

Regional Economy Committee Annual Report

Committee charge

The Regional Economy Committee was created by CMAP to guide and support the agency's initiatives related to the regional economy, the agency's strategic direction, and implementation of the comprehensive regional plan, the ON TO 2050 plan.

Goals and objectives

The Committee will:

- Serve as a standing committee of the CMAP Board.
- Bring a broad, regional perspective to the agency's economy-related initiatives and expand the agency's expertise on specific economic issues and geographies.
- Serve as a resource on economic issues to CMAP staff, the Transportation Committee, the Climate Committee, and other advisory groups.
- Review and provide input to the agency on its strategic direction, workplan, and economy-related projects.
- Coordinate and prioritize the agency's economy-related work with other regional initiatives and partners.
- Broaden regional awareness of and support for the agency's economy-related initiatives.
- Support implementation of the agency's strategic direction and the long-range transportation plan for, including but not limited to:
 - Inclusive regional growth; and
 - Increasing access to economic opportunity.
- Review recommendations of the agency's economy-related advisory groups and advance those recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by the CMAP Board.
- Assist CMAP staff in evaluating and tracking performance measures on the agency's economy-related initiatives.
- Annually report its activities, goals, and objectives to the CMAP Board.
- Align its work with CMAP's core values: serve with passion, pursue equity, foster collaboration, lead with excellence, and drive innovation.

Summary of work

Work to date

The Committee has met twice since its inception. In March 2022, the Committee approved its Annual Work Plan and schedule and began discussing CMAP's draft strategic direction. Additionally, Committee members each gave updates on relevant efforts underway to strengthen economic opportunity and growth in northeastern Illinois. In May 2022, the Committee continued its discussion on the draft strategic direction, provided feedback on various strategies and performance measures, and received an update on multiple related CMAP efforts focused on economic recovery and collaboration: the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force, a partnership with the Brookings Institution to develop a framework for economic development activities to be pursued at a regional scale, a future-oriented assessment of the region's strategic opportunities led by the nationally recognized firm TIP Strategies, , and the Local Incentives Collaborative to support the implementation of CMAP's recommendations for improving local development incentives.

Discussion on performance measures

The Committee has discussed two approaches for advancing the agency's objective to increase access to economic opportunities: to increase access for areas of disinvestment to CMAP transportation programming resources and the tools to maximize economic opportunities. Members highlighted the need for more affirmative strategies to actively eliminate barriers and increase the uptake of available resources, in addition to improving access.

Discussion also drew distinctions between evidenced-based tools as conventionally understood and the strategies that may be necessary to achieve greater racial and economic equity. Members also brought attention to biases in transportation programming around the primary purpose of supporting commutes to distant jobs, the level of community understanding on the implications of related public decisions, and the need to prioritize models of reinvestment among funders and project implementers.

Outstanding work

The Committee will meet twice more in 2022; September 26th and once again in November. The Committee's September meeting will focus on the following:

- Detailed outcomes from the CMAP's Brookings work, including review of the Chicagoland Inclusive Regional Economy Initiative held in June;
- CMAP's efforts to bolster our region's ADA transition planning and the economic benefits from such planning; and
- Committee member updates of individual initiatives that can spur area economic development.

Future work

The Committee in its current form continues to evolve and will take input from both its committee members and CMAP's strategic direction to fulfill its goals and objectives related to economic development. As an example, in future meetings, the Committee will focus on the following topics:

- Scoping a CMAP regional housing program including the potential for regional housing plan;
- Engagement on disinvestment work via community characteristics; and
- Early engagement on the scope of next regional plan

The Committee's future work also recognizes that while planned, the need to be flexible in areas of focus whether workforce development or support, and economic sector, as the past few years have demonstrated.