

Testimony to Illinois Works

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4/23/08

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) has been an early and vocal advocate for the need to pass a capital program in Illinois. Infrastructure (including transportation, water treatment, schools, housing, and open space) is the engine of economic prosperity. As a state and as a region, we are in serious danger of squandering our global competitive advantage.

Metropolitan Chicago depends upon a robust transportation system with roads, transit, and other elements organized via intermodal corridors that connect our communities. Over 253 million hours per year are spent here in traffic delays, and 151 million gallons of fuel are used each year in traffic jams. As a region, we waste \$4 billion annually on fuel and productivity due to congestion. The amount of rail and truck traffic is projected to double in the next two decades. With all these challenges, the capital program is necessary to keep our region and state economically prosperous.

As long ago as December 2006, the CMAP Board issued a clear statement of principles about the need for a capital program. Those five principles are:

- **Make it Significant.** It must be large enough to meet forecasted needs.
- **Make it Comprehensive.** No part of the transportation network can be neglected without affecting the whole. Non-transportation infrastructure cannot be ignored. This includes water treatment, schools, housing, and open space.
- **Make the Project Selection Process Transparent and Results-Driven.** Select projects based on regionally approved evaluation criteria that produce agreed-upon results.
- **Support it with New Revenue.** Need an identifiable funding source to support both pay-as-you-go funding and new bonding authority.

- **Set Funds Aside for Planning.** The public deserves to know that their dollars are being spent wisely, effectively, and according to a well thought-out plan.

As a region and as a state, we need to learn from events that led to passage of the Mass Transit Funding and Reform Bill (HB 656). No one wants to relive that process, but it did show that leaders in our seven counties -- and, eventually, in Springfield -- can put aside their differences to do what's right. The RTA's Moving Beyond Congestion plan was critical, because asking the public to increase taxes without having a strategy to maximize public funds would be short-sighted. Moving Beyond Congestion helped convince the public and elected officials that new transit operation funds would be spent wisely. To make the same case for a capital program, our region needs to demonstrate that we will be good stewards of precious public funds for infrastructure.

Leaders and residents need to break away from short-term thinking that gets in the way of effective planning. CMAP just launched *GO TO 2040*, metropolitan Chicago's first truly comprehensive planning campaign. For the first time, our region will have a clear strategy to get things done.

Performance-based outcomes are key to instilling public confidence. CMAP is developing the *GO TO 2040* performance measures -- which we call "indicators" -- in partnership with the Chicago Community Trust. CMAP and RTA are also working closely to ensure that these performance-based outcomes drive investment decisions. This effort is a major innovation, enabling the region to predict and measure the effects of implementation choices.

Our region and state have a unique opportunity to make the case for strategic investments. The CMAP Board calls on leaders here and in Springfield to unite in passing an Illinois Works initiative. Frankly, the new capital program is overdue, and it needs to cover not only transportation but all other infrastructure. It's time to do the right thing and guarantee our continued economic competitiveness.