  - Improve incident detection and management
  - Expand multimodal access
  - Achieve universal ADA accessibility
- **Goal: Prioritize safety and public health**
  - Advance Safe System Approach policies and practices
  - Prioritize speed management
  - Improve the safety of active transportation infrastructure

- Foster public health
- **Goal: Mitigate pollution and invest in resilient infrastructure**
  - Reduce pollution from the transportation sector
  - Improve the resilience of infrastructure vulnerable to extreme weather
  - Protect natural resources
- **Goal: Support economic prosperity and inclusive growth**
  - Leverage the transportation system to support local development goals
  - Prioritize multimodal access to regional employment and economic centers
  - Promote the efficiency of the national freight network in the region
  - Foster a high quality of life in communities adjacent to freight activity
- **Goal: Strategically govern, fund, and preserve the transportation system**
  - Fund the preservation of the existing system
  - Prioritize projects that maximize benefits
  - Maintain and expand revenue sources
  - Facilitate government collaboration
  - Prepare for emerging technology

The attached report includes descriptions of the objectives under each goal, with references to recent trends, emerging challenges, and priorities that have been expressed by transportation stakeholders and identified through research.

The goals and objectives will guide the development of the 2026 RTP, serving as a bridge between early research and the final plan. Upcoming phases of work, including data analysis, policy development, and performance measurement will help advance these priorities. Moving forward, CMAP will continue conducting extensive engagement to further inform the development of the plan, including public questionnaires, resource group meetings, and briefings with agencies and organizations. All project materials will be available on the project website, at <https://engage.cmap.illinois.gov/2026-rtp>.

Attachment 1: RTP emerging priorities report