



Metropolitan Chicago begins development of new ON TO 2050 comprehensive regional plan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

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Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), its partners, and stakeholders study topics for potential emphasis in long-range strategy for quality of life and economic prosperity of seven-county region

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, February 23, 2016 -- Stakeholders and leaders from across metropolitan Chicago are convening Wednesday to share ideas about how to strengthen existing communities by developing a new comprehensive regional plan called ON TO 2050.

To embark on this collaborative planning process, more than 500 participants are gathering at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and delving into a wide range of issues that will shape the region's future for decades to come. Residents can read more at www.cmap.illinois.gov/onto2050 and weigh in at www.cmap.illinois.gov/get-involved.

"Like every region, metropolitan Chicago faces challenges," said CMAP board chair Gerald Bennett. "But effective planning is about turning those challenges into opportunities rather than standing by as they become real obstacles to quality of life and economic prosperity. ON TO 2050 will identify, anticipate, and address those issues in a highly transparent planning process that involves organizations and government units committed to pursuing prosperity as a region that competes in today's global economy."

Before producing a draft plan for public comment in spring 2018, the process will involve hundreds of organizations, thousands of stakeholders, and the general public in determining priorities for ON TO 2050.

"We are absolutely intent on gathering broad input about the plan's specifics as they emerge," said CMAP executive director Joseph C. Szabo. "CMAP has clear criteria for deciding whether ON TO 2050 will ultimately emphasize a specific topic. For example, these include whether our agency or its partners have authority to implement a particular recommendation, and whether the recommendation is considered important by multiple constituencies. Our region needs to

make tough choices, making certain that every public investment and policy maximizes the benefit to residents of all seven counties."

No final decisions have been made about what the plan will include or recommend, as CMAP and its partners have just begun analyzing a wide range of issues. In some cases, the new plan will likely continue emphases of its award-winning successor, GO TO 2040. Among these continuing topics are the need for coordinated investment, preservation of water resources, and economic innovation. ON TO 2050 will further refine other prior topics such as how the region prioritizes major transportation projects. And the agency is studying potential new areas such as inclusive growth and transit modernization.

The prior plan, adopted in October 2010, has had a number of successes collected in a series of annual implementation reports. Among the more recent:

Through the Local Technical Assistance program, CMAP and its partners have undertaken almost 200 projects that have helped municipalities put the regional plan's principles into use locally.

A number of governments -- including Oswego, Montgomery, and Yorkville -- have taken steps to share services, following the plan's recommendation for efficient government.

In part with funding from the CMAP Transportation Alternatives Program, greenway trails in the region have increased to 771 miles -- more than halfway to the 2040 goal of about 1,300 miles.

Through the "Homes for a Changing Region" partnership of CMAP, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, clusters of municipalities have developed joint plans addressing their communities' current and future housing needs.

The Tollway's "Move Illinois Program," announced in 2011, includes high-priority GO TO 2040 capital projects such as the Elgin-O'Hare Western Access, now under construction.

In early 2016, the Illinois Department of Transportation initiated a proposal for managed lanes on the I-55 expressway -- a major recommendation of the plan.

As development of ON TO 2050 builds toward adoption in 2018, the public can contribute #2050BigIdeas for the region on Twitter and Facebook. CMAP will hold workshops this spring on the plan in general and, starting early in the summer, will convene forums that will take a deep dive into specific issues. Before major materials -- including the alternative regional scenarios in summer 2017 and the draft plan in summer 2018 -- are submitted for approval by the CMAP Board and MPO Policy Committee, they will be available for public review online and in events across the region.

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About CMAP. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. The agency and its partners are developing ON TO 2050, a new comprehensive regional plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.

