



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Transportation Committee

**From:** CMAP Staff

**Date:** May 20, 2024

**Subject:** Plan inventory for the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan

**Action Requested:** Information

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As the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) commences the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), staff have reviewed and summarized county, regional, state, and federal transportation plans pertaining to northeastern Illinois' transportation system. By inventorying these plans, CMAP aims to uplift the current priorities of transportation partners and to incorporate federal, state, regional, and local priorities in this early stage of plan development. The plan inventory will serve as a starting point for conversations with stakeholders about the overall vision of the 2026 RTP as well as its potential goals, objectives, and strategies.

This memo was developed by reviewing 29 distinct plans adopted by federal agencies, the State of Illinois, CMAP, county governments, and the City of Chicago. After documenting the details of each plan, staff identified overarching goals, objectives, and strategies that broadly summarized the diverse perspectives represented.

The memo is organized as follows:

- State and federal requirements for the RTP;
- Transportation goals in ON TO 2050;
- Federal, state, and regional priorities; and
- Plan inventory summary.

### State and federal requirements

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for northeastern Illinois, CMAP is required to comply with federal and state mandates regarding transportation and land use planning.

### Federal Requirements

The federal government requires CMAP to develop long-range transportation plans through a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive performance-based process. Transportation plans must feature recommendations that incorporate multiple planning factors, which include the following:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment and promote energy conservation,
- Improve the quality of life and promote consistency between transportation, planned growth, and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operations;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Improve the resilience and reliability of the transportation system and mitigate stormwater impacts on surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism.

The long-range plan must also align with federal goals, which include improving safety, maintaining a state of good repair, reducing congestion, improving reliability, improving freight movement to support economic development, promoting environmental sustainability, and completing transportation projects on schedule.

#### State Requirements

In addition to federal requirements, CMAP must also comply with state mandates. The State of Illinois requires CMAP to develop policies that reflect the relationship of transportation to land use, economic development, the environment, air quality, and energy consumption.

Other activities explicitly required by the State of Illinois include:

- Forecasting future population and employment;
- Forming criteria and procedures for evaluating and ranking projects in the plan and allocating transportation funds;
- Creating measures to best coordinate programs of local governments, transportation agencies, and State agencies to promote the goals and policies of the plan;
- Proposing model ordinances and agreements that may be enacted by local governments; and
- Recommending legislation if necessary to fully implement the plan.

## **Transportation goals in ON TO 2050**

ON TO 2050 is northeastern Illinois' current comprehensive plan. It was adopted by CMAP's Board and MPO Policy Committee in 2018 and updated in 2022. While the plan makes transportation recommendations throughout all its chapters, ON TO 2050 fulfills CMAP's responsibility to prepare a regional transportation plan through its mobility chapter, financial plan, regionally significant projects, and relevant appendices. The next RTP will maintain the 2050 planning horizon year and look to the ON TO 2050 plan as a preliminary foundation.

The mobility chapter sets three overarching transportation goals:

- Achieve a modern multimodal system that adapts to changing travel demand;
- Design and operate a system that works better for everyone; and
- Make transformative investments.

To deliver these goals, the mobility chapter makes the following recommendations:

- Harness technology to improve travel and anticipate future impacts;
- Make transit more competitive;
- Maintain the region's status as North America's freight hub;
- Leverage the transportation network to promote inclusive growth;
- Improve travel safety;
- Improve the resilience of the transportation network to weather events and climate change;
- Fully fund the region's transportation system; and
- Enhance the region's approach to transportation programming.

Other chapters in ON TO 2050 include recommendations related to mobility, including increasing regional coordination around capital funding and investments, providing assistance and resources to disinvested areas, using transportation to connect people to employment, and making the transportation system more resilient to climate change.

## **Federal, state, and regional priorities**

In addition to complying with federal and state requirements, CMAP must demonstrate consistency with the visions of national, state, and regional governments through the development of the RTP.

### **US Department of Transportation (USDOT)**

USDOT's vision is to have the safest, most efficient, and most modern transportation system in the world. The USDOT's Innovation Principles aim to achieve a safe, strong, resilient, sustainable, and equitable transportation system by transforming infrastructure, technology, and approaches to projects and operations. The department's strategic goals are the following:

- **Equity**: institutionalize equity across the department's policies and programs and reduce inequities across transportation systems and the communities they affect.
- **Climate and sustainability**: reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transportation-related pollution to build a more resilient and sustainable transportation system.
- **Safety**: protects all road users from injury and death on all modes of transportation. The current safety goal is the first step towards the department's long-term goal of zero roadway fatalities.

### Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

IDOT's vision in the Illinois Long Range Transportation Plan is to provide innovative, sustainable, and multimodal transportation solutions that support local goals and grow Illinois' economy.

The goals of this plan include:

- Improving the economy through the efficient movement of people and goods;
- Enhancing quality of life by aligning transportation investments with local goals and preserving the environment;
- Improving accessibility and safety across all modes of transportation;
- Building the resilience of infrastructure; and
- Managing growth of the transportation system by maintaining existing funding and increasing revenue sources.

### Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)

In the RTA's Transit is the Answer strategic plan, the agency envisions a safe, reliable, and accessible transit system that connects people to opportunity, advances equity, and combats climate change. The plan has three core principles: equity, commitment to change, and stewardship. The plan's advocacy agenda covers three broad goals: managing funding effectively, engaging with stakeholders authentically, and investing in infrastructure.

### **Overview of the plan inventory summary**

CMAP staff identified 29 plans for review. The complete list of reviewed plans is included below for reference:

- State, County, and Local:
  - IDOT Long Range Transportation Plan
  - Connecting Cook County: 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
  - DuPage County Long Range Transportation Plan
  - Kane County Long Range Transportation Plan
  - Kendall County 2023-2043 Long Range Transportation Plan
  - Lake 2040 Transportation Plan
  - McHenry County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
  - Will Connects 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
  - City of Chicago Strategic Plan for Transportation
  - Chicago for the People: Transition Team Report for Mayor Johnson
- CMAP:
  - ON 2050: Mobility Chapter
  - GO TO 2040: Mobility Chapter
  - 2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Northeastern Illinois
  - Northeastern Illinois Greenways and Trails Plan
  - Northeastern Illinois ITS Architecture
  - Regional Strategic Freight Direction
  - Mobility Recovery
  - Plan of Action for Regional Transit
- Transit, Rail, and Freight:
  - Transit is the Answer

- Meeting the Moment: Transforming CTA's Post-Pandemic Future
- My Metra, Our Future
- Driving Innovation: Pace Strategic Vision Plan
- Kane County Long-Range Transit Plan
- McHenry County Transit Plan
- FRA Midwest Regional Rail Plan
- High Speed Rail Alliance: Midwest Region
- Illinois State Freight Plan
- Connecting Cook County Freight Plan
- Will County Community Friendly Freight Mobility Plan
- Illinois International Port District Master Plan

The inventory revealed common themes across shared priorities, which have been summarized into the nine distinct goals listed below. While not every plan included each of these goals, this list is intended to generally represent the overarching goals that guide long-range transportation plans in northeastern Illinois.

1. Increase mobility and accessibility
2. Enhance multimodal connections
3. Preserve the existing transportation system
4. Improve safety and security
5. Mitigate climate change, enhance resilience, and protect the environment
6. Advance equity and environmental justice
7. Support economic growth and competitiveness
8. Optimize efficient freight system management and mitigate risks
9. Strategically govern, fund, and operate the system

The following section details the recurring objectives and strategies that were associated with each overarching goal.

### **Summary goals, objectives, and strategies**

#### **Goal: Increase mobility and accessibility**

- Objective: Manage congestion to improve travel time reliability.
  - Measure and manage system congestion through coordinated data collection and monitoring.
  - Identify areas of recurring congestion, conflicts, and incidents and prioritize them for improvements.
  - Implement congestion management strategies, such as operational improvements, pricing mechanisms, mode shift, increasing vehicle occupancy, providing transit options, access and speed management, improved design, signal modernization, traffic demand management, and more.
- Objective: Support transit access, improve passenger experience, and increase ridership.
  - Conduct regional analysis to identify unmet transit demand.
  - Address capacity constraints on existing transit routes.
  - Connect residential and employment areas with transit services.
  - Prioritize transit investments in corridor projects and complete streets planning.

- Improve transit commute times through consistent, reliable, and frequent service.
  - Improve technological resources for riders.
- Ensure transit facilities and vehicles are clean and well maintained.
- Objective: Invest in ADA infrastructure.
  - Prepare an inventory of ADA compliance in transportation facilities to prioritize improvements.
  - Prioritize making all transit facilities ADA compliant.
  - Ensure new and existing sidewalks and trails comply with ADA regulations.
  - Support and improve paratransit options.
- Objective: Expand bike and pedestrian network.
  - Compile an inventory of bike and pedestrian facilities.
  - Connect the regional bike and pedestrian network by coordinating planning at the municipal, inter-municipal, and county levels.
    - Decrease gaps in the network by expanding and connecting paths to desired locations.
    - Improve regional trail amenities, such as drinking fountains, improved signage, telephone access, etc.
  - Invest in infrastructure that protects the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
  - Implement plans for bike and pedestrian paths when constructing new transportation infrastructure or rehabilitating existing assets.

#### Goal: Enhance multimodal connectivity

- Objective: Provide multimodal options.
  - Improve access to intermodal and multimodal facilities.
    - Implement projects that connect bike and pedestrian infrastructure to transit centers.
    - Promote first- and last-mile connections to transit.
  - Increase multimodal street design.
  - Provide multimodal access to major job centers, commercial areas, and housing.
- Objective: Facilitate connections between modes.
  - Implement projects that increase connections between existing transportation facilities.
  - Ensure affordable connections for passengers across the transit system.
  - Enhance intermodal freight connectivity to improve the flow of goods and services.

#### Goal: Preserve the existing transportation system

- Objective: Prioritize state of good repair in planning and project delivery.
  - Take action before structures are in critical need of repair or replacement.
  - Prioritize addressing the assets of greatest need.
  - Integrate state of good repair needs when planning modernization projects.
  - Consider resilience to extreme weather events when planning maintenance projects.
  - Prioritize maintaining and modernizing the region's transit, roadway, and bridge infrastructure.

- Objective: Maintain existing revenues sources and identify more funding opportunities for system maintenance.
  - Create a long-term plan to fund the implementation and maintenance of transportation projects.
  - Maintain and increase revenue sources to fund system maintenance and modernization.

#### Goal: Improve safety and security

- Objective: Promote safe travel through the design and administration of transportation assets.
  - Implement roadway designs that improve safety and comfort for all users.
  - Design and build streets that encourage safe driving speeds and habits.
  - Improve safety and reduce accidents on the system in the face of extreme weather events by coordinating with operating agencies.
  - Improve responsible driving behavior and implement equitable enforcement policies.
  - Consider and implement a holistic approach to improving personal safety on transit facilities.
- Objective: Invest in infrastructure that improve safety.
  - Prioritize transportation projects that reduce crashes per vehicle-mile traveled and improve compliance with speed, right-of-way, and safety regulations.
  - Incorporate safety design elements into all roadway projects.
  - Address safety conflicts between freight commerce and travelers across modes.
  - Increase efficiency and safety by improving infrastructure conditions and capacity issues.
- Objective: Minimize the impacts of freight on safety.
  - Prioritize safety investments in areas that have high levels of truck-related fatalities, injuries, and crashes.
  - Eliminate or improve at-grade crossings and address safety issues created by blocked crossings.
- Objective: Centralize and maintain safety data.
  - Improve incident detection and management.
  - Expand regional data collection on safety to support programming decisions.
    - Identify and improve hazardous at-grade crossings.
    - Identify and improve high-accident locations for motorized and non-motorized users.
  - Develop new metrics to evaluate and monitor projects based on safety.

#### Goal: Mitigate climate change, enhance resilience, and protect the environment

- Objective: Reduce negative environmental impacts on air quality.
  - Adopt policies that reflect the relationship between transportation and air quality.
  - Minimize the air quality impacts of projects.
  - Implement congestion control measures to improve air quality.
  - Promote transportation projects that improve air quality in areas with high levels of point-source emissions.

- Prioritize air quality improvements in communities burdened by poor air quality.
- Objective: Protect water resources.
  - Implement strategies that focus on minimizing flooding and stormwater impacts, especially from freight and goods movement.
  - Encourage projects that protect natural groundwater recharge and water quality.
  - Partner with water management entities to preserve water resources affected by transportation projects.
- Objective: Accelerate electrification initiatives.
  - Increase availability of public charging stations for EVs.
  - Implement bus electrification plans and the facilities required to support them.
  - Accelerate electrification of freight systems.
  - Procure electric rail locomotives.
  - Establish electric bike delivery program to reduce delivery trucks.
- Objective: Integrate environmental solutions in transportation planning.
  - Establish environmental health as a goal of transportation projects.
  - Encourage the connectivity of natural, environmental, and ecological systems.
  - Balance transportation needs with the protection of natural habitats.
- Objective: Implement projects that are consistent with environmental protection plans.
  - Promote transportation proposals that mitigate environmental problems and improve environmental quality.
  - Incorporate environmental impacts into decision-making.
  - Acquire key parcels needed for environmental protection.
  - Include natural landscaping when implementing projects.
- Objective: Improve environmental resilience of transportation assets.
  - Improve operational response to weather events to ensure continued mobility.
  - Adapt vulnerable transportation infrastructure to be resilient to weather events and climate change.
  - Improve stormwater management in transportation projects.

Goal: Advance equity and environmental justice

- Objective: Prioritize equity in transportation investments.
  - Expand equitable transit access in underserved areas.
  - Grow investments in equitable transportation options.
    - Invest in upgrades to transportation assets where there is the greatest need.
    - Use equity criteria for transportation planning and project selection decisions.
  - Partner with communities to grow equitable TOD around transit hubs and multimodal corridors.
- Objective: Advance environmental justice through transportation planning and project delivery.
  - Develop strategies to decrease environmental impacts of freight on local communities by aligning freight planning, design, construction, and operations with environmental goals



- Mitigate pollution, flooding, contaminated stormwater runoff, and impacts to ecological systems.
  - Align freight planning, design, construction, and operations with environmental goals.
- Consider the distribution of environmental burdens caused by transportation assets.
  - Mitigate air, water, and noise pollution in local communities.
- Objective: Foster relationships with local communities
  - Facilitate communication and collaboration between underserved populations and transportation agencies.
  - Elevate the voices of underserved communities in planning efforts within the region.
  - Provide communities with clear, consistent points of contact.
  - Engage with communities in an inclusive and transparent way.
- Objective: Ensure transit fares are affordable.
  - Provide integrated and affordable fares while planning to keep pace with inflation.
  - Establish regional fare subsidy programs that include youth and riders with low income.

Goal: Support economic growth and competitiveness

- Objective: Develop multimodal and equitable transit-oriented projects to support local economic development.
  - Review underutilized land near transit stations for potential transit-oriented development opportunities.
  - Support projects that provide multimodal access to employment opportunities.
  - Provide technical assistance to promote transit-supportive, people-centric land use planning.
  - Implement projects that incorporate design principles that are responsive to the unique contexts in each community.
- Objective: Assist local communities in their pursuit of economic development opportunities.
  - Help local communities obtain grants and other funding to support economic development.
  - Commit staff to supporting economic development through transportation projects and local planning assistance.
  - Build capacity for disinvested communities to develop, fund, and maintain transportation infrastructure.
- Objective: Enhance performance-based planning to improve economic development outcomes from transportation projects.
  - Develop measures that can predict and/or assess economic impacts of transportation projects and policies.
  - Enhance the performance-based project selection process to account for connections between transportation assets, land use, and economic goals.

Goal: Optimize efficient freight system management and mitigate risks

- Objective: Promote an efficient freight industry.
  - Monitor emerging technologies for potential impacts on the freight system and associated industries.
  - Streamline regulations, improve public policy, and collaborate with stakeholders to facilitate reliable and efficient freight movement.
  - Improve efficient transfers between freight and passengers between modes (ground, air, and water).
  - Support freight-related economic development by improving connections to intermodal hubs and increasing the capacity of intermodal facilities.
- Objective: Maintain existing freight assets.
  - Conduct research and collect data to assess system conditions and identify solutions to ongoing challenges.
    - Integrate technology to assess conditions and monitor performance in real time.
    - Publish data about the performance of the regional freight network.
  - Monitor conditions and invest in improvements for airports, highways/streets, freight, ports, waterways, bridges, and technology.
  - Collaborate with O'Hare, Midway, and the Port of Chicago to facilitate surface transportation access to and supportive land use planning around these facilities.
- Objective: Address the challenges and disparate impacts of freight.
  - Study the impacts of freight to develop policies, data, and best practices for addressing disparate impacts.
  - Support municipalities that are seeking to address freight issues, especially suburban municipalities who lack staff and capital resources.
  - Monitor and address disparate burdens of freight on existing infrastructure.
  - Address bottlenecks across the modes and at freight nodes.

Goal: Strategically govern, fund, and operate the system

- Objective: Ensure efficient and sustainable transportation operations, maintenance, costs, and funding
  - Incorporate an information technology system for the operations of current and future assets, including multimodal transportation services.
  - Preserve and maintain transportation assets and manage their operations using a spectrum of strategies, tools, and technologies.
  - Increase and diversify funding for public transit.
- Objective: Foster a strong transportation workforce
  - Engage with partner state agencies to understand and address workforce needs.
  - Reduce barriers to entry and retention in the transportation workforce and complementary private sector industries.
  - Attract a diverse workforce and invest in retaining them.
- Objective: Improve intergovernmental coordination and collaboration
  - Establish spaces where implementing agencies can regularly coordinate on project delivery, plan implementation, and policy discussions.
    - Develop frameworks for improved collaboration and coordination among transportation agencies.

- Develop collaborations among planners, implementing agencies, and advocacy organizations to strengthen plan implementation in the region.
- Provide local units of government, developers, and site planners with information on transportation design, funding, and additional sources of assistance.
- Ensure decision-making and information-sharing is transparent to other units of government and the general public.
- Objective: Ensure capital investments are necessary and strategic
  - Build consensus on needed capacity enhancements, capital improvements, and new technology implementation.
  - Define criteria for the region to collectively pursue funding for high priority projects.
  - Leverage the existing network to guide decisions on expansion projects and service improvements.
  - Encourage project implementation that maximizes the operational effectiveness of capital improvements.
  - Integrate consideration of accessibility, racial equity, and mobility justice when assessing the potential impacts of capital projects.

### **Next steps**

The plan inventory and summary serve as a starting point to understand the current transportation goals in northeastern Illinois. Using this foundation, CMAP staff will coordinate with board members, committee members, and transportation stakeholders to explore the following questions:

- Which goals remain relevant to the transportation needs and priorities of today?
- Are there transportation goals or approaches to certain topics that need to evolve to better reflect the current landscape?
- Are there any gaps or emerging trends that require the region to form consensus around new transportation solutions?

In the near future, CMAP staff will begin conducting outreach and engagement to inform these questions and the broader RTP vision. Starting in the summer of 2024, staff will request individual meetings with relevant federal and state agencies, county governments, City of Chicago, transit agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss their transportation priorities. Furthermore, CMAP staff will engage the Community Alliance for Regional Equity (CARE) and the Future Leaders in Planning (FLIP) to share information about the RTP process and provide opportunities for input. Additional opportunities to receive feedback include disseminating a public survey and opening an online portal where governments, advocacy organizations, community groups, or other entities can submit materials they would like CMAP to consider, such as research, plans, ideas, policy positions, or other relevant materials.