

December 19, 2024

RE: CMAP Transportation Committee
Subject: Community Public Statement

Good morning, Chairman Kevin Carrier, CMAP Transportation Committee; fellow committee members and CMAP staff. We appreciate the continual work of the transportation committee and its zeal to do more for the metropolitan region.

We are writing today to encourage the committee and the broader unit of CMAP to be far more intentional in its quest to receive public comments on policy directives. It will be worthy of consideration to have policy directives that carry public comment period deadlines and/or simply desire public feedback to be placed on various platforms beyond the Etip site.

Far too often, the public is not fully aware that public comment periods are open.

Regarding the Call for Projects Deadline, the minutes from November 2024 include a mini report on the Call for Projects program. It's our hope to receive today, a brief statement on the agencies and type of projects entered as of December 9th. The Greater Englewood community and greater Southside are most interested in this program.

It's important to note that a host of transportation related policies were pursued in this year's City Budget departmental hearings. On December 16th, the city council approved in its Program Management Ordinance language to create a Division on Policy and Planning within CDOT to help sharpen and broaden its approach to transportation decision-making.

Also, CDOT is currently accepting feedback/suggestions for the division policy:<https://webapps4.chicago.gov/efrms/cdotplanningpolicysurvey>.

Grow Greater Englewood (GGE) is a social enterprise Food and Land Sovereignty organization working to ensure healthy and productive living in the Southwest Region of Chicago. GGE is engaged in urban farming, open space strategies, alternative transportation planning and recently established a Community Land Trust organization.

This week, another major Federal grant was released to advance the 75th Street CREATE Project. This major public investment speaks volumes on the Federal government commitment to reduce freight traffic congestion in the Midwest.

We would now only encourage, as part of the Billion Dollar CREATE Project, that CMAP create a public participation platform that will formally assemble Southwest Regional community stakeholders to engage and plan alongside railroad operators and transportation agencies. We would need CMAP help to introduce environmental solutions, a Unified Workplan and innovations in planning via climate resiliency.

Let's move as a team and not alone! This project is fast becoming a national model without a very real public participation plan. FY 2025 provides that window of opportunity to plan together.

To this end, thank you for your consideration and leadership. We remain committed to working with the CMAP Transportation Committee and it's Executive Board to improve regional coordination in transportation and equity in capital spending decision-making.

Happy Holidays!

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