

May 27, 2014

Re: GO TO 2040 Plan Update

The unanimous adoption of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) long-range GO TO 2040 plan in 2010 represented a milestone for the region. The plan provides the metropolitan area its first integrated land use, transportation, housing and environmental planning framework, and offers a national model for cooperation across municipal and county borders to achieve balanced growth and a better future for all the region's residents.

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) applauds CMAP's 2014 update of the GO TO 2040. This document represents an important mid-course refinement of the original plan. It focuses on how the region has changed over the past four years without fundamentally altering the tenor or goals of the plan. With this update, GO TO 2040 remains the essential guiding document in the Chicago region for decision making on planning issues, guidance for policy change and prioritization of infrastructure projects.

Broadly, the GO TO 2040 plan update reaffirms CMAP's commitment to the guiding principles for developing a more equitable, sustainable and economically competitive region. It is imperative that the CMAP board endorse the update and that public actors—from municipalities to counties to Illinois state government agencies—incorporate CMAP's policy proposals into their own plans. Our frustrations lie not with the GO TO 2040 plan but rather with inadequate mechanisms to guide and reward growth consistent with its clear vision.

In the spirit of constructive collegiality, MPC staff reviewed the plan update summary's four major sections and offer comments, plus specific recommendations for improvement.

Over the next four years, CMAP will begin developing the region's next major comprehensive plan, due in 2018, an opportunity to innovate further. CMAP must use this period to institutionalize itself as the region's principal planning coordinator, playing an increasingly important role in guiding growth through tools and incentives for transit-oriented development, water supply, workforce housing and data usability. It must, for despite multiple assets, our region's growth lags every major region other than Detroit, and current patterns of low-density growth are both uncompetitive and unsustainable.

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In the near term, CMAP's ability to identify expanded and reliable funding sources for transportation will play an essential role in determining how expansive the next regional plan can be. Under the current funding straightjacket, the next regional plan, even if it covers an additional 10 years into the future (i.e., to 2050), will provide little opportunity for major new infrastructure investments given the very significant needs to maintain existing capacity. Yet the region's continued population growth demands a more extensive transportation network. New transportation funding sources at the local, state and federal levels will make it possible for CMAP to execute a vision that matches the potential of this world-class region.

At the same time, CMAP must secure new sources of funding that are not dependent on federal transportation allocations. In order to extend its mission successfully, CMAP must identify new, stable funding sources that allow it to be a relevant and valued partner on a range of regional challenges.

CMAP must also take a more active role in altering the land use decisions in order to produce the regional outcomes identified in GO TO 2040. CMAP's guidance on Developments of Regional Importance (DRIs), while useful, is not supported by any binding authority. The region would benefit from a visible, public review of large projects that highlights the role they play in affecting transportation, water supply and housing costs. CMAP's authority to distribute funding to major developments that are consistent with GO TO 2040 should be expanded.

Regional Mobility

An efficient, effective transportation system is essential to ensuring the continued growth of the Chicago region, making it possible for people to get to and from work and play, and for goods to get to market. The GO TO 2040 update's emphasis on expanded investment in transport, particularly public transportation, calls for expanded resources to meet these needs, following decades of declining spending on infrastructure. CMAP recommends, and MPC supports, increasing the state motor fuel tax and identifying a replacement given the declining yield; congestion pricing on major roadways, particularly in conjunction with the addition of new capacity; performance-based funding; and variable parking pricing. All of these revenue sources correspond to MPC's goal of using our existing system as efficiently as possible while planning and funding new infrastructure to accommodate balanced growth.

GO TO 2040 recommends that the vast majority of transportation dollars be invested in the maintenance and state of good repair of the existing transportation network. Combined with performance-based funding, this is

an important recognition of the limited resources for infrastructure that the region currently has available, and a decision to prioritize the most transformative projects that we do have. GO TO 2040's constrained list of major capital projects is a reflection of those facts. Recent progress on priority regional transportation projects, such as the CTA Red and Purple Line Modernization and the Elgin O'Hare Western Access, suggests that CMAP's principled prioritization four years ago is resulting in positive outcomes; the single variant to this track record is the inclusion of the Illiana Expressway which clearly does not meet the goals of the plan.

Moving forward, MPC recommends that the metrics of GO TO 2040—including doubling daily transit ridership and significantly expanding the share of the population and jobs with access to transit--be incorporated into decision making at all levels about which projects to prioritize. In other words, while the limited list of regional major capital projects reflect a consensus on the metropolitan area's most important investments; those investments, and other future choices, may not produce the mobility outcomes that GO TO 2040 targets. **CMAP must take a more proactive approach in modeling and communicating outcomes of alternative investment choices, showing how some types of investments lead to outcomes that align much more closely with CMAP's proposed policy objectives than others.** This presentation of alternative scenarios will help municipalities, counties and the state make the wisest choices.

In addition, CMAP must integrate its Livable Communities principles into the goals of the Regional Mobility program. The summary draft provides support for this idea, suggesting, for example, that "the region should also plan for nearby housing and land use to support mixed-income transit-oriented development;" **but CMAP must both raise its voice and identify financial incentives to reward communities that plan clustered development appropriately around transportation improvements.** In some cases, this may mean the development of modernized local land use plans, in others this may mean the identification of associated capital improvements to leverage the value of transportation infrastructure.

Livable Communities

MPC sees great strength and potential in CMAP's efforts to improve the livability of the region's communities by making them more healthy, safe and walkable. Access to quality transportation, schools, jobs and services supports communities that are attractive for residents and workers, and cost-effective for local governments. Focused planning for our region's communities results in more vibrant neighborhoods with a distinct sense of place.

One joint venture between CMAP, MPC and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is *Homes for a Changing Region*, which received a multi-year National Foreclosure Settlement award to support the development of a toolkit. It will empower communities by providing a framework for housing plans grounded in data and to encourage collaboration between communities that face similar challenges. MPC looks forward to continuing this close partnership.

Traditionally, CMAP partners with a range of municipalities and counties to conduct planning and Local Technical Assistance (LTA) efforts, yet CMAP has great potential to expand partnerships throughout the region to address resource allocation and efficiency. **MPC proposes that CMAP take on a coordinating role with housing authorities on the Regional Housing Initiative.** This supports CMAP's interest in implementing more coordinated, efficient governance and takes better advantage of public and private investment. Additionally, CMAP should seed and implement collaborative models for tackling unique, subregional issues. The South, West, and Northwest Housing Collaboratives and the Northwest Water Planning Alliance demonstrate the benefits of addressing subregional challenges through coordinated planning and implementation. CMAP should proactively seek opportunities to support multi-town collaboratives through LTA assistance where geography or priorities align with CMAP's goals, including strong retail corridors, better green space, bundled capital investments and other efforts related to improved efficiency and livability. CMAP must also be more proactive in identifying and working with communities that may not initially be interested in LTA, but would add to the momentum.

It is paramount that water supply and stormwater management are emphasized in this update. These two areas impact residents' lives in a number of ways, from the movement of freight through Chicago area waterways to potable water used for daily personal care. **MPC strongly recommends close integration of CMAP's Water 2050 regional water supply and demand plan into the GO TO 2040 implementation process.** Water supply planning is inextricably linked to changing our local and regional growth patterns. The two plans must be deployed side-by-side. CMAP is the most appropriate entity to lead the region in integrating stormwater management into various planning efforts through the climate adaptation initiatives.

Finally, targeting infrastructure investments will improve livability for local communities. Investments such as transit-oriented development and bus rapid transit not only provide better access to jobs and amenities, but can accommodate everyone, including lower-income individuals, pedestrians and cyclists, to make streets that are safer and more walkable; and to support people in making healthy choices. **CMAP should work proactively with**

government agencies, including IDOT, to incorporate livability principles into major capital investments.

Human Capital

MPC applauds CMAP's focus on building Chicago's economic base to improve the region's global standing. GO TO 2040's emphasis on sub-regional industrial clusters, data-driven information systems and demand-driven workforce training is central to improving the region's competitiveness. As identified by World Business Chicago, metropolitan Chicago is a freight powerhouse, handling a quarter of all rail movement in the country, and benefits from a strong manufacturing sector that gained jobs faster than the national average over the last two years. **CMAP has been at the forefront by studying and identifying core industries in the manufacturing-freight nexus and should continue to work jointly with WBC to unlock the growth of the transportation distribution logistics sector.**

To capitalize on the region's existing infrastructure and strengths, MPC sees opportunity for CMAP to intensify its support in the next phase of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE), a partnership between federal, state and local governments; metropolitan transportation agencies; and the nation's freight railroads. Through grade separations and joint-use corridors, CREATE has helped reduce the time it takes for goods to pass through Chicago by 25 percent. **CMAP can continue to support federal and local funding requests to implement the unfunded components of CREATE and build consensus on additional ones needed to drive economic development by reducing freight rail congestion.**

While CMAP is committed to supporting a robust business environment that attracts firms in the advanced manufacturing, technology, logistics, management and finance sectors, there is a lack of workforce training and educational opportunities that meet the needs of emerging sectors. **CMAP could play a stronger role in gauging regional employer demand and facilitating appropriate workforce and job training programs to match these needs.** MPC urges CMAP to take a leadership role in the Millennium Reserve Industrial Jobs Work Plan for the Calumet region. This plan is focused on addressing the mismatch between local labor force and manufacturing firms—both by building career-advancement opportunities and supporting regional economic development.

Lastly, CMAP has always promoted data-driven decisions, planning and investment, and MPC sees an enhanced role for CMAP in identifying shifting

demographics, particularly in terms of immigration and ports of entry, and projecting employment sector growth. **CMAP should identify strategies for creating culturally appropriate human services, counseling and job training programs that are best matched with employment demands.**

Efficient Governance

Improving the effectiveness of government service delivery, creating tax policies that ensure sustainable revenues and providing ready access to usable data are urgent priorities and MPC commends CMAP for its leadership. Northeastern Illinois has an abundance of government units, a heavy emphasis on sales and property taxes, and data accessibility and usability remain challenges. Resolving all of these requires hard political choices; **CMAP should redouble its efforts in the coming years to enable better decision making in these areas through research, demonstration projects and awareness raising.**

The report of the Regional Tax Policy Task Force provided a roadmap for policy changes that would boost revenues for state and local governments, while also easing some of the tax policy-driven disparities between local units of government. It also prompts the region to consider lowering the overall sales tax rate while expanding the base to cover services, which are a growing segment of the economy, and to re-examine how transportation investments and transit operations are funded. These recommendations need to be put into action. **CMAP should convene regional stakeholders—including MPC—to determine a consensus-based pathway for advancing these issues, and then lead the way to policy change.** Additionally, CMAP should examine tax policy as related to its own funding—so long as CMAP’s funding is largely limited to transportation appropriations, it will continue to struggle to be able to allocate sufficient resources to other pertinent regional challenges, from water supply management to workforce housing.

CMAP is to be commended for listening to feedback on MetroPulse and refocusing it to select indicators to monitor progress and challenges on plan implementation. MetroPulse is a valuable tool for tracking the performance of the region and will become even more valuable as it is built-out further. **CMAP can continue to help the region and its many decision makers by playing a larger role in opening up new data sets for use;** working to establish protocols for formatting, collection and dissemination of data; and developing templates and processes for more easily integrating big data sets into decision making at all levels of government.

Many units of government in northeastern Illinois are already attempting to share services, coordinate investments and improve the efficiency of service delivery. Many more are not, and need guidance on proven means for doing so, from sample by-laws for interjurisdictional partnerships to shared protocols on data management. Consolidation of government units is one means of improving service delivery, but is not the only pathway, and **CMAP can play a large role in educating our many units of government on feasible options for enhanced efficiency.** Additional research on townships, single-purpose units of government and efficiencies of scale for some standard services (e.g. water supply, parks, etc.) would help the region make more prudent decisions.

Additionally, CMAP should be asserting its leadership by establishing a coordination role for itself on all of its issue areas – from transit-oriented development to water supply systems, from data usability to workforce housing. By assuming this mantle, and proactively convening disparate interests involved in any given issue area, CMAP can cement itself in the region’s collective consciousness as a useful entity for coordination of data-driven investments and policymaking. This role can stretch beyond Illinois as well—on freight movement, transit, water systems and housing markets, CMAP should be doing more to coordinate with Northwest Indiana (NIRPC and the RDA) and southeast Wisconsin (SEWRPC) to reduce interstate competition and focus on true regional growth.

Conclusion

CMAP must use the next four years to solidify its role as Chicagoland’s single regional planning entity. Through LTA grants (connected with transportation investments), new thinking about water resources and other strategies, CMAP can act as the essential coordinator that binds our region together. In each of the specific suggestions outlined, MPC looks forward to being an active participant to CMAP on execution. We recognize that maintaining unity across jurisdictional boundaries will remain tough. MPC commends the work CMAP has conducted so far to encourage those cross-border collaborations, and looks forward to encouraging more of those connections in the years ahead, all in the interest of building a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous region.



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