



MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Board

From: Nora Beck, Principal, Regional Policy and Implementation (RPI)

Date: April 29, 2026

Subject: Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) update

Action Requested: Information

In November, the CCAP project team briefed the Board on the development of the [Comprehensive Climate Action Plan for Greater Chicago](#). Since then, CMAP and its partners have finalized and publicly released the plan, marking an important milestone for the region.

The CCAP provides a data-driven, economy-wide roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 48 percent by 2035 and 86 percent by 2050. It models more than 30 strategies across major sectors and identifies the combinations of actions needed to achieve these reductions.

The next phase of work focuses on translating this roadmap into practical, near-term implementation priorities. At the upcoming meeting, CMAP will provide a brief overview of the final plan and focus on two areas that are central to implementation: the electric grid and building decarbonization.

1. The electric grid as the backbone of the transition

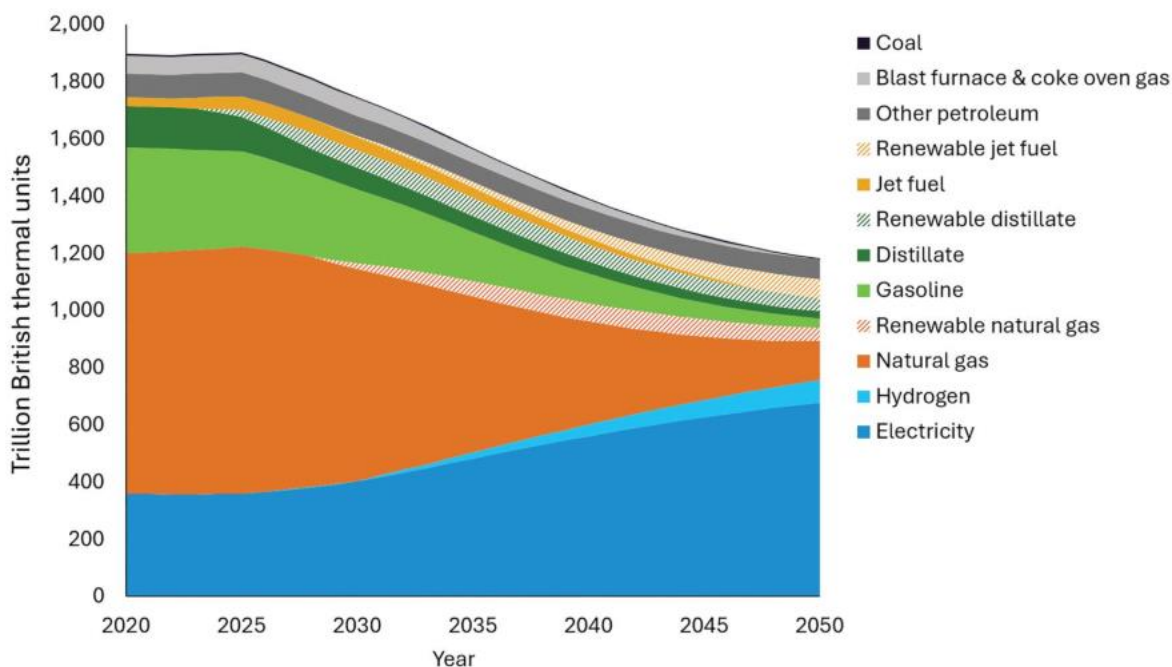
The CCAP makes clear that a clean and modernized electricity system underpins nearly every major emissions-reduction strategy. As buildings, vehicles, and industry shift from fossil fuels to electricity, the grid must both become significantly cleaner and expand capacity to reliably serve growing demand.

The electric system has three main components -- generation, transmission, and distribution -- each planned, governed and operated by different entities and on different timelines. Generation produces electricity (i.e. nuclear, wind, solar, natural gas), transmission moves it long distances, and distribution delivers it to homes and businesses. Together, these systems must evolve in coordination to support the region's transition.

As highlighted in the chart below, current energy use in the region has occurred outside this system, through gasoline, diesel, and natural gas. The CCAP calls for shifting much of that

demand onto electricity – making the grid the backbone of the region’s energy system, not just one part of it.

The climate action plan projects dramatic decreases in fossil fuels like gasoline and natural gas, and an increase in electricity.



Note: Projected electricity demand reflects electrification associated with modeled plan strategies and does not include additional load growth from data centers or other economic changes.

Source: CMAP and E3, 2025.

This transition presents both opportunity and complexity. Grid infrastructure investments take years to plan and build, utility planning and regulatory processes operate on fixed timelines, and demand is expected to grow unevenly across the region. At the same time, clean energy resources must keep pace with demand to ensure electrification delivers emissions reduction.

While utilities and regulators lead many grid decisions, local and regional actions play an important role in shaping outcomes. Land use, development patterns, and infrastructure siting all influence how and where the grid must grow. These same local decisions can also help reduce pressure on the grid by encouraging energy efficiency, flexible energy use, and on-site clean energy production and storage – helping lower costs and support a faster, more reliable transition. Coordination across state agencies, utilities, and local governments will be critical to ensure the system can meet future demand reliably, affordably, and in alignment with the region’s climate goals.

2. Buildings as a near-term implementation opportunity

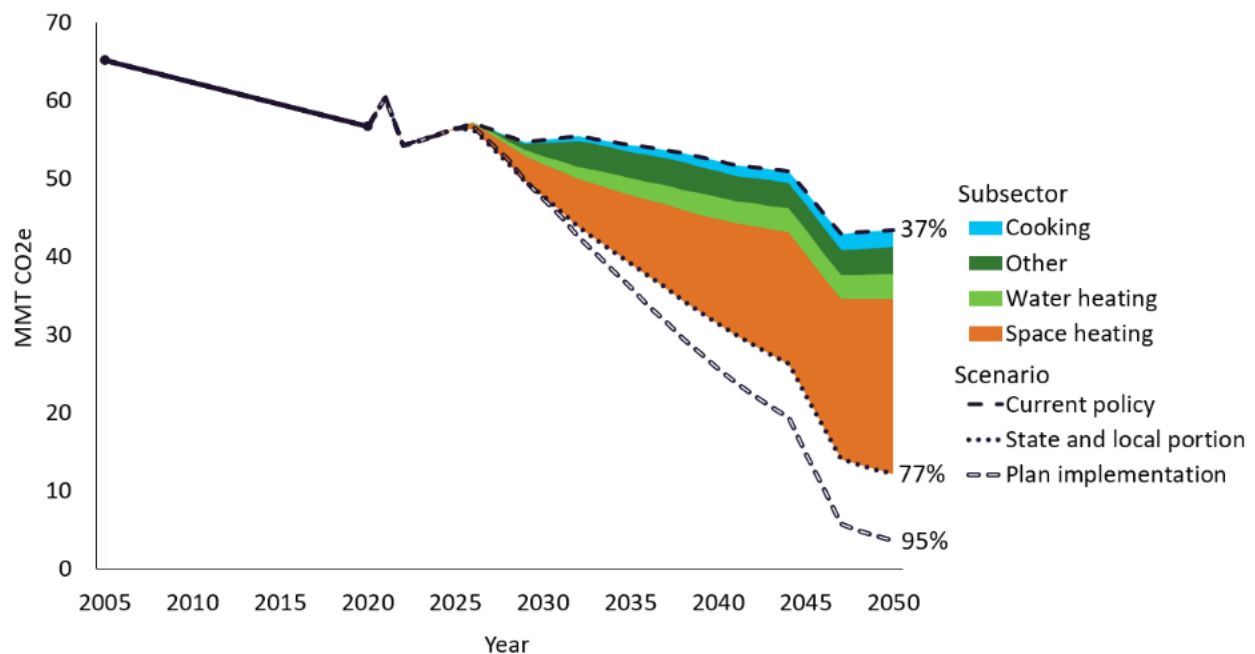
The building sector represents one of the most immediate opportunities for action. Commercial and residential buildings account for roughly 35 percent of regional emissions and must achieve deep reductions – on the order of 95 percent by 2050 across the plan’s 13-county geography – to meet overall targets.

Unlike some sectors that rely heavily on federal policy or long-term technology development, building decarbonization is strongly influenced by state and local decisions, including:

- Updated building codes and energy standards
- Streamlined permitting and retrofit processes
- Targeted public building investments
- Thoughtful land use and development patterns

The CCAP determines that state and local action alone could deliver the overwhelming majority (77%) of building sector reductions needed to reach its 2050 goals. As reflected in the chart below, the greatest savings can be found in reducing emissions from efforts to heat indoor commercial and residential space.

State and local action can substantially reduce commercial and residential building emissions



Note: The “other” subsector includes activities such as commercial and residential lighting, refrigeration, and air conditioning.

Source: CMAP and E3, 2025.

Near term actions and leadership opportunities

The CCAP identifies a range of strategies to reduce emission from buildings, many of which can begin immediately. While some actions are most effective at the state level, local governments play a critical role in advancing implementation, shaping demand, and supporting market transformation. The following actions highlight where regional and local leadership can be most impactful:

Lead locally. Local governments can take immediate steps to reduce energy use and support electrification by:

- Improving building efficiency and weatherization, particularly for existing homes and businesses
- Modernizing permitting and inspection processes to support energy upgrades and electric equipment
- Leading by example in public buildings through retrofits, electrification, and energy management
- Encouraging compact, transit-served development, which reduces both building and transportation energy use.

Shape and support. Local governments also influence how quickly and cost-effectively the transition occurs by:

- Updating local development codes to enable on-site solar, storage, and EV charging
- Expanding transparency around building energy use through benchmarking and disclosure policies
- Supporting adoption of heat pumps and electric appliances through outreach, incentives, and partnerships
- Coordinating with utilities and regional partners to align building upgrades with grid readiness

These actions help reduce strain on the grid and create conditions for broader system change.

Advocate for state-led actions that unlock scale. Many of the most impactful building strategies are more effective when implemented at the state level, where consistent standards and broader market signals can reduce costs and administrative burden. Regional leaders can play an important role in advancing:

- Statewide building energy codes and all-electric new construction standards
- Clean heat standards
- Building performance standards for large buildings
- Appliance standards and electrification incentives
- Large-scale weatherization and retrofit programs
- Policies to support low-carbon materials and construction practices

State-level action can create a more level playing field, accelerate market adoption, and reduce the need for individual municipalities to develop separate programs and policies.

Why this matters

Taken together, local action can make building decarbonization a near-term opportunity that will lead to a longer-term systems transition. Progress will depend on coordinated action across levels of government, with both local leadership playing a critical implementation role and state policy establishing broader scale and consistency.

Next steps

CMAP will continue working with regional partners to identify implementation priorities, support local and state action, and integrate CCAP strategies into ongoing planning and investment decisions.

ACTION REQUESTED: Information