



MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: May 22, 2026

Subject: Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for public comment

Action Requested: Approval

Background

Federal law requires CMAP, as the designated metropolitan planning organization for northeastern Illinois, to develop and periodically update a long-range regional transportation plan. The 2026 RTP is the region's transportation policy and investment framework for the next 20 years. It is one of the first plans developed under CMAP's transition to a family of plans approach to comprehensive planning, in which a long-term regional vision guides a series of topic-specific planning efforts. The Century Plan, scheduled for adoption in 2027, will serve as that overarching vision and inform future RTP cycles. In the meantime, ON TO 2050 continues to serve as the policy foundation for the 2026 RTP.

Development of the 2026 RTP involved multi-year engagement with transportation agencies, local governments, community organizations, and residents across the seven-county region. The Transportation Committee, CMAP Board, and MPO Policy Committee provided direction and oversight throughout. Resource groups covering congestion management, regional capital projects, and financial planning contributed technical expertise at key stages. Other advisory groups — including the Community Alliance for Regional Equity, Future Leaders in Planning, and the Regional Mobility Council — ensured that community perspectives informed the planning process. Nearly 1,800 residents participated in a public questionnaire, and public comment received in recent months has been extensive.

About the Draft Plan

The draft 2026 RTP elevates five transportation goal areas and identifies priority investments to advance them. A brief summary of each goal area follows.

- **Connections:** The plan examines travel reliability, multimodal choice, and accessibility across the region. It identifies strategies to address congestion, expand transit and

active transportation, and ensure the system is accessible to all residents, including people with disabilities and older adults.

- **Safety:** The plan confronts a roadway safety crisis that peaked at more than 700 traffic deaths in 2021. It calls for a regional Safe System Approach framework, context-appropriate speed management, protective infrastructure, and prioritized investment in corridors and communities where risk is greatest.
- **Climate and environment:** The plan addresses transportation emissions, air quality, and the resilience of transportation infrastructure to flooding and extreme heat. It calls for progress on emissions-reduction targets and investments to mitigate the effects of extreme weather on the regional transportation system.
- **Economy:** The plan examines how transportation supports workforce access, freight movement, and inclusive economic growth. It recommends aligning transportation investment with land use decisions to strengthen economic centers and multimodal connections across the region and addresses intercity bus and passenger rail as regional economic assets.
- **Governing, funding, and preserving the system:** The plan documents the region's infrastructure maintenance backlog, the gap between revenues and costs, and the coordination needed to address both. It identifies specific revenue mechanisms — including expanded tolling, a road usage charge, sales tax modernization, and more — and calls for more coordinated, performance-based investment decision-making.

To implement this transportation vision, the 2026 RTP elevates 15 priority investments, which were identified through a rigorous, performance-based evaluation process. These priorities include the projects and programs that most substantially advance regional goals. Beyond this list, all fiscally constrained regional capital projects remain eligible for federal funding.

To explore this information in greater detail, the draft RTP and accompanying set of appendices are included below:

- [2026 Regional Transportation Plan](#)
- [Plan de Transporte Regional de 2026](#)
- [Appendix A: Administrative Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Appendix B: Air Quality Conformity Documentation](#)
- [Appendix C: Financial Plan for Transportation](#)
- [Appendix D: Public and Stakeholder Engagement](#)
- [Appendix E: Regional Capital Projects Benefits Report](#)
- [Appendix F: Socioeconomic Forecast](#)
- [Appendix G: System Performance Report](#)
- [Appendix H: Transportation System Inventory](#)
- [Appendix I: Travel Demand Model Documentation](#)

Federal Nondiscrimination Requirements

Federal law, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, and disability in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. As a recipient of federal transportation planning funds, CMAP is required to conduct planning activities in a nondiscriminatory manner and to assess whether the benefits and burdens of regional transportation investments are

consistent with these requirements. In developing the 2026 RTP, CMAP conducted a nondiscrimination analysis examining the distribution of plan investments across the region's population, with particular attention to minority and low-income populations, persons with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and people age 65 and older.

To assess nondiscrimination, the activity-based model was used to measure access to colleges and universities, grocery stores, trauma centers, and jobs within varying time thresholds by both auto and transit. The analysis compared levels of access to these key destinations in the 2026 base year compared to the 2050 plan build-out year and found that the plan's investments are distributed across the region in a manner that does not discriminate against any of the assessed populations.

CMAP's public engagement process was designed to reach a broad cross-section of the region's residents, including those with limited English proficiency, through a public questionnaire, translated materials, partnership with local organizations, and in-person outreach in a wide range of communities throughout the region.

Public Comment and Public Hearing

The public comment period will provide residents, organizations, municipalities, and agencies across northeastern Illinois the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan. Once the plan is released, feedback can be submitted through a form at cmap.is/rtp, by emailing rtp@cmap.illinois.gov, or by calling, mailing, or visiting the CMAP office. The comment period is anticipated to run from June 12 through July 31.

Federal regulations require CMAP to hold a public hearing on the draft RTP during the comment period. The public hearing is scheduled to be held at the Old Post Office (433 West Van Buren Street, Suite 450, Chicago) from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 6. Members of the public are invited to attend and provide comments on the draft plan. Please [register](#) in advance.

All comments received — whether submitted in writing, by phone, at the public hearing, or through other channels — will be reviewed and considered before the plan is finalized and presented to the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee for adoption.

Note on the North DuSable Lake Shore Drive Project

The North DuSable Lake Shore Drive improvements project has been the subject of significant public comment throughout the RTP development process. A separate attachment to this memo summarizes the public comment received and explains the basis for the project remaining on the fiscally constrained list and priority investment list in the draft plan.

Attachment: North DuSable Lake Shore Drive Improvements