



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Agenda Item 2.01

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MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Board

From: Erin Aleman, Executive Director

Date: June 5, 2024

Subject: Executive Director's report

Action Requested: Information

Dear Board Members,

This report provides an update ahead of our June meeting with the goal of greater transparency to CMAP's work and to supplement the agenda.

Should you have questions regarding this report, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Aleman', is positioned below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Erin Aleman

Welcome Mayor Jada D. Curry

Mayor Jada D. Curry from the Village of Lynwood is joining the CMAP Board representing Cook County. We are excited to welcome Mayor Curry at her first meeting in September and look forward to the new partnership.

CMAP to launch new website

CMAP's new and improved website will launch on June 18. Visitors to cmap.illinois.gov will experience a new, modern design with user-friendly navigation as well as improved accessibility, interactivity, and search functionality.

CMAP used strong research and data to drive decision making on the development and design of the new site. Prioritizing the user experience means users can understand the agency's focus areas and interconnected work, finding what they're looking for with as few clicks as possible.

CMAP's new website complies with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which prioritize accessibility for people with disabilities, as well as all users across various devices. We also prioritized the use of plain language — clear wording, structure, and design — so users can understand our message as quickly, easily, and completely as possible.

As the region's planning agency and data resource, CMAP's website is a go-to resource for a vast range of information, garnering more than 180,000 users annually and nearly double that in sessions (also known as activity on the site). The website's primary audiences are municipal and county staff, elected officials, nonprofits, community groups, and civic organizations.

The new site includes:

- Clear communication of who CMAP is and what we do
- A website architecture that can grow and change, easily integrating current and future regional plans
- Navigation designed to help users see CMAP's major areas of work and reduce the number of clicks it takes to get where they want to go
- A robust content strategy that highlights the correlation between ON TO 2050 and what the region is doing today to meet those goals
- An enhanced events calendar that supports better engagement with CMAP public bodies and activities
- Integrated data and resources on every page, as well as embedded tools like the Community Data Snapshots visualization tool, which provides a quick and easy look at important data about your community, or the Job Quality and Access Tool, which provides analysis on employment and industry trends

[View screenshots](#) for examples of the new homepage, improved site navigation, and the focus areas overview page.

CMAP analysis of FY2025 state budget

CMAP recently published its [analysis](#) of the [state's FY2025 budget proposal](#) and how it impacts transportation funding and other regional policy priorities.

Highlights from the budget review include:

- The state is projecting a General Fund surplus of \$128 million and a transfer of \$170 million to the rainy-day fund due, in part, to a series of proposed tax law changes that raise an estimated additional \$910 million in state general funds.
- The budget proposal recommends the elimination of the state grocery tax, a 1 percent sales tax on groceries imposed by the state but wholly dedicated to local governments, which is estimated will result in a \$325 million combined loss in funding for local governments across the state.
- The governor is proposing to transfer an additional \$175 million from the Road Fund to the Public Transportation Fund, which results in an overall decrease in total funding for transportation operations.

[Read more on CMAP's analysis of the proposed FY25 state budget.](#)

Executive director engagements

Illinois High Speed Rail Commission

As a member of the High Speed Rail Commission (appointed by the Governor in 2022), I join other transportation leaders monthly to discuss creation of a statewide high-speed railway network plan. The group met last week and received an update on the proposed technical planning process, which will include developing a draft purpose and need, market ridership research, alternatives analysis, service options, and an operations analysis. The consultant team also presented an overview of statewide public engagement activities.

The [High Speed Railway Commission](#) is charged with creating a statewide plan for a high-speed rail line and feeder network connecting St. Louis, Missouri and Chicago, Illinois that includes current existing Amtrak and Metra services, connects the cities of Rockford, Moline, Peoria, and Decatur, and uses inter-city bus service to coordinate with the rail line.

Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) annual meeting and conference

In early May, I participated in a panel of MPO leaders at the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) annual meeting and conference. I joined fellow panelists from MTC (the Bay Area), San Diego Association of Governments, and Miami Dade's MPO to discuss how regional planning advances our transportation, climate, and economic resilience priorities to an audience of over 1,000 mayors and local government leaders.

All our regions are grappling with similar challenges and share similar goals and priorities to address transit funding, lack of housing, and climate action planning.

Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) annual meeting and conference

In May, attended the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) annual meeting in Washington, D.C. where I was re-elected to the board vice chair role.

The conference's theme was "Freight Investment is No Gamble - Time to Double Down." I participated on a panel that took a closer look at "Threats on the Horizon: How Can We Prepare for Tomorrow's Supply Chain Crisis." I spoke about some of the land use and transportation challenges we face in our region with freight. Conference attendees had the opportunity to attend an "Off the Record Conversation" with congressional staff to learn what the authorizing committees are planning for the next iteration of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL).

As the drafting of the new legislation begins, feedback on challenges and successes will certainly influence what may be incorporated. We will keep the Board updated as this evolves.