



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
Region V
200 West Adams, Ste. 320
Chicago, IL 60606



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Illinois Division Office
130 South Martin Luther King Drive, Ste. A
Springfield, IL 62703

May 29, 2026

In Reply Refer To:
HPA-IL

Secretary Gia Biagi
MPO Policy Committee Chair
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
433 W. Van Buren St, Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60607

Subject: Chicago, Illinois Transportation Management Area Federal Certification Review

Dear Secretary, Biagi:

This letter notifies you that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly certify the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) transportation planning process in the Chicago, Illinois Transportation Management Area (TMA). This certification is based on the findings from the Federal Certification Review conducted on January 27-28, 2026.

The review found the transportation planning process for the Chicago, Illinois TMA, as led by CMAP, has fully implemented all necessary requirements under 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303. The planning process at CMAP is a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive process and reflects a significant professional commitment to deliver quality in transportation planning.

We would like to thank Erin Aleman and her staff for their time and assistance in planning and conducting the review. Enclosed is a report that documents the results of this review and offers eleven (11) recommendations and six (6) commendations for continuing quality improvements and enhancements to the planning process. This report has been transmitted concurrently to the MPO, Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Regional Transportation Authority.

If you have any questions regarding the Certification Review process, the Certification action, and/or the enclosed report, please direct them to either Jon Paul Diipla, FHWA Illinois Division, at (312) 353-4048 or Mark Kane, FTA Region V, at (312) 353-1552.

Sincerely,

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Digitally signed by VERSHUN
KENYATTA TOLLIVER
Date: 2026.05.28 11:42:04
-05'00'

Kelley Brookins
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

Vershun K. Tolliver
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Enclosures

ecc: Ms. Holly Bieneman, Office of Planning & Programming, IDOT
Mr. Mike Vanderhoof, Bureau of Planning, IDOT
Mr. Brandon Geber, Bureau of Planning, IDOT
Ms. Megan Swanson, Bureau of Planning, IDOT
Ms. Erin Aleman, CMAP
Ms. Aimee Lee, CMAP
Mr. Bill Barnes, CMAP
Ms. Teri Dixon, CMAP
Mr. Martin Menninger, CMAP
Ms. Jill Leary, Regional Transportation Authority



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

Federal Highway
Administration

Federal Transit
Administration

Chicago, Illinois Transportation Management Area

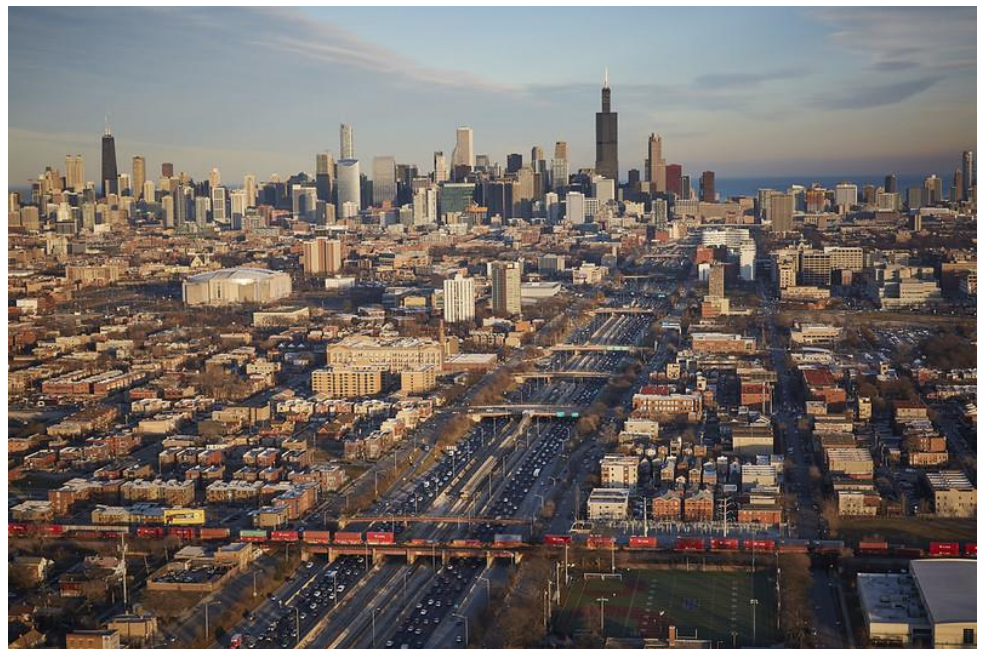


Photo Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

May 2026
Summary Report





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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 27-28, 2026, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Chicago, Illinois urbanized area. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements.

As a part of the TMA certification review process, FHWA and FTA employ a risk-based approach containing various factors to determine which topic areas require additional evaluation during the certification review. The certification review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. This certification review was conducted to highlight best practices, identify opportunities for improvements, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

The certification review included a desk review of the metropolitan planning organization's (MPO) planning products and processes, an opportunity for public comment via a web-based survey posted by the MPO, and a site review with staff from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), transit agencies, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) on January 27-28, 2026.

Based on the findings from the certification review, the FHWA and FTA jointly notified the CMAP MPO and IDOT by letter dated May 29, 2026, that the Chicago IL, TMA's metropolitan transportation planning process meets federal requirements and is certified. The Federal Review Team recognized six (6) commendations, zero (0) corrective actions, and eleven (11) recommendations.



2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of over 200,000. In general, the reviews consist of three primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), and preparation of a Certification Review Report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO(s), the State DOT(s), and public transportation operator(s) in the conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA Certification Review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect regional issues and needs. As a consequence, the scope and depth of the Certification Review reports will vary significantly.

The Certification Review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) approval, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), metropolitan and statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) findings, air-quality (AQ) conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal contact provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the Certification Review process.

Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in such areas. The certification review is also an opportunity to provide assistance on new programs and to enhance the ability of the metropolitan transportation planning process to provide decision makers with the knowledge they need to make well-informed capital and operating investment decisions.

While the Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of Certification Review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort.

Federal reviewers prepare Certification Reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed whether or not they relate explicitly to formal “findings” of the review. The Chicago, IL TMA review process was



individually tailored to focus on topics of significance to their metropolitan planning area. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the designated MPO for the Chicago, Illinois urbanized area.

This certification review included a desk review of the MPO's planning products and processes, an opportunity for public comment via a web-based survey posted by the CMAP MPO, and a site review with staff from the CMAP MPO, transit agencies, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) on January 27-28, 2026.

The findings of the certification review are provided in section 3 of this report.

3.0 PROGRAM REVIEW

3.1 Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries

3.1.1 Observations

CMAP, in coordination with IDOT, determined that there were no substantive changes warranting a modification to the metropolitan planning area (MPA) relative to the Chicago, IL-IN urbanized area and the Round Lake Beach-McHenry-Grayslake IL-WI urbanized area boundaries following the 2020 Census. The MPO Policy Committee reaffirmed the metropolitan planning area boundary via MPO Resolution 24-02 on June 13, 2024.

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

3.1.2 Findings

The MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries satisfies federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(e) and 23 CFR 450.312(a)).

3.2 MPO Structure and Agreements

3.2.1 Observations

The CMAP MPO planning process is administered in accordance with six intergovernmental agreements. These agreements were reviewed, however, the MPO structure was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process. Existing MPO structure and intergovernmental agreements may be impacted later in 2026, after the planning process is certified, with the Regional Transportation Authority's transition to the Northern Illinois Transit Authority. The transition is discussed further in 3.5 Transit Planning.



3.2.2 Findings

The MPO's Structure and Agreements satisfies the federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.314(a)).

Recommendation:

To accommodate a smooth transition from RTA to NITA, the MPO should adopt Policy Committee bylaw changes to facilitate NITA's participation in CMAP's existing governance structure.

Recommendation:

With NITA's establishment, steps should be taken to ensure relevant intergovernmental agreements involving RTA, CMAP and any of the transit service boards are updated to meet the region's current needs in addition to changing RTA references to NITA.

3.3 Unified Planning Work Program

3.3.1 Observations

The MPO cooperatively develops an annual Unified Work Program (UWP) that discusses the transportation planning priorities, budget, and scope of work for the fiscal year, (July 1- June 30). All FHWA Metropolitan Planning (PL), Statewide Planning and Research (SPR), and FTA 5303 funds provided to participating agencies are granted on an 80 percent Federal 20 percent local basis.

The UWP is annually developed through the CMAP UWP Committee. The UWP Committee works to set program priorities in alignment with the recommendations and implementation actions of the region's long-range plan, ON TO 2050. CMAP's Transportation Committee also considers the UWP priorities prior to the annual project selection process.

Eligible agencies develop project proposals and submit them to the UWP Committee for review. Projects required to meet Federal regulations are selected first in the Core Program, with a second tier of Competitive projects reviewed and ranked by the Committee.

In 2023, CMAP established a five-year program of projects approach for the UWP competitive program similar to adopted practices for the programming of surface transportation block grant and congestion mitigation and air quality improvement programs. Initiation of the five-year program of projects approach was in response to partner agency feedback to assist with efficiencies in mid-range program development for planning initiatives to meet regionally identified transportation planning needs.

The Federal Review Team observed that statewide planning and research (SPR) funded projects and UWP Competitive Program projects include details regarding project purpose, proposed schedule, budget summaries, and project deliverables. However, a consistent level of detail for the UWP core program is not present within recent UWP planning documents, notably beginning



the FY 2025 UWP. The FY 2024 and prior UWP documents detailed core program activities, competitive program activities, and SRP program activities in a comparable fashion.

3.3.2 Findings

The MPO's Unified Planning Work Program satisfies federal requirements (23 CFR 450.308).

Recommendation:

CMAAP is encouraged to expand supporting detail of planning activities identified with its annual UWP for its core program projects using FHWA PL and FTA 5303 funds. This is to further describe projects' contributions towards addressing regionally identified transportation planning needs and to provide consistency with project descriptions currently included for the competitive program and SPR sections of the annual UWP. CMAAP is also encouraged to maintain accuracy for citations referencing federal requirements within its UWP.

Recommendation:

The IDOT is encouraged to coordinate with all Illinois MPOs to have draft UWP documents available for State and Federal review prior to MPO Policy Committee action. Establishing a timeline in advance of MPO Policy Committee approval for review ensures that the MPO is in compliance with UWP requirements. This coordination will also contribute to a streamlined State and Federal approval process to help ensure the MPOs' access to planning funding faster and in alignment with the State Fiscal Year.

3.4 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

3.4.1 Observations

The region's *ON TO 2050 Plan* was adopted in October 2022. CMAAP is currently in the process of updating its metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) which will be adopted in October 2026. CMAAP currently refers to the Plan update as the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The core MTP elements were previously embedded into the *ON TO 2050* mobility chapter and supporting appendices. However, the 2026 RTP update will be developed as a separate document which links to the regional comprehensive *Century Plan* and maintains the 2050 planning horizon.

CMAAP has actively engaged its various MPO committees, regional stakeholders, and the public throughout the plan development process. Several working groups consisting of regional transportation infrastructure implementation and resource organizations have been convened to contribute to developing the RTP update. CMAAP has also incorporated elements of the RTA investment needs analysis and IDOT asset management tool data to inform the development of RTP fiscal constraint analyses.

Recommendations from the 2022 Federal Certification Review report are in the process of being incorporated into the RTP update. CMAAP is revising thresholds for its definition of regionally significant projects and renaming them to "Regional Capital Projects" in the forthcoming 2026



RTP. Projects are anticipated to be identified within the categories of capacity projects, financially significant projects, and sponsor nominated. Additional work is underway for defining the amendment process to the regional capital project list to reflect changes in regional infrastructure needs, as warranted, between metropolitan transportation plan updates. CMAP's identification and tracking of performance-based planning targets was also discussed during the on-site meetings. CMAP provides a listing of the MPO's adoption of required performance targets within the system performance report, however a similar listing of performance measure target selection and adoption outside of the system performance report between RTP update cycles is not presently available.

3.4.2 Findings

The MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan satisfies federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (i), 23 CFR 450.324(f)(11)(i) and 23 CFR 450.324 & ((f)(11)(i)).

Recommendation:

CMAP is encouraged to provide documentation of the MPO's performance measure target selection and adoption between update cycles of its RTP.

Commendation:

CMAP is commended for their Performance Measures Dashboard webpage. This resource provides performance measure data in an accessible and graphic format that is updated as new data becomes available. The regionally significant projects benefits report is also a notable practice.

Commendation:

CMAP is commended for their Certification Review webpage which provides a centralized location to highlight elements required in conducting the continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) transportation planning process. This resource also provides details regarding FHWA and FTA transportation planning requirements.

Commendation:

The I-290 Eisenhower Expressway/Blue Line Forest Park Branch Corridor Improvement project is a regionally significant project. Due to the project's complexity as a corridor with highway and transit assets with significant improvement costs, CMAP has facilitated a corridor development office (CDO) to help coordination efforts with all stakeholders to help long-term corridor program visioning, coordinating and sequencing projects, developing funding plans, supporting coordination with federal partners, tracking progress, and strategic communications and messaging. CMAP is the appropriate venue for the CDO because the agency handles highway and transit planning issues. The Federal review team commends CMAP for facilitating the CDO. A CDO encourages the exploration of all surface transportation alternatives. CMAP is encouraged to apply this model to similar projects.



3.5 Transit Planning

3.5.1 Observations

Since the 2022 certification review cycle, state laws have significantly changed the funding and oversight of the Chicago region's public transportation network. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), the region's governmental unit responsible for transit financial and oversight issues will be replaced by the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA) in 2026. NITA's establishment will restructure the region's transit governance and will implement several changes intended to benefit the riding public.

RTA currently oversees the region's capital plan and NITA will take over that responsibility. CMAP will remain the entity responsible for programming transit projects into the STIP. Given the overlap between RTA/NITA's capital plan and CMAP's STIP processes, extensive coordination between the entities is necessary to meet Federal 3-C transportation planning requirements. NITA's oversight responsibilities will be enhanced to manage major project changes undertaken by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra and Pace. The enhanced management of major project changes will allow better coordination between NITA and CMAP to ensure adequate public engagement, as outlined by the region's public participation plan, when the STIP is amended.

3.5.2 Findings

The MPO's Transit Planning satisfies federal requirements (49 U.S.C. 5303, 23 U.S.C. 134, and 23 CFR 450.314).

Recommendation:

Performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) remains a key component of the Federal 3-C planning process. RTA, the transit service boards and CMAP recently updated its intergovernmental data sharing agreement to incorporate Federal (PBPP) requirement changes. The MPO remains the responsible entity for setting regionwide transit asset management and transit safety performance targets in planning documents. The intent of the performance target requirement is to create a data driven approach that prioritizes projects that improve public transit safety and reliability. The capital planning process managed by RTA, and eventually NITA, outlines metrics for asset state of good repair and safety which implies the capital plan prioritizes projects based on asset condition and safety scores. RTA also manages a separate process of allocating additional funding to a service board that may have a greater need for state of good repair funding than another service board in a particular year. The Federal review team notes that there may be some overlap in RTA's and CMAP's PBPP work. The planning area's transit performance management efforts could benefit from consistency between RTA/NITA and CMAP when setting transit targets and detailing how projects are prioritized. Consistency could also ensure efforts are not duplicated.



3.6 Transportation Improvement Program

3.6.1 Observations

CMAP develops and maintains a transportation improvement program (TIP) in cooperation with the State and public transit operators that serves as the regional agenda for surface transportation projects. Thresholds have been established to differentiate TIP amendments from administrative modifications. Amendments requiring an air quality conformity determination are approved twice a year by the MPO Policy Committee while amendments not requiring conformity have been delegated to the CMAP Transportation Committee for review and action. The Transportation Committee meeting schedule is structured to correspond with the IDOT letting schedule and its associated milestones and deadlines so that project sponsors have the maximum opportunity to submit amendments and avoid delays of project authorizations.

CMAP administers an online electronic TIP (eTIP) database that contains all details about approved TIP projects and a record of amendments and modifications. This platform also includes search tools for locating projects geographically, by project, or funding type.

The Federal Review Team observed that the MPO provides detailed and publicly available resources for TIP programming staff and that the TIP document provided an excellent high-level overview of the project selection utilized by CMAP, IDOT, and transit providers. The Federal Review Team also observed that components of MPO's process to determine and maintain fiscal constraint of the TIP are located in various sections throughout both the TIP and TIP programmer documentation.

The Federal Review Team observed that additional documentation within the TIP to provide clarity on whether the MPO supported IDOT's statewide performance-based planning targets or adopted their performance targets is needed. The MPO currently provides detail for each of the federally required performance targets within the MTP System Performance Report and relies on referencing this report within the TIP narrative. Additional information on how the CMAP TIP works toward supporting achievement of identified performance targets was also identified as an element for continued development.

3.6.2 Findings

The MPO's Transportation Improvement Program satisfies federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (j) and 23 CFR 450.326 & (j)).

Recommendation:

CMAP is encouraged to include a listing of current performance measure targets selected by the MPO in the transportation improvement program. This information should include the MPO's approach for either supporting established Statewide performance targets or using MPO identified performance targets.



Recommendation:

CMAP is encouraged to highlight its processes for determining and maintaining TIP fiscal constraint within a consolidated section of the TIP document. Components of the approach are presently detailed in various locations within the TIP and TIP programmer documentation. Providing this information in a consolidated location within the TIP would convey a comprehensive overview of the MPO's process.

Recommendation:

IDOT is encouraged to coordinate with all Illinois MPOs to have drafted TIP documents available for State and Federal review prior to MPO Policy Committee action. Establishing a timeline in advance of MPO Policy Committee approval for review ensures that the MPO is in compliance with TIP requirements. This coordination will also contribute to a streamlined State and Federal approval process to help ensure the region's access to transportation funding is not delayed.

Commendation:

CMAP is commended for its collaboration with IDOT and Illinois MPOs in the statewide deployment of the eTIP platform.

Commendation:

CMAP is commended for its development of detailed programming documents for the Surface Transportation (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives (TA) programs. These resources provide project sponsors with the requirements of the federal funding sources and activities related to maintaining projects' active program status within the MPO TIP.

3.7 Public Participation

3.7.1 Observations

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

3.7.2 Findings

The MPO's Public Participation satisfies federal requirements 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(6), 23 CFR 450.316, and 23 CFR 450.326(b)).

Commendation:

The CMAP Regional Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Process, and Freight engagement webpages are a notable practice. These resources provide resources and updates on the respective plan development timelines, relevant CMAP staff contacts, and related plan development materials for public access. The Federal Review Team also recognizes CMAP's



work in providing MPO Committees' meeting materials in a centralized and publicly accessible location on the MPO website.

3.8 Consultation and Coordination

3.8.1 Observations

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

3.8.2 Findings

The MPO's Consultation and Coordination satisfies federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(g) & (i), 23 CFR 450.316, 23 CFR 450.324(g)).

3.9 List of Obligated Projects

3.9.1 Observations

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

3.9.2 Findings

The MPO's List of Obligated Projects satisfies the federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(j)(7) and 23 CFR 450.334).

3.10 Freight Planning

3.10.1 Observations

CMAA is developing a Regional Freight System Assessment to detail planning level issues within the multimodal freight network. Development of the Regional Freight System Assessment is occurring in phases and will identify freight networks, performance evaluation, and key priorities for investment within the multimodal freight network. These efforts will produce resources for regional partner organizations which include model ordinance language related to truck size, weight, and designated routes. Work on the Regional Freight Assessment will also provide for an update to the Northeastern Illinois Priority Grade Crossings list.

CMAA serves as a member of the Illinois State Freight Advisory Council. The MPO is currently engaged with IDOT to provide feedback on Council operations to enhance freight collaboration within Illinois.

The Federal Review Team observed that freight bottlenecks and prioritized grade separation projects are documented in CMAA planning efforts, however planning level analyses for truck parking needs within the regional freight network is an element for additional inclusion. Section



1401 of MAP-21 (PL 112-141), also known as "Jason's Law," helps advance a more comprehensive set of programs, efforts, and research to improve truck parking and provide States and MPOs with resources to identify parking needs and to encourage improvements and investments.

CMAP has provided local technical assistance for agencies and developed numerous freight planning documents at regional and sub-regional scales. However, there is not a comprehensive document that calls attention to the full breadth of CMAP's freight planning efforts.

3.10.2 Findings

The MPO's Freight Planning satisfies the federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(h), and 23 CFR 450.306).

Recommendation:

CMAP is encouraged to include regional truck parking needs within its freight planning activities to further identify and develop strategies for access to safe, secure, and accessible truck parking.

Recommendation:

CMAP is encouraged to consider development of a regional freight plan that captures all the freight planning activities in the MPO area into a single document. This would link various freight-related analyses, data sets, priorities, and recommendations to serve as a resource for regional partner agencies.

3.11 Transportation Safety

3.11.1 Observations

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

3.11.2 Findings

The MPO's Transportation Safety Planning satisfies federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(B), 23 CFR 450.306(b)(2), 23 CFR 450.306 (d), and 23 CFR 450.324(h)).

3.12 Transportation Security Planning

3.12.1 Observations

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.



3.12.2 Current Status

The MPO's Transportation Security Planning satisfies federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(h)(1)(C), 23 CFR 450.306(b)(3), 23 CFR 450.306(d), and 23 CFR 450.324(h)).

3.13 Travel Demand Forecasting

3.13.1 Observations

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

3.13.2 Findings

The MPO's Travel Demand Forecasting satisfies federal requirements (23 CFR 450.324(f)(1)).

3.14 Air Quality

3.14.1 Observations

This topic area was not selected for additional review based on the results of the risk assessment process.

3.14.2 Findings

The MPO's Air Quality Planning satisfies federal requirements (42 U.S.C. 7401, 40 CFR Part 93, 23 CFR 450.324(m)).

3.15 Congestion Management Process / Management and Operations

3.15.1 Observations

CMAQ initiated an update to its Congestion Management Process (CMP) in 2024 utilizing the eight-step process outlined in the FHWA *Congestion Management Process Guidebook*. The MPO convened a resource group composed of organizations responsible for the management and operations of the multimodal transportation system to coordinate development of objectives, strategies, definition of the CMP network, and relevant performance measures. Strategies considered during this process included travel demand reduction, job access projects, and operational management approaches. The CMP resource group identified a set of congestion and reliability measures which steered CMAQ staff in updated data collection and system performance monitoring efforts.

CMAQ has developed a *Congestion Management Strategy Guidebook* which provides information on congestion management strategies and serves as a resource for the MPO's partner



agencies. The guidebook provides strategies identified for the region and prioritizes demand management and operational improvements. CMAP's next steps are to utilize the guidebook to assist in corridor planning efforts for priority congested arterial corridors identified through data collection, congestion and reliability measures, and system performance analyses. Efforts related to the CMP update are being integrated into various elements of the 2026 metropolitan transportation plan update.

The periodic assessment of CMAP's CMP during update cycles for the metropolitan transportation plan provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented congestion management strategies in addressing regional congestion needs.

3.15.2 Findings

The MPO's Congestion Management Process/Management and Operations Planning satisfies federal requirements (23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) and 23 CFR 450.322).



4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the certification review, the FHWA and FTA jointly certify that the transportation planning process of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning MPO meets the federal planning requirements. The Federal Review Team recognized six (6) commendations, no corrective actions, and eleven (11) recommendations.

4.1 Commendations

The following are noteworthy practices that the CMAP MPO is doing well in the transportation planning process:

CMAP is commended for their Performance Measures Dashboard webpage. This resource provides performance measure data in an accessible and graphic format that is updated as new data becomes available. The regionally significant projects benefits report is also a notable practice.

CMAP is commended for their Certification Review webpage which provides a centralized location to highlight elements required in conducting the continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) transportation planning process. This resource also provides details regarding FHWA and FTA transportation planning requirements.

The I-290 Eisenhower Expressway/Blue Line Forest Park Branch Corridor Improvement project is a regionally significant project. Due to the project's complexity as a corridor with highway and transit assets with significant improvement costs, CMAP has facilitated a corridor development office (CDO) to help coordination efforts with all stakeholders to help long-term corridor program visioning, coordinating and sequencing projects, developing funding plans, supporting coordination with federal partners, tracking progress, and strategic communications and messaging. CMAP is the appropriate venue for the CDO because the agency handles highway and transit planning issues. The Federal review team commends CMAP for facilitating the CDO. A CDO encourages the exploration of all surface transportation alternatives. CMAP is encouraged to apply this model to similar projects.

CMAP is commended for its collaboration with IDOT and Illinois MPOs in the statewide deployment of the eTIP platform.

CMAP is commended for its development of detailed programming documents for the Surface Transportation (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ), and Transportation Alternatives (TA) programs. These resources provide project sponsors with the requirements of the federal funding sources and activities related to maintaining projects' active program status within the MPO TIP.

The CMAP Regional Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Process, and Freight engagement webpages are a notable practice. These resources provide resources and updates on the respective plan development timelines, relevant CMAP staff contacts, and related plan development materials for public access. The Federal Review Team also recognizes CMAP's



work in providing MPO Committees' meeting materials in a centralized and publicly accessible location on the MPO website.

4.2 Corrective Actions

There are no corrective actions identified or issued in this report.

4.3 Recommendations

The following are recommendations that would improve the transportation planning process:

To accommodate a smooth transition from RTA to NITA, the MPO should adopt Policy Committee bylaw changes to facilitate NITA's participation in CMAP's existing governance structure.

With NITA's establishment, steps should be taken to ensure relevant intergovernmental agreements involving RTA, CMAP and any of the transit service boards are updated to meet the region's current needs in addition to changing RTA references to NITA.

CMAP is encouraged to expand supporting detail of planning activities identified with its annual UWP for its core program projects using FHWA PL and FTA 5303 funds. This is to further describe projects' contributions towards addressing regionally identified transportation planning needs and to provide consistency with project descriptions currently included for the competitive program and SPR sections of the annual UWP. CMAP is also encouraged to maintain accuracy for citations referencing federal requirements within its UWP.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is encouraged to coordinate with all Illinois MPOs to have draft UWP documents available for State and Federal review prior to MPO Policy Committee action. Establishing a timeline in advance of MPO Policy Committee approval for review ensures that the MPO is in compliance with UWP requirements. This coordination will also contribute to a streamlined State and Federal approval process to help ensure the MPOs' access to planning funding faster and in alignment with the State Fiscal Year.

CMAP is encouraged to provide documentation of the MPO's performance measure target selection and adoption between update cycles of its RTP.

Performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) remains a key component of the Federal 3-C planning process. RTA, the transit service boards and CMAP recently updated its intergovernmental data sharing agreement to incorporate Federal (PBPP) requirement changes. The MPO remains the responsible entity for setting regionwide transit asset management and transit safety performance targets in planning documents. The intent of the performance target requirement is to create a data driven approach that prioritizes projects that improve public transit safety and reliability. The capital planning process managed by RTA, and eventually NITA, outlines metrics for asset state of good repair and safety which implies the capital plan prioritizes projects based on asset condition and safety scores. RTA also manages a separate process of allocating additional funding to a service board that may have a greater need for state of good repair funding than another service board in a particular year. The Federal review team



notes that there may be some overlap in RTA's and CMAP's PBPP work. The planning area's transit performance management efforts could benefit from consistency between RTA/NITA and CMAP when setting transit targets and detailing how projects are prioritized. Consistency could also ensure efforts are not duplicated.

CMAP is encouraged to include a listing of current performance measure targets selected by the MPO in the transportation improvement program. This information should include the MPO's approach for either supporting established Statewide performance targets or using MPO identified performance targets.

CMAP is encouraged to highlight its processes for determining and maintaining TIP fiscal constraint within a consolidated section of the TIP document. Components of the approach are presently detailed in various locations within the TIP and TIP programmer documentation. Providing this information in a consolidated location within the TIP would convey a comprehensive overview of the MPO's process.

IDOT is encouraged to coordinate with all Illinois MPOs to have drafted TIP documents available for State and Federal review prior to MPO Policy Committee action. Establishing a timeline in advance of MPO Policy Committee approval for review ensures that the MPO is in compliance with TIP requirements. This coordination will also contribute to a streamlined State and Federal approval process to help ensure the region's access to transportation funding is not delayed.

CMAP is encouraged to include regional truck parking needs within its freight planning activities to further identify and develop strategies for access to safe, secure, and accessible truck parking.

CMAP is encouraged to consider development of a regional freight plan that captures all the freight planning activities in the MPO area into a single document. This would link various freight-related analyses, data sets, priorities, and recommendations to serve as a resource for regional partner agencies.



APPENDIX A – SITE VISIT PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were involved in the Chicago, IL urbanized area on-site review occurring on January 27-28, 2026.

Federal Highway Administration, Illinois Division

Jon Paul Diipla, Metropolitan Planning Specialist
Anna Musial, Transportation Planning Specialist
Irene Pantoja, Transportation Engineer
Todd Schmidt, Metropolitan Safety and Mobility Specialist

Federal Highway Administration, Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty

Andrew Edwards, Senior Community Planner
Matt Smoker, Transportation Specialist

Federal Transit Administration, Region 5

Mark Kane, Lead Community Planner

Illinois Department of Transportation

Brandon Geber, Section Chief of Metropolitan Program Planning, Bureau of Planning
Jarod Hitchings, Sustainability Projects Specialist, Bureau of Planning
Robert Innis, Metropolitan Planning Manager, Bureau of Planning
Julie Kaschke, Metropolitan Planning Manager, Bureau of Planning
Jason Lange, Sustainability Specialist, Bureau of Planning
Charles Riddle, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Local Roads and Streets – District 1
Steven Schilke, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Programming – District 1
Chris Schmidt, Air Quality Manager, Bureau of Planning
Megan Swanson, Senior Metropolitan Planning Manager, Bureau of Planning
Michael Vanderhoof, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Planning

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Erin Aleman, Executive Director, Executive Office
Bill Barnes, Deputy, Regional Policy and Implementation
Alex Beata, Director, Regional Policy and Implementation
Vas Boykovskyy, Deputy, Finance
Kama Dobbs, Principal, Transportation, Research, Analysis, & Programming
Doug Ferguson, Senior Analyst, Transportation, Research, Analysis, & Programming
Jane Grover, Principal, Communications and Engagement
Noah Harris, Analyst, Regional Policy and Implementation
Kasia Hart, Principal, Communications and Engagement
Aimee Lee, Deputy, Transportation, Research, Analysis, & Programming
Martin Meninger, MPO Program Lead, Regional Policy and Implementation
Jen Miller, Senior TIP Analyst, Transportation, Research, Analysis, & Programming
Tom Murtha, Senior Analyst, Regional Policy and Implementation
Kyle Schultz, Deputy of Strategic Advancement, Executive Office
Elizabeth Scott, Principal, Regional Policy and Implementation



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Ryan Thompto, Principal, Regional Policy and Implementation

Jennie Vana, Deputy, Communications & Engagement

Claire Williams, Deputy Executive Director of People and Operations, Executive Office

Chicago Transit Authority

Molly Poppe, Chief Planning & Innovation Officer

Metra

Lynnette Ciavarella, Senior Division Director, Strategic Planning & Performance

David Kralik, Director of Planning and Programming

Pace

Erik Llewellyn, Chief Planning Officer

Regional Transportation Authority

Jill Leary, Chief of Staff



APPENDIX B – SITE VISIT AGENDA

2026 U.S. DOT Planning Certification Review Chicago, Illinois Transportation Management Area Agenda

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

433 W. Van Buren Street, Suite 450, Chicago, IL 60607

- 9:00 A.M. Federal Review Team Arrival
- 9:30 A.M. Introductions and Overview of the TMA Certification Review Process, *FHWA & FTA*
- Explanation of the TMA Certification Review Process
 - Review of Findings from the 2022 Certification Review
- 10:00 A.M. Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) overview, *CMAP*
- Local transportation planning updates since 2022
 - Accomplishments
 - Goals for next 4-year period, long-term goals
 - Transportation planning areas of concern
 - CMAP Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Committees; members comments
- 11:00 A.M. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update, *FHWA & FTA*
- 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) development and timeline
 - Regional capital projects
 - Financial planning
- 12:00 P.M. Lunch
- 1:15 P.M. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), *FHWA & FTA*
- UPWP core and competitive programs
 - UPWP development and reporting processes
- 2:15 P.M. Break
- 2:30 P.M. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), *FHWA & FTA*
- eTIP system and process
 - Performance target setting
- 3:30 P.M. Adjourn Day 1



Wednesday, January 28, 2026
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
433 W. Van Buren Street, Suite 450, Chicago, IL 60607

- 8:30 A.M. Federal Review Team Arrival
- 9:00 A.M. Congestion Management and Freight Planning, *FHWA*
- Congestion Management Process (CMP) update
 - Regional Freight System Assessment update
- 10:00 A.M. Transit Planning, *FTA*
- Discussion of Preliminary Topics and Questions, *FTA & CMAP*
- 11:00 A.M. Preliminary Findings Discussion, *Federal Review Team*
- 11:30 A.M. Presentation of Preliminary Findings & Next Steps, *Federal Review Team*
- 12:00 P.M. Adjourn Day 2



APPENDIX C – PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning conducted a web-based public comment form on behalf of FHWA and FTA to collect public input on the federal transportation planning process in the Chicago, IL, Metropolitan Planning Area. The survey was posted on the CMAP website from January 13 through February 10, 2026. CMAP announced the availability of the public comment form during its various MPO committee meetings and additional interested parties were provided with the public comment link through CMAP newsletters.

Information on accessing the public comment form was posted on the CMAP website, LinkedIn account, and Facebook page. The Federal Review Team has reviewed all comments and have taken them into consideration through the development of this report. Information on the public comments received is provided in the following summary.

Summary of Results:

- 14 public comment forms were completed.
- 9 respondents indicated they are involved in the MPO planning process, with 5 indicated that they are not.
- All transportation modes and users are represented in planning: 1 respondent disagrees.
- There is adequate opportunity to participate in planning process: 2 respondents disagree, 1 respondent neither agrees nor disagrees.
- MPO plans and documents are easily accessible: 1 respondent disagrees, 1 respondent neither agrees nor disagrees.
- All members of the public have equal opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process: 4 respondents disagree.

Written comments submitted via the public comments form:

- CMAP does a great job connecting local government entities and related stakeholders to the key issues facing our region. I've been impressed by the work they're doing to encourage ADA Title II compliance across the region, especially!
- CMAP doesn't have much formal power over local land use decisions. Therefore, it can kind of feel removed and academic when actual planning and zoning decisions are made. I wish CMAP would take a more active role facilitating communication and collaboration with partner agencies - IDOT in particular.
- CMAP frequently holds public open houses where all residents are invited. Important decision makers are at those meetings inviting conversation and recommendations.
- Absolutely, CMAP has a wonderful team of knowledgeable and accessible professionals.
- Data access and the ease of finding information about different communities. Continue to find ways to help find tax relief and government consolidation.
- CMAP is effective at tracking stakeholders and project participants, but for solo-occupant car commuters like me traveling from the northwest suburbs to downtown Chicago, it



shows little vision for reducing congestion. At a Transportation Chicago event, a CMAP manager candidly admitted that congestion relief is not one of the organization's active goals—yet CMAP oversees the CMAQ Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program. Cities like New York recognize that thinner vehicles reduce road space usage, charging motorcycles only half the congestion fee of a car. CMAP could be the world's leader in addressing global traffic congestion through administering a modest weather- and road-protected, highway-capable ThinMobility pilot project. CMAP's support for this type of narrow-footprint pilot project could make solo and duo occupant commuting from the suburbs to downtown Chicago much more efficient and enjoyable while positioning CMAP at the forefront of innovative congestion solutions.

- They are Including, adding, and improving bicycle transportation in all transportation planning, funding, and implementation now. I'm concerned that federal transportation budgeting in the current administration will hamper future funding.
- CMAP is an extra layer of government that needs to be absorbed by another body. There is too much of a heavy hand by the Exec Dir that limits the abilities of the participating parties of the MPO. CMAP is continuously looking for ways to keep the funding instead of sharing with the transportation agencies.
- Main thing is the website is difficult to navigate. It has gotten better, but it is not user friendly. Could be improved.
- CMAP MPO focuses too much on automobile infrastructure to the detriment of other modes.
- Safety is the top of every program.





Report prepared by:

**Federal Highway Administration
Illinois Division**

**130 South Martin Luther King
Drive, Suite A**

Springfield, IL 62703

(217) 492-4640