Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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MEMORANDUM

To: Climate Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: Thursday, July 23, 2026

Subject: Energy to Communities

Action Requested: Discussion

CMAP seeks to update the Climate Committee on the progression of the agency's transportation decarbonization modeling project by providing an overview of the project, a status update, and a discussion about preliminary findings. This memo provides a brief overview of the project and updates regarding modeling.

Project overview

CMAP, Commonwealth Edison (ComEd), and the Respiratory Health Association are partnering through the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy to Communities (E2C) In-Depth Partnerships Program to better understand how the region can decarbonize the transportation sector and how it will impact the electric grid. Working with Argonne and Oak Ridge National Laboratories, the project examines the interaction between transportation and electricity and seeks to identify pathways toward a net-zero transportation sector by 2050.

Over the course of the three-year project (2024-2027), the team is testing a range of transportation decarbonization strategies – including vehicle electrification, transit expansion, road usage pricing, and freight strategies – to better understand their impacts on greenhouse gas emissions, electricity demand, grid infrastructure, and transportation outcomes. Rather than identifying a single best scenario, the project is designed to illuminate the benefits, tradeoffs, and synergies associated with different strategy combinations.

The project will conclude in early 2027 with a set of findings and implementation insights for transportation agencies, utilities, local governments, and other regional partners. CMAP intends to use these results to strengthen future updates of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan for Greater Chicago, inform the agency's long-range transportation planning and legislative priorities, and help regional decisionmakers better coordinate transportation and energy investments.

Project updates

Over the past two years, the team has evaluated numerous transportation and electric grid strategies to better understand their individual impact on greenhouse gas emissions, electricity demand, and system performance. The analysis has examined strategies across several categories:

- Vehicle electrification
- Improved vehicle and network efficiency
- Mode shift through transit, active transportation, and land use change
- Road usage pricing
- Freight operations and efficiency
- Electric grid upgrades
- Distributed energy resources (i.e. batteries)

With this foundation in place, the project is now moving beyond evaluating individual strategies to test how they perform in combination. These integrated pathways represent ambitious combinations of actions designed to achieve the region's transportation decarbonization goals by 2050. By examining these aggressive pathways, the project can identify where strategies reinforce one another, where tradeoffs emerge, and what coordination across transportation planning, utilities, and public policy would be required to meet the regions' climate targets.

Next steps

Rather than reviewing the technical modeling process, the presentation will share the major insights emerging from the analysis and invites the climate committee to help interpret what those findings mean for regional decisionmakers. Committee feedback will help shape the project's final communication strategy, ensuring the results are translated into clear, actionable messages for the agencies, utilities, local governments, and other organizations responsible for implementing the region's transportation decarbonization efforts.