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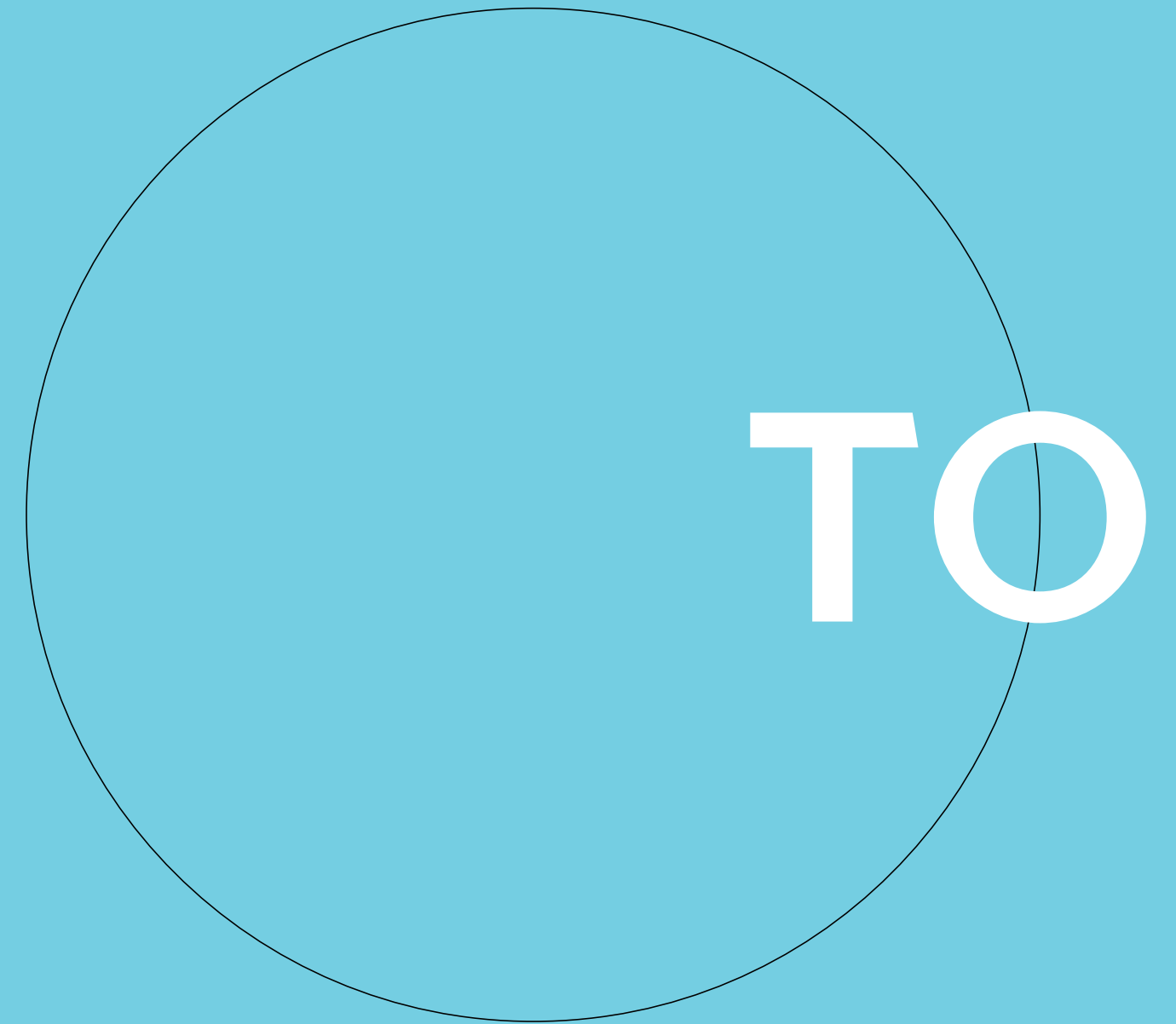


**2050**

ON

**Executive Summary**  
**Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning**

Find the full text of ON TO 2050 at [cmap.illinois.gov/2050](http://cmap.illinois.gov/2050)

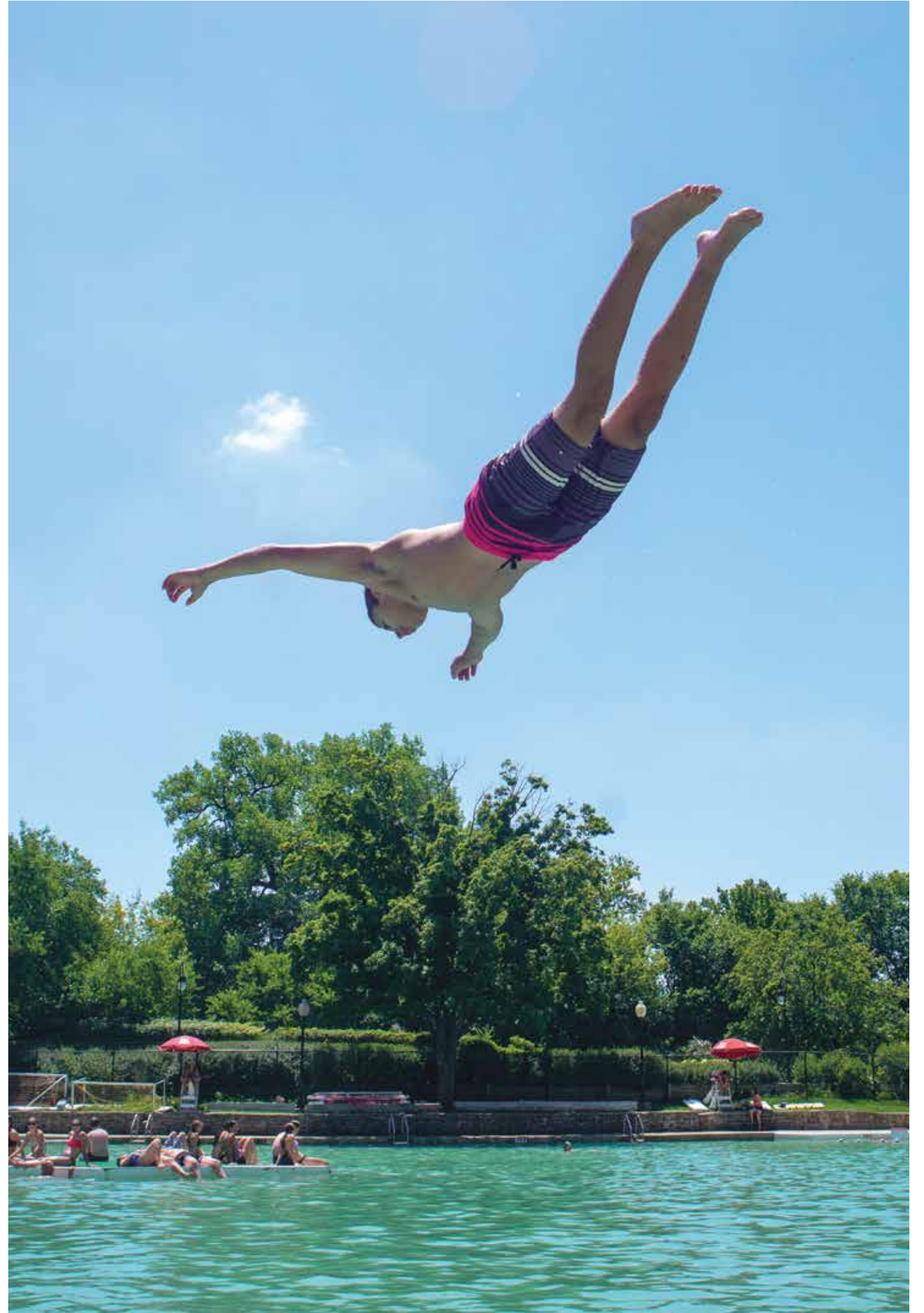


2050











# OPEN

# TO

# ALL

Residents of metropolitan Chicago live and work here because of the many opportunities for prosperity that the region offers. We are home to diverse industries, a well-educated workforce, and world-class institutions of higher education. The region remains a nexus for rail, air, water, and automotive transportation in North America. In the past decade, the region has made great strides on investing in its transit and road networks, preserving high-quality open space, and fostering livable communities. At the same time, we are struggling to keep up with our peers economically, making do with less revenue to maintain our aging infrastructure, and facing growing inequality.

**The Chicago region has a tradition of seizing its destiny rather than leaving the future to chance. To thrive, we must address our challenges collaboratively and ensure metropolitan Chicago’s status as a global center of commerce, a place where opportunity is open to all.**

Our progress has stalled for reasons that are complex but by no means irreversible. By systematically investing in our residents, infrastructure, and communities, as a region we can make tangible progress toward broad, lasting prosperity and quality of life. Most important, while we possess the assets necessary to succeed, we are strongest when we coordinate our efforts regionally.

In developing this ON TO 2050 comprehensive regional plan, CMAP spent approximately three years working with partners to conduct extensive research, issue more than two dozen reports, and engage over 100,000 residents of the seven-county region. The plan affirms and builds on the recommendations of its predecessor, GO TO 2040, to offer specific direction where needed and identify additional priorities. The plan process identified three clear, overarching principles:

**Inclusive Growth:** Growing our economy through opportunity for all.

**Resilience:** Preparing for rapid changes, both known and unknown.

**Prioritized Investment:** Carefully target resources to maximize benefit.

These principles inform every ON TO 2050 recommendation in support of goals described on the following pages for Community, Prosperity, Environment, Governance, and Mobility. This publication summarizes the full plan, which is at [cmap.illinois.gov/2050](http://cmap.illinois.gov/2050).

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# INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Long-term regional prosperity requires economic opportunity for all residents and communities.



Regions that offer economic opportunity for residents regardless of race, income, or background enjoy longer, stronger periods of prosperity and fewer, shorter periods of economic stagnation.

Metropolitan Chicago simply cannot thrive when so many people and places are left behind. Despite our numerous enviable assets, we fall short of ensuring economic opportunity for all residents. Though also true of many other regions, this unfortunate reality is particularly evident here according to numerous measures based on race or ethnicity, most clearly for black residents. For a stronger, more equitable future, our region needs to ensure every resident and community has the ability to fully contribute to and benefit from the economy. By taking deliberate steps region-wide, together we can make progress toward inclusive growth across all seven counties and 284 municipalities and ensure a more robust economy.

Inequity persists when the location of someone's home, their race or ethnicity, or socioeconomic status determines their economic success, health, and overall quality of life. This inequality manifests strongly along racial lines, and often can be traced to past racially discriminatory policies and practices such as redlining of minority neighborhoods, exclusionary zoning, school segregation, and predatory lending. Residents also experience health disparities depending on where they live and work. Promoting inclusive growth can disrupt these patterns and help the region be stronger and more successful economically.

**To compete in the global economy, we must tap the full potential of all our workers, businesses, and infrastructure. Currently, a substantial portion of the region's human capital — embodied in the talents and skills of excluded residents — is being wasted. Paired with other strategies to capitalize on the region's economic assets, emphasizing inclusive economic initiatives can help restart long-term growth in disinvested places and increase prosperity across the region.**

Strategies for inclusive growth can also help the region attract and retain a diverse populace. Having recently lost population — particularly among low and moderate income residents as well as black residents — we must take proactive steps to open doors in communities where opportunity hasn't knocked for generations as well as pursue economic growth that benefits residents at all skill and income levels.

Regionally, inequity also takes a toll on communities themselves, many of which have not recovered from the recession. Despite making prudent budget choices, too many municipalities find their tax base limited by long-term disinvestment of people and jobs and resulting high vacancies. Combined with decreasing federal and state support, this lack of capacity can make it difficult for municipalities to provide essential services. Inclusive growth can help such communities stem these trends and control their own destiny.

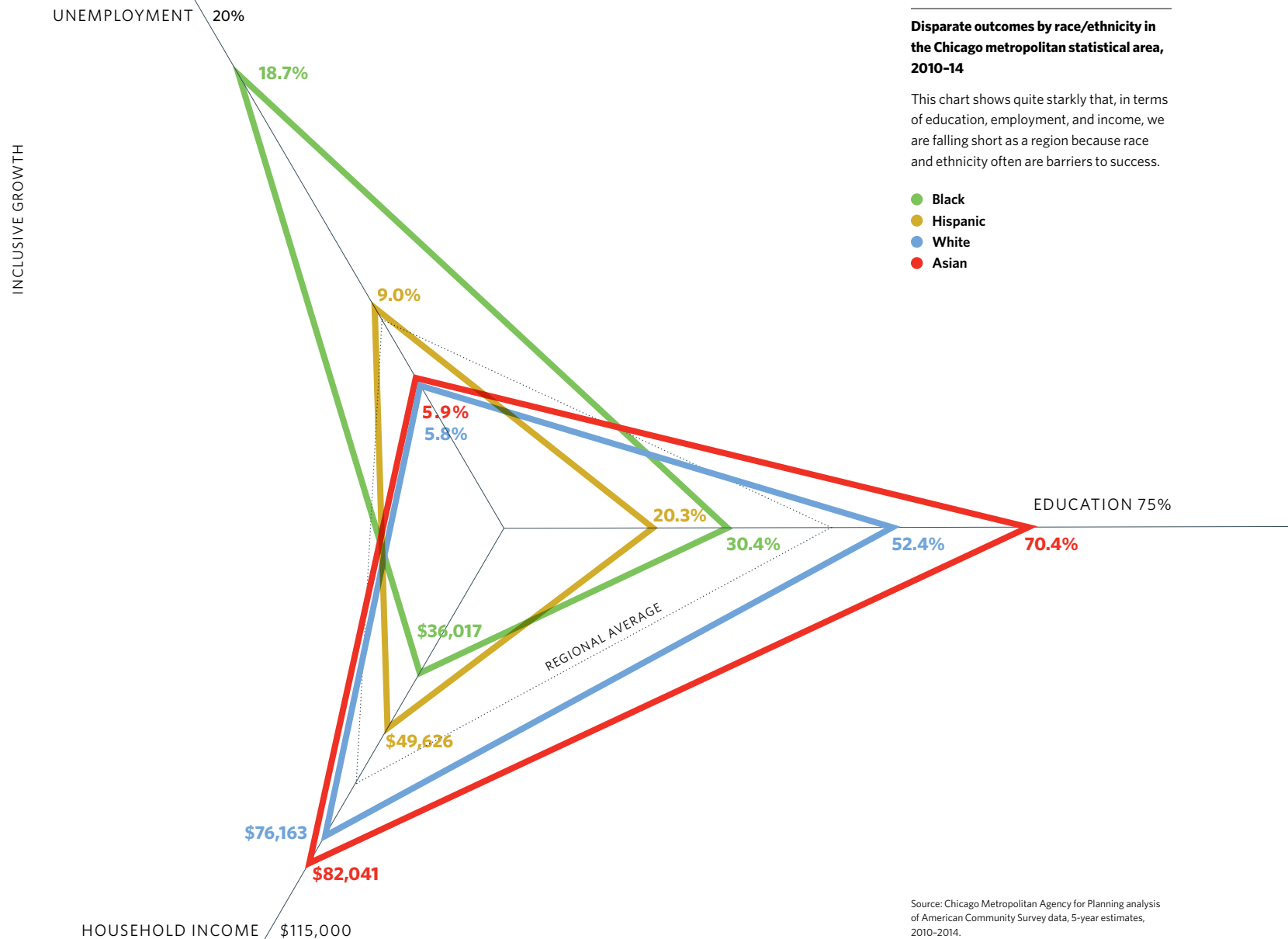
Rebuilding disinvested areas will be critical to long-term regional prosperity by ensuring that jobs and economic opportunities are available in communities where economically disconnected residents live.

**Promoting inclusive growth can encourage infill and bring prosperity to areas that thrived economically in the past and still have strengths — including transit — to build upon.**





# Inequity persists when the location of someone's home, their race or ethnicity, or socioeconomic status determines their economic success, health, and overall quality of life.



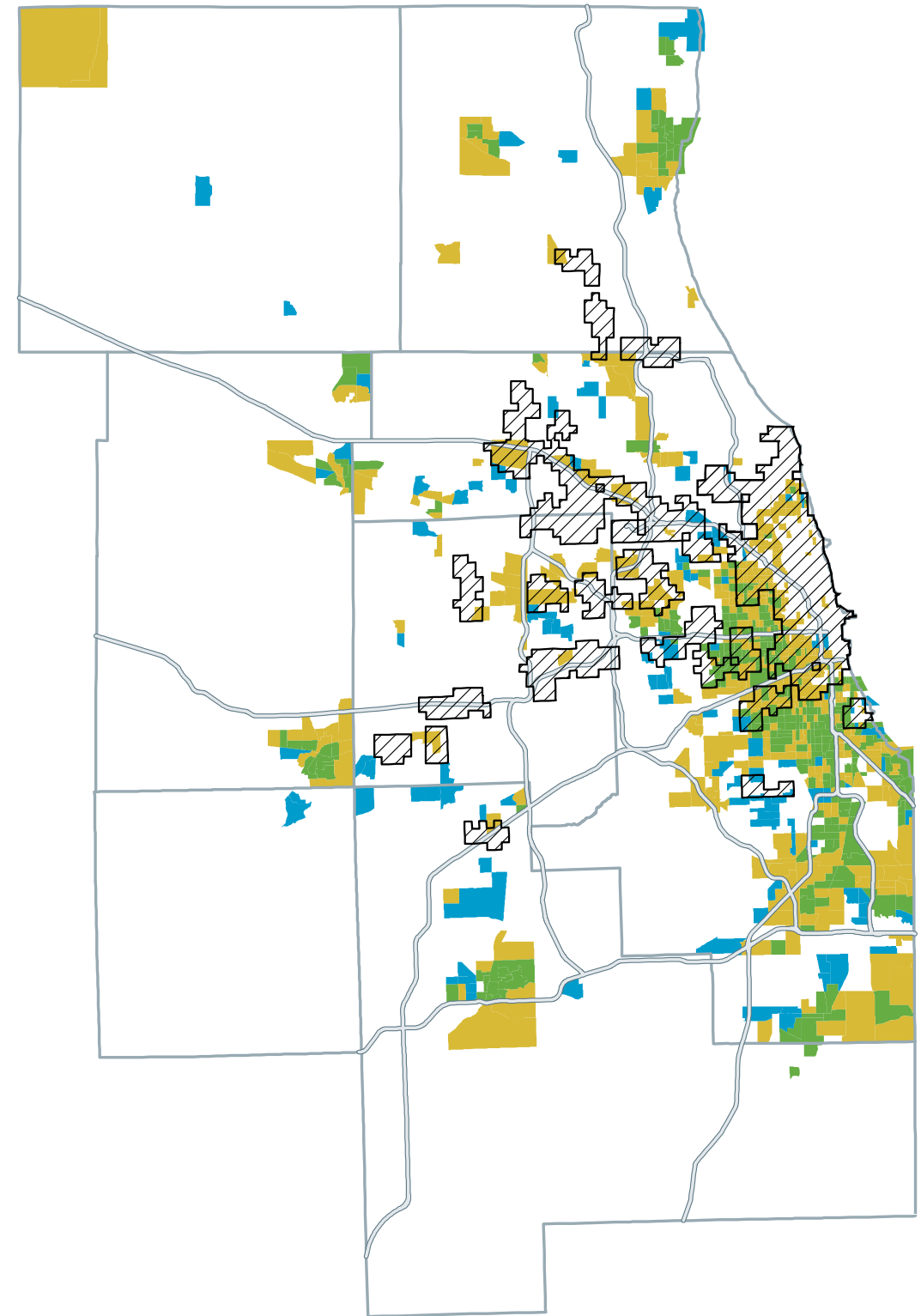
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of American Community Survey data, 5-year estimates, 2010-2014.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

## Some areas in our region face especially difficult economic challenges

- Employment centers**  
Hatched areas indicate centers of high employment, such as the Loop, Schaumburg, or Oak Brook. These areas contain approximately half of the region's jobs.
- Disinvested areas**  
The blue areas represent parts of our region that have experienced a persistent, long-term lack of market investment leading to declining property values, low tax receipts, and shrinking employment.
- Economically disconnected areas (EDAs)**  
Yellow areas indicate places with a concentration of low income residents and either minority residents or residents with limited proficiency in English.
- Areas that are both disinvested and economically disconnected**  
The green areas represent parts of our region that have **both** a persistent, long-term lack of market investment and are EDAs. These areas are a focus of ON TO 2050.







## Profile

# Dr. Lazaro Lopez

After Dr. Lazaro Lopez graduated high school he wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his life. He joined the U.S. Army and, after completing his military service, bounced between jobs while looking for his path. Not until a few years later did he become the first in his family to go to college. He started with an associate's degree from College of DuPage before working all the way up to a doctorate of education from Aurora University.

As the associate superintendent for teaching and learning at Arlington Heights-based Northwest Suburban High School District 214, Lazaro oversees the district's career pathways program to help today's students identify and pursue their career passions. With more than 900 partners providing internships, work, and educational opportunities to the district's 12,000 students, he said these connections are the basis for preparing young people to thrive in tomorrow's economy.

Bringing all those different actors together requires collaboration. "Our public system of education still serves as the great equalizer that facilitates inclusive growth, but our policies and practices still encourage an independent network of educational institutions working to ensure their individual success that may not always align with collective success of the region," he said. "The only way we can succeed economically long term is to work together collectively toward that same goal."

Lazaro, who also chairs the Illinois Community College Board, said that in both of his roles he sees imaginary boundaries get in the way of larger goals, and outside-the-box thinking is required to provide a lifetime of education and training to all the region's residents. "If we do nothing, we are going to eliminate the potential workforce for the businesses of tomorrow. Our residents won't have the resources to sustain our consumer-driven economy because they won't have jobs that will pay them enough to have sustainable wages to prosper and have economic opportunity. It's all interconnected," he said.

The future can be brighter. With more pathways for upward economic mobility and data-driven approaches for workforce and education systems (both recommendations in ON TO 2050's Prosperity chapter), learners of all ages, passions, and skill levels can get the training they need to succeed in the changing economy.

**"My dream for 2050 is that all of our public and private entities are collectively working toward one goal, that every resident has access to the education they need to be successful in our economy in a way that's affordable and close to home."**



# RESILIENCE

**Our region and its communities must anticipate and adapt to future challenges — both known and unknown — driven by climate, commerce, technology, and other factors.**







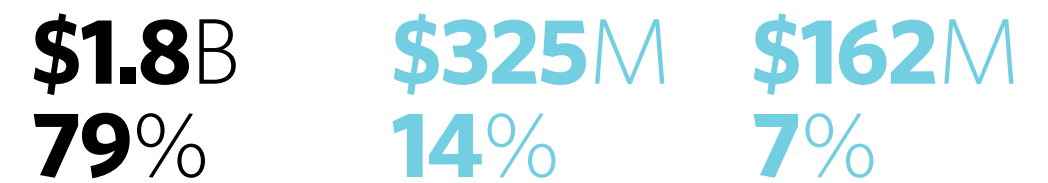
A resilient transportation network can continue to provide seamless mobility even in the face of changing climate and technology. In combination with continued support for public transit, technology for shared mobility and automated vehicles has the potential to enhance mobility for lower income residents and to improve access to jobs, healthcare, and other essential destinations.

To remain strong, metropolitan Chicago requires communities, infrastructure, and systems that can thrive in the face of future economic, fiscal, and environmental uncertainties. “Resilience” refers to much more than climate change.

By building “Resilience,” our communities can prepare for and recover from acute shocks and chronic stresses. This requires making infrastructure, development, natural systems, and social structures more durable. In addition to rebounding quickly from, for instance, stronger storms and frequent flooding, a resilient region can actually capitalize on these challenges. To cite one example, if extreme heat causes pavement to buckle, it can be replaced not only by a road more resistant to extreme temperatures, but one also built to mitigate flooding and ensure reliable, weather-resistant transportation.

Many communities lack the capacity — for example, revenue, staff, expertise, equipment, and other resources — to effectively implement local and regional goals related to services, land use, and quality of life. By pooling resources, deploying new technologies, and training staff, resilient municipalities can plan collaboratively to provide essential services even as federal and state support continues to diminish. While funding from the State of Illinois will continue to play a crucial role — though quite an uncertain one due to fiscal conditions — in our prosperity, local revenue streams must become more resilient to economic forces beyond the region’s control. Working closely together to achieve resilience, our region’s communities can also prepare for inevitable challenges as global markets spur a transition to new types of work in emerging industries and change commercial, industrial, and even residential development patterns.

Select flooding damage payments, 2007-14



**CMAP Region**

National Flood Insurance Program, FEMA Individual Disaster Assistance, and Private Insurance

**Rest of Illinois**

National Flood Insurance Program, FEMA Individual Disaster Assistance, and Private Insurance

**Statewide**

Statewide FEMA Public Assistance

Note: These totals represent a fraction of damage costs. Source: 2015 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Report for the Urban Flooding Awareness Act.






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 Profile

## Jennifer Hughes

The Village of Oswego's first well was dug in 1895. Though small at 14 feet wide and 18 feet deep, it was sufficient to provide water for all who lived there at the time.

More than a century later, Jennifer Hughes was hired as the village's first-ever staff engineer. With Kendall County experiencing rapid growth, Oswego officials had become concerned about water supply.

"The community started the water system and left it to us. We want to make sure, when we turn it over to the next generation, that it's in good shape," said Jennifer, who is public works director for the village that in 1990 was home to less than 4,000 residents. In 2015, Oswego's population had grown to 32,500 people and is projected to keep growing by 2050.

Oswego, like its neighbors Montgomery and Yorkville, still relies on groundwater sources for their drinking water supply. But the region is withdrawing groundwater faster than it can be replenished.

"It's a really critical issue for us. If we run out of water, we don't have a community," Jennifer said. "Businesses and residents want to know that they have safe, clean drinking water that's affordable."

While sufficient water supply is projected for several more decades in groundwater-dependent communities like Oswego, Jennifer said we can't ignore the issue.

"People don't want to pay for something today that they may not use for 20 years. The idea of running out of water is this nebulous idea that seems so far out in the future that it can be difficult to motivate people to action," she said. But examples of water shortages elsewhere in the U.S. indicate we should be proactive.

That's why Oswego and its neighbors, with support from CMAP's Local Technical Assistance program, have been studying options that include governance of a shared water treatment plant. Officials know that whatever decision they make — whether connecting to the Fox River, Lake Michigan, or another source — will be time consuming and expensive.

"We want to make sure we do our homework before we go to the residents," Jennifer said.

"It's really important to realize we're all in this together. We have a lot more in common than the borders that may define us, so we need to continue to draw on the talents of each community to find the answer."

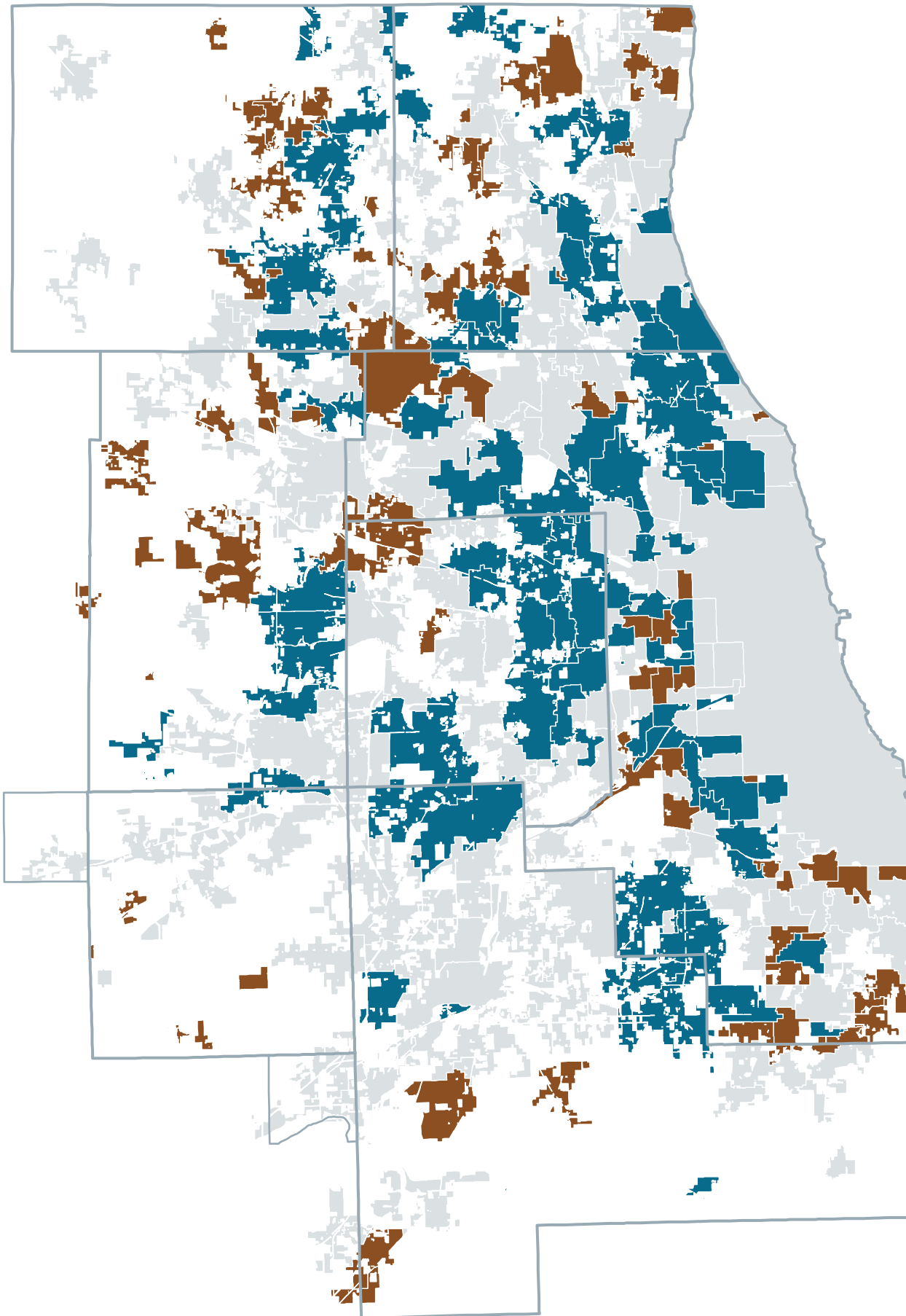
**"I hope by 2050 we've left a legacy of a sustainable water source, a sustainable region that has embraced the challenges of the future and has set itself up to be a vibrant, dynamic great place to live."**



# PRIORITIZED INVESTMENT

**We must carefully target public resources to maximize regional benefits for mobility, the economy, and quality of life for all residents.**





# In 2015, the State of Illinois sent \$2 billion less in revenues to local governments statewide, compared to 2000.

State revenues distributed to municipalities, per capita, difference from the median, 2015

- At least 20% less than the median
- Within 20% of the median
- At least 20% more than the median

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of Illinois Department of Revenue data, 2015.

In any era, metropolitan Chicago requires wise stewardship of public revenues to maximize regional benefits. Especially when federal and state funding becomes less sufficient year by year, we must ensure “Prioritized Investment” for infrastructure, development, and the economy to maximize regional benefits.

Prioritized investment extends beyond transportation infrastructure, to the built environment, technical assistance, and other public resources. For decades, funding of public services and infrastructure at all levels of government has been stagnant or diminishing, yet costs continue to rise. Due to the need of new support for transportation in particular, ON TO 2050 identifies a number of alternatives to our state’s and region’s antiquated sources of revenue. We require funding methods sustainable and flexible enough for operating and maintaining a modern system of roads, transit, and freight, whose needs could continually shift due to emerging technologies and economic realities.

Coordinating investment broadly — by linking transportation with housing, or targeting public expenditures to attract private resources, among other examples — is also essential for effectively using limited resources. To maximize the benefit of precious transit resources, for instance, requires land use decisions that support residential and commercial development so people can live and work near bus or train service. By making the best use of existing roadways through strategies like improved responses to weather and events, or managing demand through congestion pricing, we can limit expansion needs. Similarly, stormwater management investments can meet multiple goals by also offering recreational options and improving water quality.

Above all, prioritized investment requires close coordination across implementing agencies responsible for providing technical assistance or selecting projects transparently based on clear, measurable objectives. Local governments can take a similar approach to development through targeted reinvestment in existing places, paired with fiscally and environmentally sustainable expansion. To improve the existing system, we must address the backlog of transportation, water, and other infrastructure in need of repair or replacement, opting for expansion projects only when they meet clear regional objectives.






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 Profile

## Cheryl Watson

Cheryl Watson grew up in a historic bungalow in the Chatham neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago. She now lives there again, having moved back decades later to care for her aged parents. The neighborhood continually changes around her, yet one thing remains constant: When rain falls, the home she loves starts to flood.

“As soon as I could walk, I can remember my parents telling me to look down the basement steps and see how high the water was,” Cheryl said. And not just water, but raw sewage, too.

Yet her family loved Chatham. In the 1950s, Cheryl said, it was a jewel of Chicago and the African American community. Her parents worked for years to afford a home there, in a place people wanted to be.

Over the decades Cheryl saw violence there increase. She watched homes and businesses sit empty, and the effects of disinvestment played out on streets all around her. And over those same years, she has worked hard to keep her home above water, literally. “Every year, multiple times a year,” she said. “From March until October you can’t relax.”

In the 1990s she installed a flood control system at her own expense to keep the sewage water out of her home. She installed rain barrels to divert water to her garden. She made modifications to her home’s gutters and drainage systems, but it’s still not enough.

In recent years, Cheryl went through the Chicago Conservation Corps sustainability education program to learn more about climate change that was causing more frequent and intense storms and how to advocate for her community. She’s gone to block club meetings to educate her neighbors and worked with the Center for Neighborhood Technology’s RainReady initiative to help create a plan for Chatham.

The decision to stay or leave a home and neighborhood she loves is a calculation Cheryl is weighing for her own future. And, the years of cleanup and destruction have taken a toll on her emotionally. But she’s not looking for a quick fix. As a former computer scientist and teacher, she said the complex issues of flooding don’t have simple solutions.

“We need a deeper, more analytical approach. Patch and go is not going to work. It’s time. It’s way past time to deal with this flooding situation,” she said. “People can’t afford it, but at the same time the people here can’t afford to move away either.”

“I want to see changes in the neighborhood so it can get back to its original state where it was clean and healthy, the people were safe, and the values of the homes were higher.”



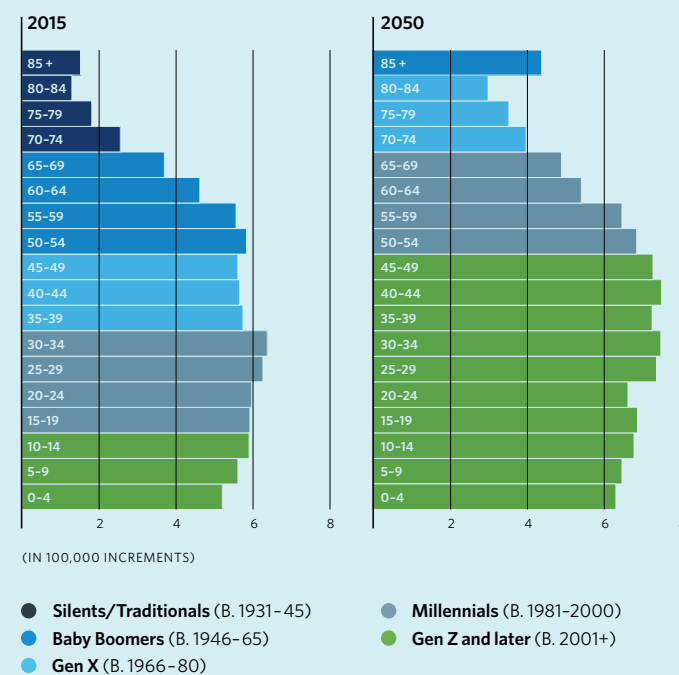
# Our Region Today

**Metropolitan Chicago's residents, businesses, and institutions continue to create ideas, art, and commercial products that reach around the world. Over the last decade, our region has experienced significant economic, demographic, technological, environmental, and fiscal changes, and the future promises even more substantive shifts. We must also rebuild and modernize aging infrastructure at a time when travel patterns are changing, with potentially profound effects. Uncertainties about the state's fiscal condition and federal priorities mean that we must fund our own needs. To thrive, we must face today's opportunities and challenges, build on the region's many resources, and prepare to take advantage of future change.**

## An aging and diversifying population

Residents will live longer, and our population will be more diverse. The majority of our region's population will likely be persons of color within the next decade. Diversity is an economic and cultural strength that the region can capitalize on, while taking steps to ensure access to economic opportunity for all residents.

Population change by age group and generation, 2015 estimate and 2050 forecast

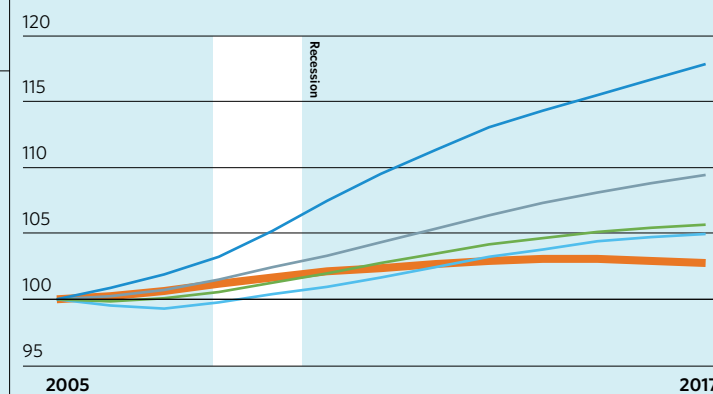


Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning draft ON TO 2050 socioeconomic forecasts.

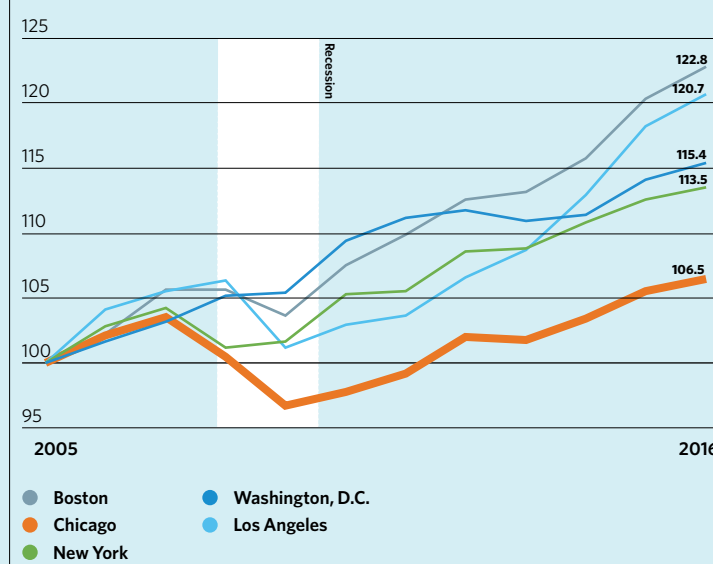
## Economic challenges and assets

Despite our diverse industries, infrastructure assets, well-trained workforce, and strong quality of life, economic and population growth lags behind peer regions. With strengths in business services, transportation, and manufacturing industries — along with a well-educated and globally connected workforce — our region can grow again. Among other positive signs, the region's unemployment rate continues to improve, and our businesses produce more goods and services year after year.

Cumulative population change in select metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), 2005-17



Cumulative real Gross Regional Product growth in select MSAs, 2005-16

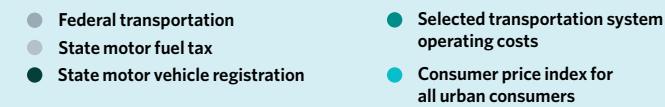


Note: Indexed to year 2005. Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of U.S. Population Estimates Program data.

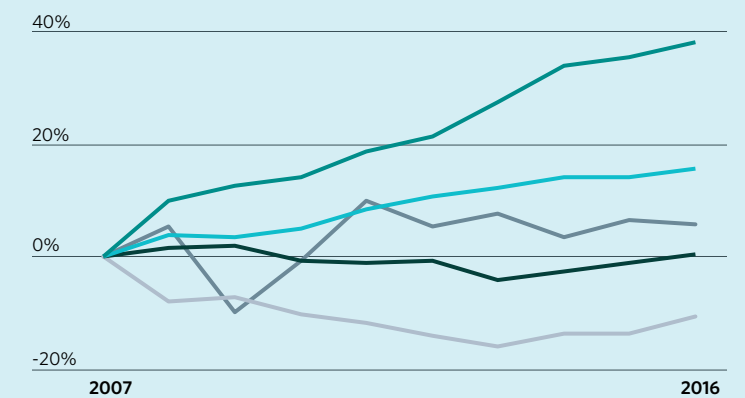
## Decreasing federal, state, and local revenues

Insufficient funding presents a central challenge to achieving an enviable quality of life and economic vitality for all.

Selected federal and state transportation revenues, indexed to 2007



Note: Percent change since 2007. Federal transportation revenue excludes revenue for 2009 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Transportation operating costs include those incurred by Illinois Department of Transportation's District One, Illinois Tollway, Regional Transportation Authority, and all transit service boards. Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of IDOT data, Illinois Office of the Comptroller data, RTA data, and data derived from state/regional resources tables.



## Changing climate

The climate is changing at a global scale, with significant implications for the built environment, economy, ecosystems, and people of this region. We have significant resources in the form of Lake Michigan's water and high-quality natural areas to help reduce the impacts of climate change.

## Mixed progress on sustainable development

The region preserved 61,500 acres of open space from 2001-15, but the developed acreage also expanded by an area equal to the city of Chicago.

Acreage of preserved open space, 2001-15

61,500

Acreage of developed open space, 2001-15

140,000

## Aging and obsolete infrastructure

At current funding levels, the conditions of regional transportation and water systems are declining while the costs to repair them are increasing. In replacing our aging infrastructure, we can take the opportunity to modernize, to increase efficiency, and to improve mobility.

Gallons of water lost due to aging or obsolete infrastructure per year

49 Billion

Projected shortfall of revenue needed by 2050 simply to maintain, operate, and administer the transportation system as it is today

\$24 Billion

## Widespread racial and economic disparities

The region's residents of color, particularly black residents, often experience lower incomes and higher unemployment. Some communities become caught in a cycle of disinvestment, unable to promote economic development, invest in infrastructure, and otherwise serve their residents.

## Opportunities and pitfalls of swiftly changing technology

New technologies will change the nature of work, shift development patterns, and offer new mobility options.



**Supports Inclusive Growth:**

By rebuilding communities to create opportunity close to where people live, increasing local revenues, and enhancing local government capacity and expertise.

**Supports Resilience:**

By preserving high quality natural areas, incorporating sustainable practices into all development, and leveraging data and expertise to plan for market realities, infrastructure needs, and fiscal stability.

**Supports Prioritized Investment:**

By carefully expanding our built environment to ensure fiscal, economic, and environmental sustainability.

# Community

**Strengthening Where We Live**





# Creating and sustaining vibrant communities can help the region compete and thrive.

ON TO 2050 will make the region and its communities stronger by targeting resources, improving planning, encouraging collaboration on fiscal and economic issues, preserving high quality open space and agricultural assets, and promoting housing choice.

**Strategic and sustainable development, reinvestment for vibrant communities, and development that supports local and regional economic strength are the Community goals of ON TO 2050.**

The plan continues our region's emphasis on reinvesting in communities and infrastructure, while also offering new guidance to enhance quality of life. While local governments continue to play the critical role in overseeing land use decisions, supportive initiatives by many actors will collectively enable progress toward these goals. Some communities have a wealth of expertise and resources for reinvestment and other quality of life initiatives, while others struggle to raise revenues for basic services.

Creating and sustaining vibrant communities can help the region compete and thrive, offering residents and businesses many choices for where to live and work. Meeting increased demand for diverse, walkable, and accessible communities with amenities will also support transit and ease commutes. Changing plans and modernizing revenue policies to adapt to the development and mobility impacts of e-commerce can sustain existing and growing communities.

ON TO 2050 also emphasizes preserving land used for agriculture and open space and implementing sustainable development patterns through fiscally responsible expansion.

Most important, the region cannot succeed without concerted investment to rebuild jobs, amenities, and resources in communities that have been left behind. Investment for continued economic growth and success for the entire region should include investments in communities with limited resources for rebuilding infrastructure and amenities needed for jobs, housing choices, and healthy living.





Goal: Strategic and sustainable development

Recommendation

**By targeting infill and infrastructure to developed areas, preserving key natural resources, and linking growth to financial and environmental sustainability, communities can spend public dollars wisely and minimize impact on agricultural and natural areas.**

Recommendation

**All seven counties have some communities that, while rich with assets, have seen long-term disinvestment. These areas require focused and catalytic investment as well as assistance that will build their ability to improve their residents' quality of life.**

**Reinvesting in areas with existing services and infrastructure has broad regional benefits:** Local governments and transportation providers can reduce costs of infrastructure and services. Businesses can access a larger pool of potential customers and workers. And residents can reach a broader set of options for work, recreation, and services via public transit, car, or bike.







The region's population overall is growing older and more diverse, businesses' location preferences are changing, and more residents want to live in walkable communities. Strong, livable places offer a range of housing, transportation, employment, and amenity options to meet these changing needs. While their character varies according to local goals, vibrant destinations and communities attract activity and investment.

**Goal: Reinvestment for vibrant communities**

**Recommendation**

**Vibrant communities attract investment and contribute to regional resilience. Enhancing walkability increases market potential and supports both cost-effective transit service and non-motorized transportation like biking, improving public health and reducing GHG emissions.**





Recommendation

For communities to be economically resilient in the face of changing demographics and consumer preference for denser and more walkable places, we must build and maintain the types of housing that people increasingly want.

Infill and redevelopment can provide a variety of benefits, such as leveraging and making efficient use of existing infrastructure and services, promoting walkability, and spurring investment in disinvested or stagnant growth areas.

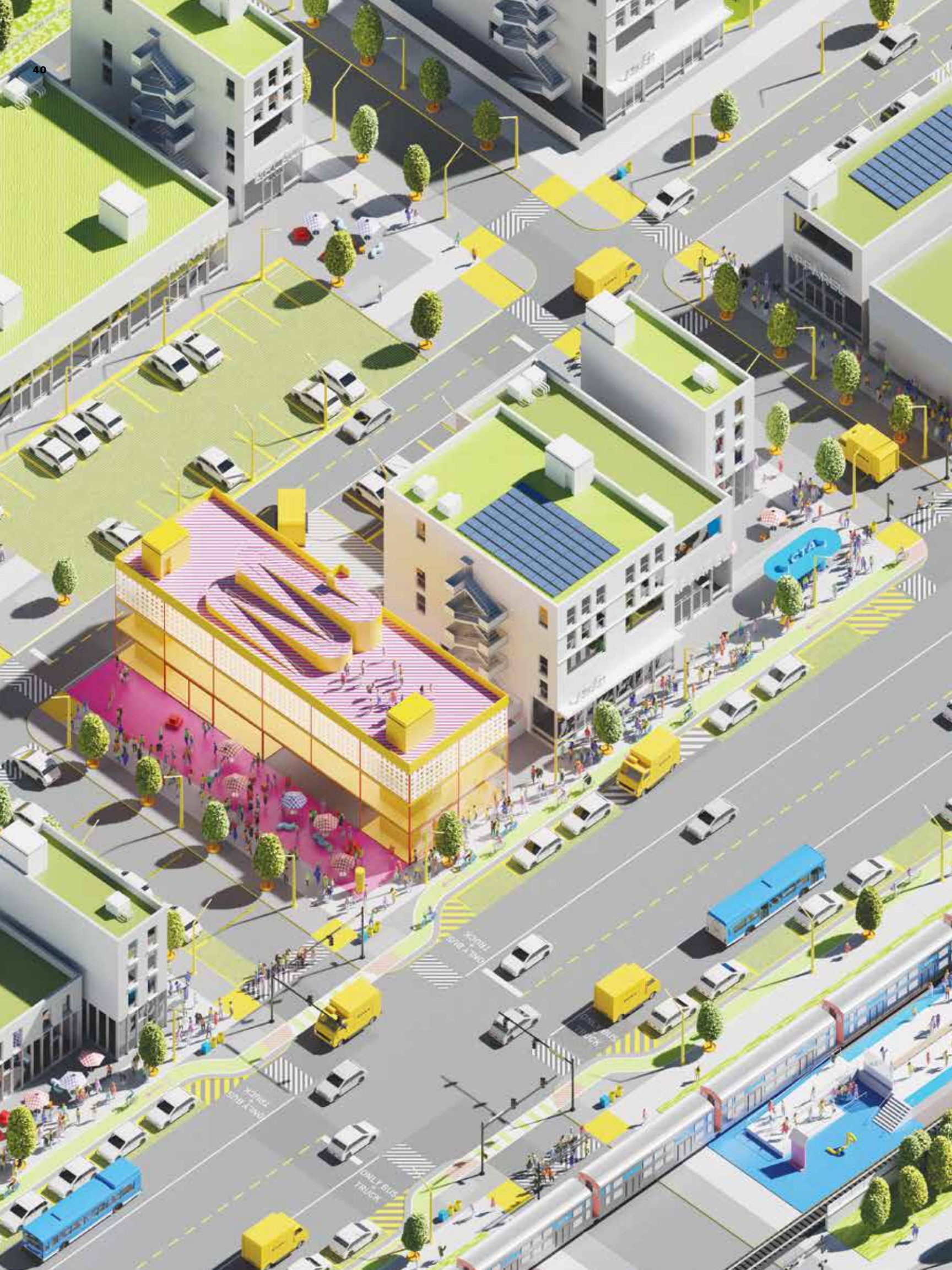
The redevelopment process also presents unique opportunities to conserve, restore, and enhance natural resources at infill locations and to increase climate resilience.

Recommendation

As they pursue redevelopment opportunities, communities should improve natural resources, use sustainable building and greening practices, and account for the needs of the most vulnerable residents and areas.







**Recommendation**

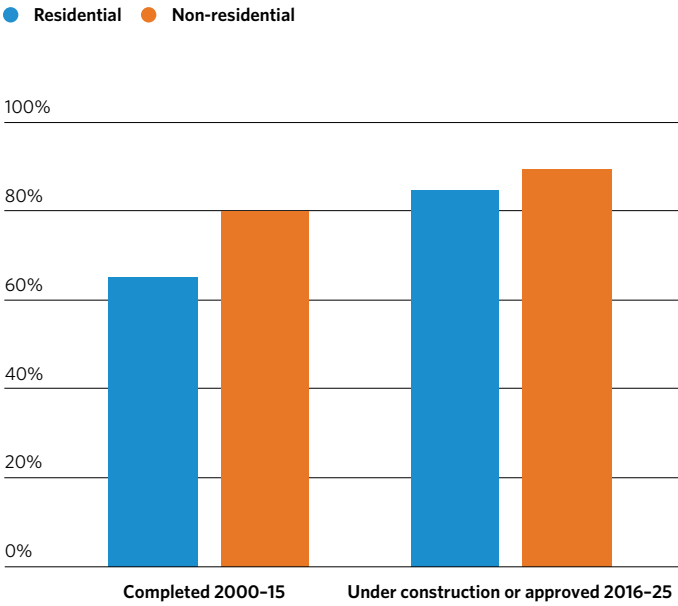
**Communities can become stronger by taking a collaborative approach to modernize tax policies that support the multi-jurisdictional nature of how local economies actually operate and by reforming tax policies to support local land use choices and offer opportunities for disinvested areas.**

**Recommendation**

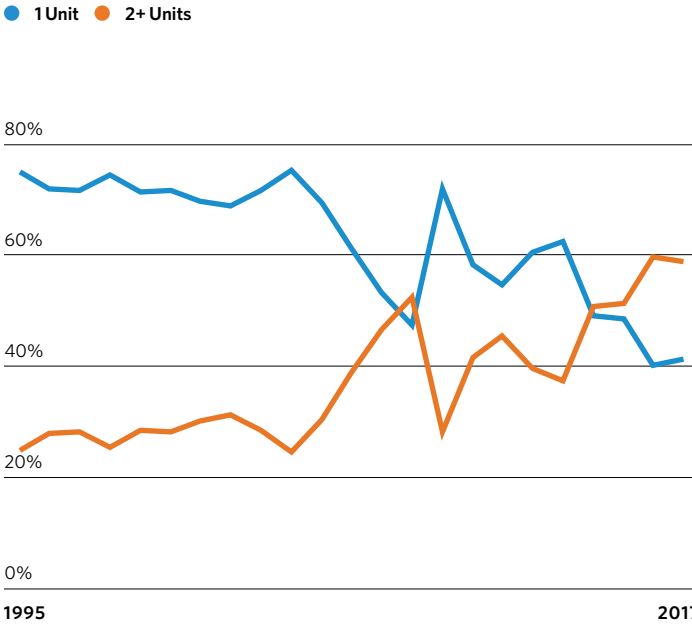
**Planning for current market understanding and fiscal sustainability helps local governments reach their goals. Coordinating economic development activities across jurisdictions, aligning local actions with regional goals and partners, and targeting incentives achieves maximum public benefit.**

Residents increasingly seek places where a car is optional and they can walk to shopping, entertainment, and services.

**Proportion of development occurring within highly and partially infill supportive areas, completed and under construction/approved**



**Proportion of permitted new housing units in the Chicago MSA, by units in structure**



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of Northeastern Illinois Development database.



# Prosperity

**Supports Inclusive Growth:**

By broadening opportunities for innovation and promoting pathways for upward economic mobility.

**Supports Resilience:**

By taking a regional approach to economic development and better preparing the workforce for future economic shifts.

**Supports Prioritized Investment:**

By coordinating economic and workforce development activities.





# Economic and workforce development challenges increasingly require a regional approach to capitalize on our distinctive assets.

Developed and emerging economies around the world have been transformed in recent years by new technologies, advances in freight and logistics, and evolving consumer demand. These trends — together with climate change — will increasingly shape global commerce.

**Robust economic growth that reduces inequality and responsive, strategic workforce and economic development are the Prosperity goals of ON TO 2050.**

To adapt and thrive in a changing global economy, metropolitan Chicago must address today's inequality and improve opportunities for employment and robust economic output while taking deliberate steps to ensure prosperity for all. As our prolonged slow growth continues to lag behind peer regions, lower- and moderate-income residents are leaving to seek economic opportunity elsewhere.

Human capital — among the most important determinants of regional economic vitality — transcends jurisdictional boundaries. While healthy competition within the region has its benefits, economic and workforce development challenges increasingly require a regional approach to capitalize on our distinctive assets. Such activities must be inclusive, prioritized, and responsive to market shifts and outcomes.

Amid stagnant growth in the labor force, institutions of higher education and research help to retain and develop the region's innovative talent. Business expansion depends on reaching markets around the world with goods and services that can compete successfully in the global economy.



Goal: Robust economic growth that reduces inequality

## Recommendation

**Improved regional coordination of economic development combined with state-led initiatives to improve the business climate will make the region more globally competitive.**

Our competitive advantage as a global economic center depends on our infrastructure, workforce, diverse and advanced industries, civic leadership, and institutions of education and research. Today, people, goods, services, knowledge, and capital move across borders with growing frequency. **Increasingly complex supply chains extend globally, and some employers can more easily access a worldwide workforce. Strategies to achieve the region's economic goals must be similarly nimble and responsive.**



An industry cluster is a group of firms, related stakeholders, and supportive institutions that gain productive advantages from close geographic proximity and related economies of scale. As groups of related industries grow and develop, clustering can help lower business costs and increase the extent and benefits of specialization. **Deeper labor pools, better access to customers and suppliers, knowledge spillovers — these and other advantages are derived from an environment of balanced competition and collaboration.**



**Goal: Robust economic growth that reduces inequality**

**Recommendation**

**Coordinated support for metropolitan Chicago's specialized industry clusters combined with actionable analysis — particularly for clusters that grow the economy by connecting us to global markets — can spur significant economic activity that forges broad economic opportunity and growth.**



Recommendation

**Investing in a career pathway approach to workforce development will help unleash the full potential of the region's human capital and is essential to achieving inclusive economic growth.**

Recommendation

**Sustainable economic growth that is resilient to global shifts depends on the region's ability to innovate. Fostering economic innovation will require leveraging the region's higher education and research institutions and diversifying its entrepreneurial base.**

Profile

**Torres Hughes**

Torres Hughes is a young man from Chicago's Austin neighborhood. On the verge of dropping out of high school, he was exposed to a manufacturing career pathway program. It enabled him to get certifications and, after he graduated, a manufacturing job in his community. That company then paid for his continued training and education, resulting in advancement and the chance to manage other workers.

Torres says these experiences were life-changing, and he wants more people from his community to have these kinds of opportunities. ON TO 2050 recommends that our workforce and education systems prioritize pathways for upward economic mobility to make sure all of our region's residents can reach their full potential, like Torres.



Recommendation

**Planning for human capital means bridging the gap between residents seeking to build a career and employers looking to build their workforce. It will require increased coordination among regional industries, community colleges, and other institutions engaged in workforce development at every level.**

Recommendation

**Planning for current market understanding and fiscal sustainability helps local governments reach their goals. Coordinating economic development activities across jurisdictions, aligning local actions with regional goals and partners, and targeting incentives achieves maximum public benefit.**





### Erica Swinney Staley

Erica Swinney Staley knows innovation isn't just about creating the next big technological wonder. It also requires support for the people and the environment that make such advances possible. "We can't have a sustainable economy if we don't have a robust education and training system. Our ability to build and sustain a robust economy is based on talent, it's based on people," she said.

That's why she works to provide opportunities for young people to unlock their potential through the nonprofit Manufacturing Renaissance and its career pathways program, Manufacturing Connect, which works with more than 100 companies that provide internships and other real-world experiences.

Having begun in 2007 with Austin College and Career Academy, the group has shown how such schools could be the catalyst for community development, connecting students who needed support with companies who needed employees. "Innovation is not just about coming up with a totally new idea, it's making existing systems function more efficiently," Erica said.

By 2050, Erica hopes to see initiatives like Manufacturing Connect in dozens of schools across the region, but it will take investment and intentional planning to make it happen. "Without these kinds of programs we can't grow," she said. "We are helping create the conditions for innovation."



### Recommendation

**Expanding data-driven approaches in the workforce and education systems will enhance their flexibility and efficacy.**

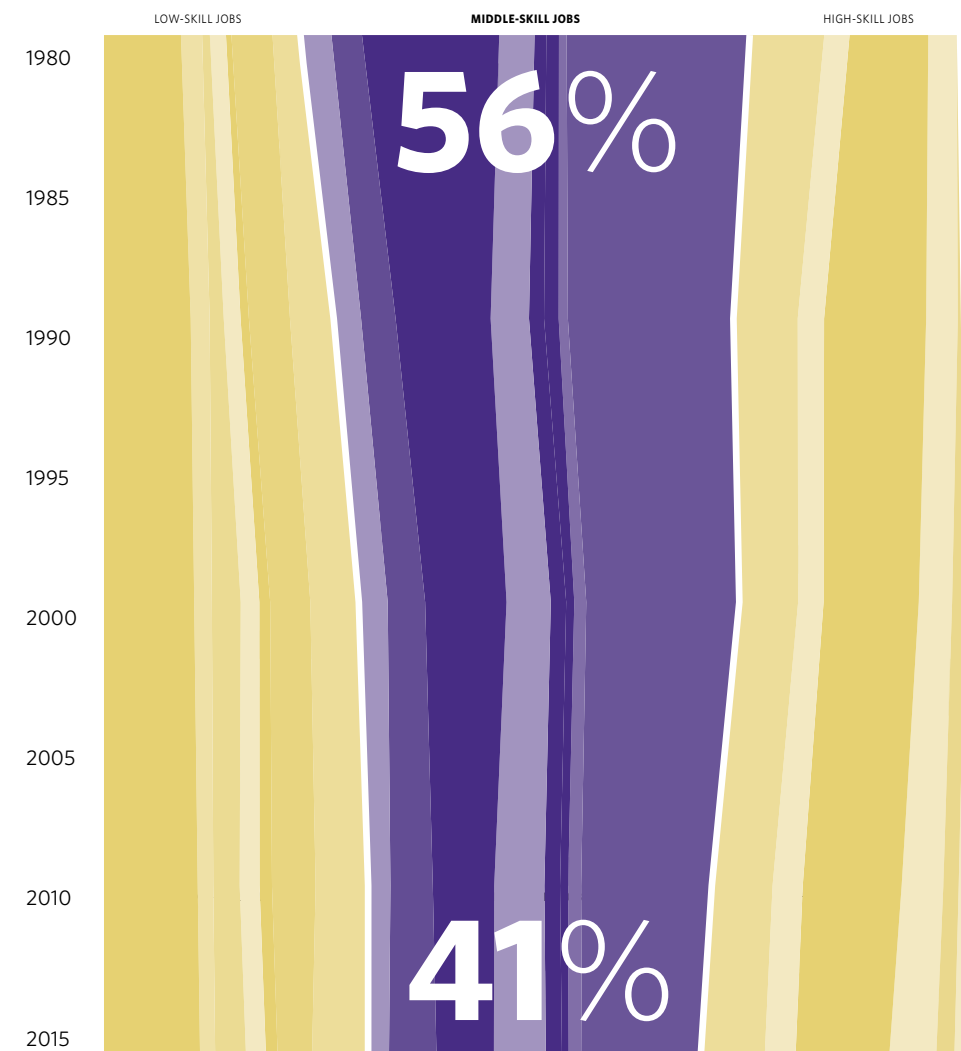
### Recommendation

**By taking a performance-based approach to incentives for economic development, communities can support regional and local economic goals while attracting beneficial economic activity and improving transparency and accountability.**

**Middle-skill occupations used to be the clear majority of jobs in the Chicago region. But today, the job market is becoming more polarized, adding more low- and high-skill jobs as middle-skill jobs decrease.**

### Share of total employment in the Chicago region, by occupation type, 1980-2015

Note: The geography for the Chicago region differs from traditional U.S. Census Bureau definitions and changes slightly over time. Median occupational wage in 1980 is used as a proxy for skill. Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning analysis of Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 1980-2000 Decennial Census and 2010-16, American Community Survey data.





# Environment

**Supports Inclusive Growth:**

By growing the ability of vulnerable populations to respond to environmental challenges and improving environmental conditions and access to nature for those populations.

**Supports Resilience:**

By planning for anticipated future impacts, protecting residents from risk, and promoting gray and green infrastructure that provides essential services and can adapt to changes in climate and technology.

**Supports Prioritized Investment:**

By using limited financial resources in a strategic and efficient way, maintaining existing infrastructure, and securing new revenues for needed enhancements.



## Natural assets provide “ecosystem services” that generate an estimated \$6 billion every year in economic value to the region.

Our rare and diverse natural areas and ecosystems are some of the most valuable and irreplaceable assets in metropolitan Chicago. ON TO 2050 strongly affirms that these natural resources are critical for protecting the quality of our air, land, and water, providing ecosystem services, wildlife habitats, and recreational spaces, contributing to a high quality of life, and supporting a vibrant regional economy.

**A region better prepared for climate change, an integrated approach to water resources, and development practices that protect natural resources are the Environment goals of ON TO 2050.**

Natural assets provide “ecosystem services” such as flood control, water purification and recharge, and carbon storage. Just these few services generate an estimated \$6 billion every year in economic value to the region.

While the region permanently preserved 61,500 acres of natural and agricultural lands from 2001 to 2015, an additional 140,000 acres of such lands were developed. Growth at the region’s edge — which incurs increased infrastructure costs for water, wastewater, and stormwater — can also consume groundwater beyond sustainable levels.

Climate change is already bringing more frequent and severe storms, extreme temperatures, and drought, significantly affecting our economy, ecosystems, built environment, and people. In particular, substantial flooding issues will continue to increase due to climate change and increased impervious surfaces.

The impacts of these trends do not affect all residents equally. Vulnerable populations in particular may experience heightened risks, costs, and liabilities, including repetitive flooding, high water rates in low income communities, and compromised infrastructure in areas that are otherwise overlooked by private investment.

New technology and gray infrastructure design and materials have an important role in ensuring climate resilience. **Modernization efforts should promote infrastructure that is based on revised design standards that anticipate future climate conditions and built or retrofitted at comfortable levels of risk tolerance.**

Goal: A region prepared for climate change

Recommendation

**Pursuing multiple coordinated strategies, such as strengthening gray and green infrastructure and improving the performance of the region’s transportation system during weather events, will enhance the region’s resilience to climate change.**





**Goal: A region prepared for climate change****Recommendation**

**Comprehensively addressing energy and climate change at the federal and state levels, transforming transportation systems to reduce emissions, and increasing low and zero emissions energy generation will intensify climate mitigation efforts.**

Development at the region's edge necessitates increased water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. **It can push demand for groundwater beyond sustainable levels, affecting communities and the resources themselves.** The short and long-term costs associated with providing infrastructure and services in these locations can be substantial.

**Goal: Integrated approach to water resources****Recommendation**

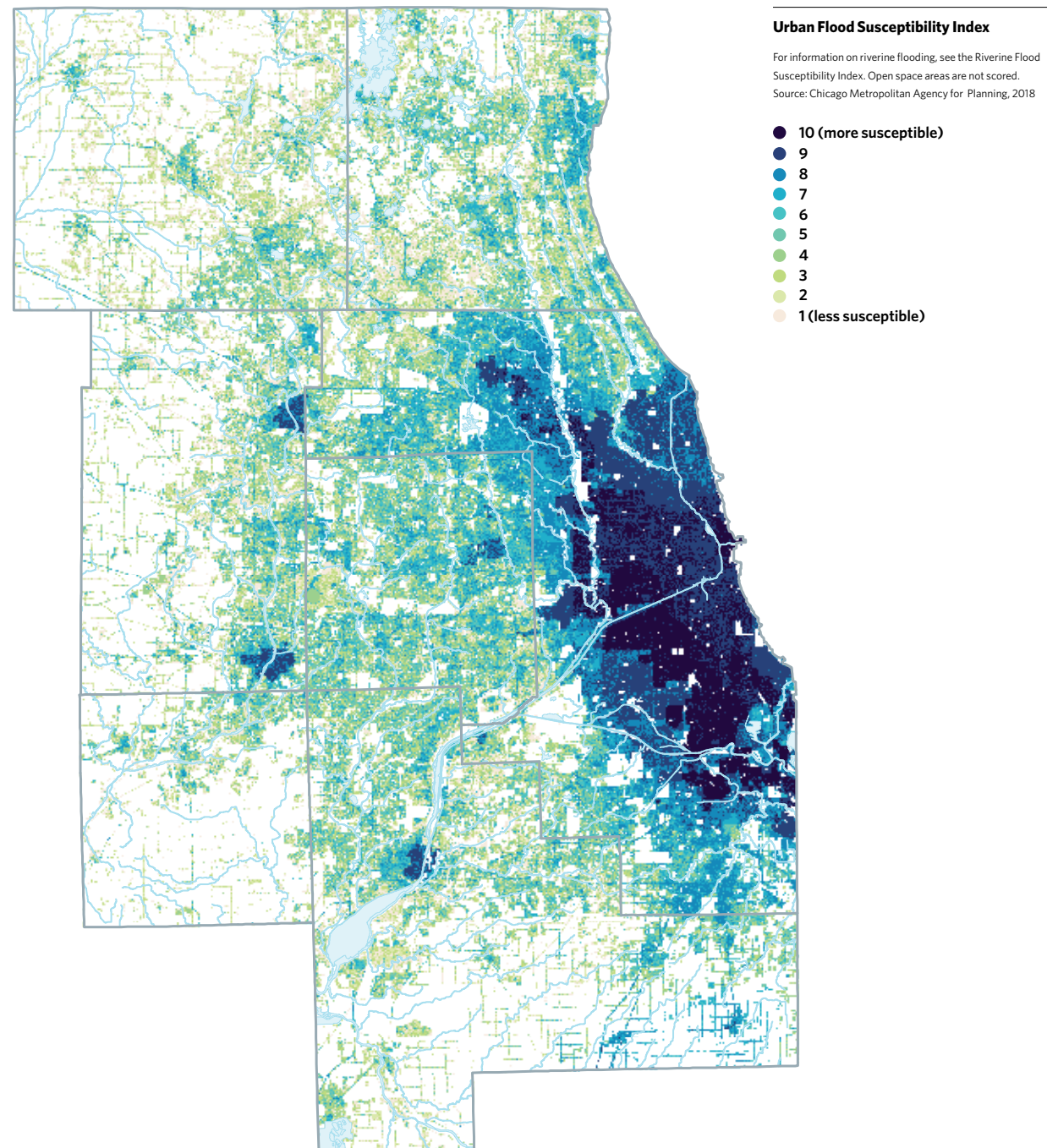
**Protecting and enhancing the integrity of the region's aquatic systems will require incorporating better water resource management into local planning, optimizing water infrastructure investment, and addressing the unique challenges of Lake Michigan and its tributaries.**





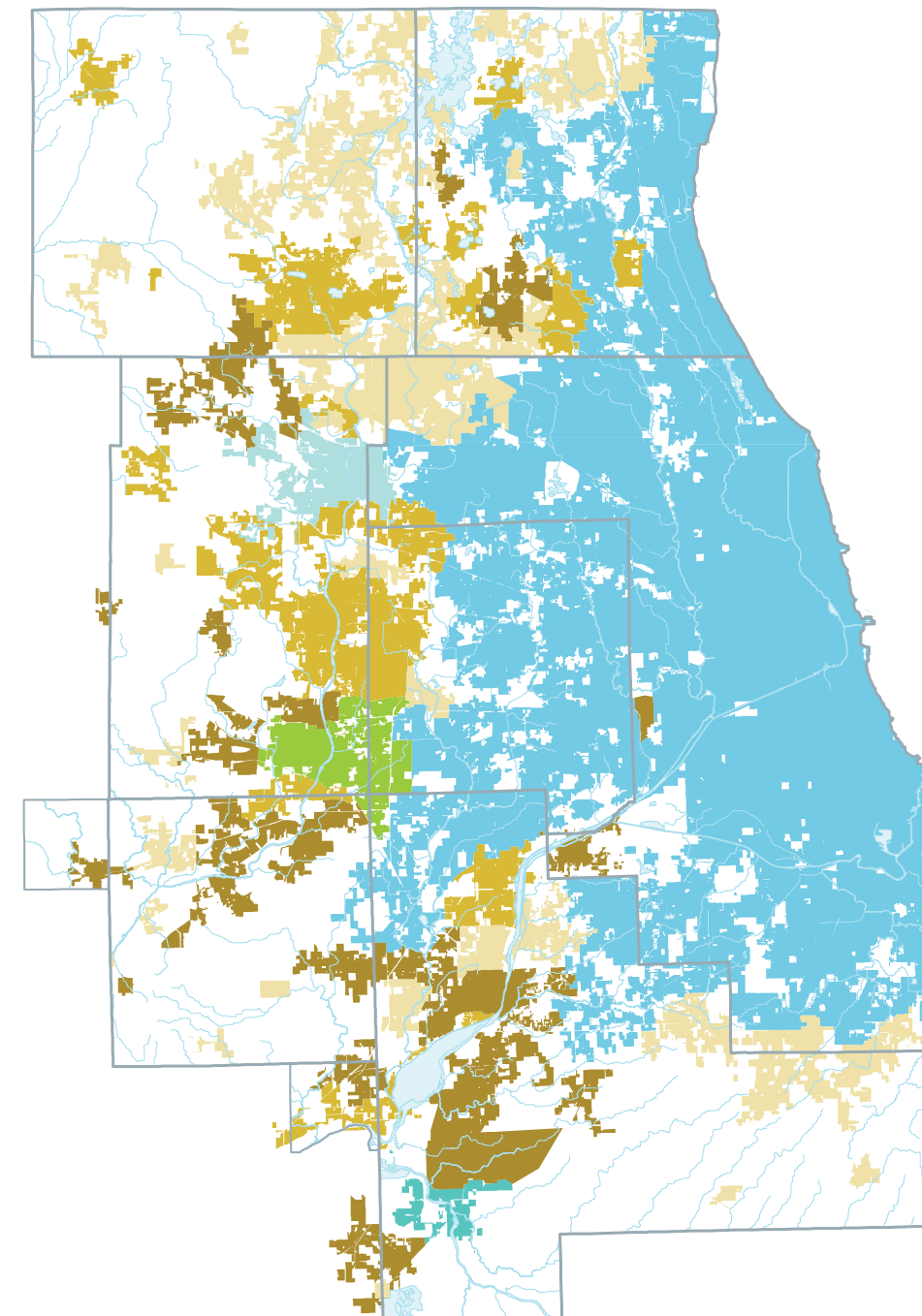
Recommendation

Reducing flood risk begins by updating our understanding of the areas at most risk of flooding in order to improve readiness. It will also require investments in gray and green infrastructure and addressing flood vulnerability and stormwater management in current and future transportation assets.



Recommendation

Better coordination and conservation of the region's shared water supply resources means incorporating water supply and demand considerations into local and regional planning, strengthening regional water supply management, and managing the demand and infrastructure for the region's supply of drinking water.







Goal: Development practices that protect natural resources

Recommendation

**As they pursue redevelopment opportunities, communities should improve natural resources, use sustainable building and greening practices, and address the needs of the most vulnerable residents and areas.**

Recommendation

**Integrating land preservation into strategic growth efforts and local planning will help the region enhance critical open space by protecting high-priority natural areas, identifying and maintaining key agricultural lands, and evaluating future infrastructure costs when considering development expansion.**



# Leading Effectively Together

**Supports Inclusive Growth:**

Through tax policy reforms and technical assistance to communities.

**Supports Resilience:**

Through improved long-term finances and increased collaboration across jurisdictions.

**Supports Prioritized Investment:**

Through data-driven decision making for services and infrastructure.





# To prosper, the region requires collaboration across jurisdictions, investment based on measurable outcomes, and helping local governments build their capacity to thrive.

The ON TO 2050 vision of a prosperous, inclusive region will require renewed collaboration and focused investment for addressing today's challenges and adapting to tomorrow's. Each level of government — from the State of Illinois to municipalities — has a role to play. For our region to thrive, current efforts to share or consolidate services and increase efficiency should expand to include more issues and jurisdictions.

**Collaboration at all levels of government, capacity of governments to provide a strong quality of life, and data driven and transparent investment decisions are the Governance goals of ON TO 2050.**

Implementing ON TO 2050 will depend on collaboration across jurisdictional lines, highly efficient investment based on measurable outcomes, and a focus on helping all units of local government build the capacity necessary to provide basic services and implement their plans.

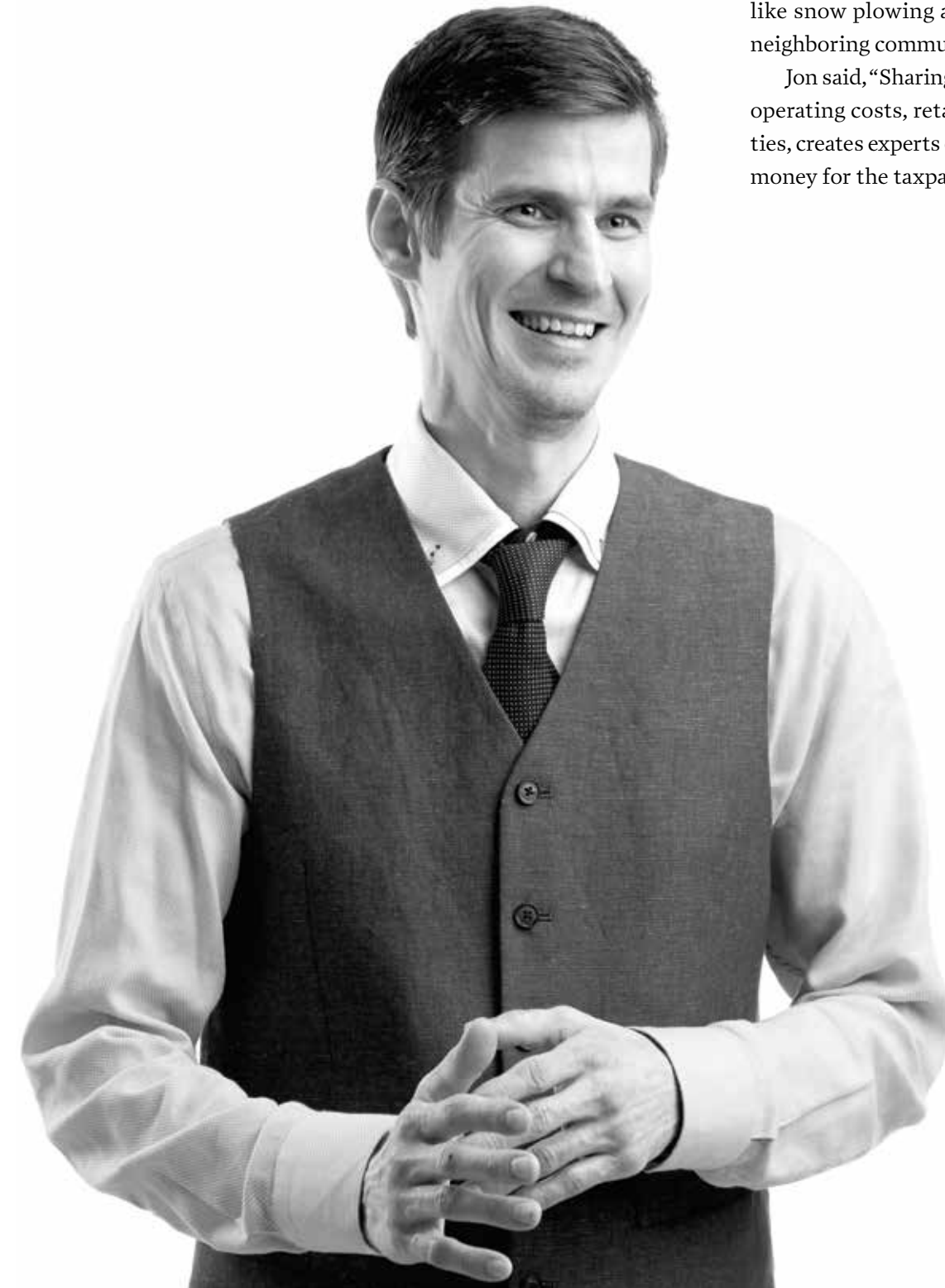
State funding plays a crucial — yet quite uncertain — role in the region's ability to invest in infrastructure and support local government services. A more modern tax system, a long-term plan to pay for obligations, and transparent, data-driven budgeting and programming can improve the state's near-term fiscal condition and long-term outlook. It can also bolster local governments, whose ability to serve the public is impeded by funding constraints.

By working together effectively across borders, the region's governments can stretch their limited resources. State and local governments — along with transit agencies — need the fiscal, technical, and administrative capacity to function effectively. With proper funding and support, the State of Illinois and local governments will be able to implement performance-based decision making, improve asset management, and leverage new technology for better services and infrastructure.

Goal: Collaboration at all levels of government

## Recommendation

**Limited state and federal funding increase the need for more regional partnerships and consolidation. This requires partnerships, funding, and proactive planning to pursue cost-saving sharing options, exploration of government consolidation, and annexation of developed and unincorporated areas.**



## Profile

### Jon Kindseth

Beach Park Village Manager Jon Kindseth was tired of seeing his community lose business to larger, more established retail markets. He joined forces with leaders of Winthrop Harbor and Zion to hire a shared economic development coordinator. Rather than compete against each other in a “race to the bottom,” as Jon calls it, all three villages will benefit from any sales tax earned by businesses the new coordinator generates.

His village also contracts some services such as police or animal control to the county or township, while services like snow plowing and street sweeping are shared among neighboring communities.

Jon said, “Sharing services allows governments to reduce operating costs, retain our unique identities as communities, creates experts of our staff, but most importantly, saves money for the taxpayers.”



Effective coordination can reduce the need for costly roadway expansion by making the most efficient use of the existing system. Establishing real-time communication and operational agreements between roadway agencies, emergency management services, transit providers, and traveler information services can improve transportation system safety and reliability, and reduce congestion.

#### Goal: Collaboration at all levels of government

##### Recommendation

**Collaborative leadership can address challenges like the region's lackluster economic growth through coordinated pursuit and implementation of federal and state investments, development and implementation of a shared economic growth strategy, and collaborative pursuit of inclusive growth.**

##### Recommendation

**Coordinating infrastructure operations and maintenance maximizes public investment. Units of government should partner to deliver infrastructure projects, enhance cooperation to improve roadway operations, share highway traffic management resources, and integrate local goals with roadway regulations.**



**Recommendation**

**To help strengthen communities will require modernizing tax policies to support the multi-jurisdictional nature of how local economies actually operate, tax reforms that support the best use of local land and offer opportunities for disinvested areas, and user fees for high-demand services and amenities like water and parking.**

**Recommendation**

**Building local government capacity enables communities to achieve prosperity and improve quality of life. CMAP will retool its Local Technical Assistance program and with its partners build communities' technical abilities, foster partnerships, and develop local expertise.**

**Profile****Hildy Kingma**

When Mayor John Osteburg told his staff that he wanted Park Forest to be one of the most sustainable communities in the Chicago metropolitan area, Hildy Kingma knew they would need a little help getting there.

Hildy was the only planner on staff in the small, south suburban community and, although she was the village's Director of Economic Development and Planning, she did not have a lot of experience with sustainability work.

She started to look for resources that would help her create a framework to reach the mayor's goal and found CMAP's newly created Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program. The village applied, was accepted, and together they created "Growing Green: Park Forest Sustainability Plan," which was adopted in 2012. Through 14 chapters, the plan detailed how Park Forest could improve its environment and economy.

"CMAP doesn't just say 'Here's a plan, good luck,'" Hildy said. "The next thing (CMAP) did was help us identify sources of funding to hire a sustainability coordinator and help us wrap our heads around what we needed to do on a day-to-day basis to make the plan a reality."

Park Forest has continued to work with CMAP, completing a bicycle and pedestrian plan and re-writing its zoning and subdivision standards to create a new unified development ordinance.

**Recommendation**

**Increasing access to budget information and analysis and other public information by leveraging technological improvements is necessary for accountable decision making at all levels.**

**Recommendation**

**Transparent and performance-based decisions informed by the most accurate data help extend limited public resources. Supporting a modern census and collecting and sharing vital socioeconomic, public health, and transportation data will improve evidence-based planning and decision making.**





# Achieving a Safe and Reliable System for Tomorrow

# Mobility

### Supports Inclusive Growth:

By improving mobility options that spur economic opportunity for low income communities, people of color, and people with disabilities.

### Supports Resilience:

By ensuring that infrastructure can adapt to changes in climate and technology.

### Supports Prioritized Investment:

By using resources to efficiently maintain existing infrastructure while securing new revenues for needed enhancements.





# Travel patterns are being influenced and potentially transformed by rapidly evolving technologies that make for an uncertain and yet promising future.

Our region's transportation network has reached a critical juncture. Travel patterns are being influenced — and potentially transformed — by rapidly evolving technologies that make for an uncertain and yet promising future. We cannot stand still, deferring important decisions that will shape the system for decades to come. ON TO 2050 seeks a well-integrated, multimodal transportation system for seamless movement of people and goods within and through the seven counties of metropolitan Chicago.

**A modern, multimodal system that adapts to changing travel demand, a system that works better for everyone, and making transformative investments are the Mobility goals of ON TO 2050.**

Making this vision our regional reality will require collective action to overcome obstacles inherent to existing assets and organizations. While some strategies may require action from the state or federal governments, increasingly this region and its local governments must rely on each other for homegrown solutions, including the revenues necessary to support a system of mobility that is the engine of our economic prosperity and quality of life.

Transportation agencies, counties, and municipalities will need to magnify coordination efforts and take swift action to adopt and regulate new technologies, make the transit system more competitive, end fatal crashes, and advance inclusive economic growth. Crucially, they will need to create new revenue streams to improve conditions of the existing transportation system as well as to make limited and highly targeted expansions.

The rapid pace of technological innovation in transportation seems likely to accelerate for many years to come. In the near term, existing technologies can improve the safety, efficiency, reliability, and resilience of our transportation network. **In the long term, emerging technologies like connected and autonomous vehicles and private mobility services like car sharing and ridesourcing present both a remarkable opportunity and a challenge for regional planning.**

Goal: A modern, multimodal system that adapts to changing travel demand

## Recommendation

Existing and emerging technologies, such as real-time data and expanded communications capabilities, can help us make more effective use of the transportation system. We can also establish pricing, development, and other policies today to prepare for future advances.

## Recommendation

Effective and competitive transit service requires not only strategic investments in service and infrastructure, but also coordinated land use planning and appropriate pricing for roads and parking. To ensure better and more equitable access, the region should diversify and increase funding sources as well as better link housing, transit, and jobs.





## Recommendation

**To maintain Chicagoland's status as North America's freight hub, the region must take a unified approach to focusing investments and improving the movement of freight through the region, while also mitigating negative impacts on residents and communities.**





## Recommendation

**Growing the regional economy inclusively will require leveraging the transportation system to better connect residents — particularly minority and low income residents — to jobs and other amenities. Increased engagement of underrepresented communities is essential to improve commute options, accessibility, and safety.**

## Profile

## Amorita Falcon

Amorita Falcon is a young college graduate who sometimes spends more than four hours a day commuting between her south suburban home and her job in Chicago. Without a car, every day she has to juggle a complicated and expensive combination of buses, transfers, and trains. It's draining, and if she misses a connection or a bus is late, she could even lose her job.

As Amorita points out, not everyone has the ability to live closer to their jobs, so having better links to jobs can lift economically disinvested communities and the region overall. ON TO 2050 recommends strategies to leverage our transportation system for inclusive growth and make transit a more competitive option to connect people to jobs.



## Recommendation

**To eliminate all traffic fatalities by 2050, the region must update roadway design to reduce speeding and crashes, invest in bike and pedestrian pathways, expand data collection, and improve driver training and equitable enforcement policies.**

## Profile

## Parker and Katie Thompson

Parker and Katie Thompson aren't sure what people think about the sight of them — and their two young sons — pedaling around Elgin, to the grocery store, to work, to the library, all on their bicycles. As they've transitioned to life in the suburbs without a car, they realize it's not a lifestyle everyone can understand. But the transition from driving to biking has proven beneficial for their wallets, health, and happiness, while also making them feel more connected to their neighbors. In terms of safety, people walking and biking are the most vulnerable users of the transportation network. It's something the Thompsons keep in mind as they ride with their five- and three-year-old boys in the back of the family's long-tail cargo bike.

As a pastor in her community, Katie works with people from all walks of life. She sees how transportation disparities can limit access to opportunity and make life more difficult for some. "It's about equal access to transportation," she said. "I believe a bicycle is a vehicle for social change and tool for economic empowerment."





## Recommendation

**Improving the resilience of the transportation network to weather events and climate change will require adapting infrastructure that was built decades ago and is therefore vulnerable to the impacts of both today's weather and even more so tomorrow's.**

## Recommendation

**Decades of underinvestment in the region's transportation system mean that in order to maintain, much less improve it, we must rethink current funding formulas and look for new revenues. ON TO 2050 recommends implementation of five new sources of revenue to fully fund the region's transportation system.**





Goal: Making transformative investments

Recommendation

By continuing to implement performance-based programming region-wide and expanding asset management practices to the entire transportation system, we can ensure the maximum public benefit for every transportation dollar.

Regional bridges in poor condition

8.6%

Regional roads in poor condition

25%

Regional railcars exceeding their useful life

21.7%

Regional buses exceeding their useful life

8.4%

Goal: Making transformative investments

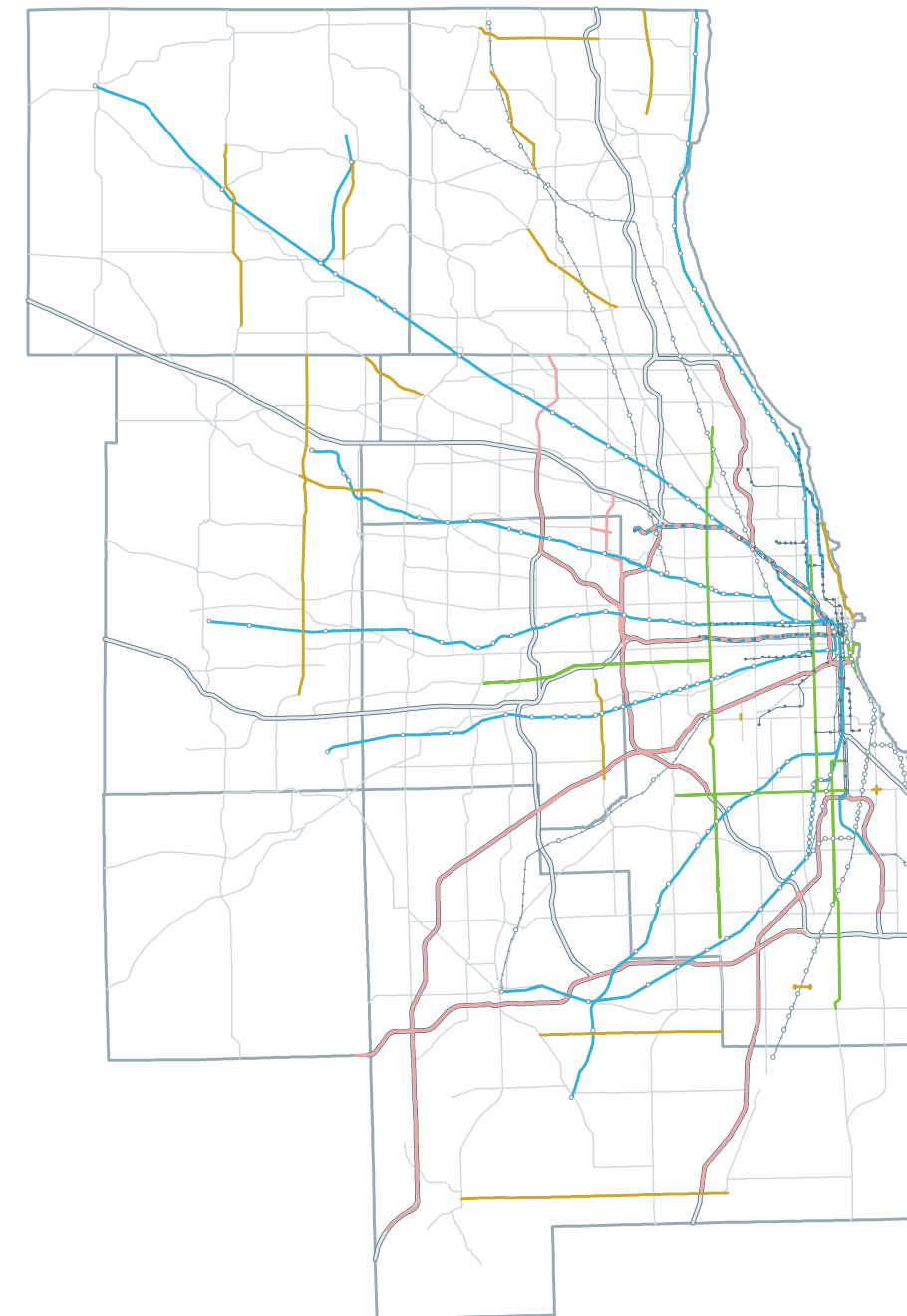
Recommendation

ON TO 2050 recommends carefully selected regionally significant projects that will improve and, in some cases, expand the region's transit, expressway, and arterial system. As required by federal law, the plan includes a prioritized list of such projects, available at [cmap.illinois.gov/2050/regionally-significant-projects](http://cmap.illinois.gov/2050/regionally-significant-projects).

Regionally Significant Projects

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2018

- Arterial
- Bus
- Rail
- Expressway





# Together as a region: Let's Go ON TO 2050

The ON TO 2050 plan contains dozens of recommended actions that this summary document does not describe in detail. Implementing those recommendations relies heavily on collaboration at all levels of government and across the public and private sectors. To that end, CMAP encourages all stakeholders to familiarize themselves with the full plan at [cmap.illinois.gov/2050](http://cmap.illinois.gov/2050), which includes links with many involvement opportunities.

Our region's communities can succeed together by pursuing their shared vision of economic prosperity and quality of life as articulated in ON TO 2050. Gwendolyn Brooks — a Pulitzer Prize winner and Poet Laureate of Illinois for more than 30 years — famously wrote:

**We are each other's  
harvest:  
we are each other's  
business:  
we are each other's  
magnitude and bond.**

ON TO 2050 resulted from three years' intensive, collaborative development of goals and strategies. Its implementation requires that same sense of common purpose to achieve a more prosperous region. Its three principles — **Inclusive Growth, Resilience, and Prioritized Investment** — point the way forward.







## About CMAP

CMAP was created in 2006 to help our communities and region thrive.

*Along with many partners, the agency seeks to make Chicagoland more competitive by:*

- Guiding public investments that include transportation, water, open space, and housing.
- Analyzing trends to inform better decisions involving demographics, the economy, workforce, and tax policy.
- Building consensus to achieve broad-based objectives.

*CMAP also supports local planning by:*

- Customizing assistance to communities.
- Fostering self-sufficiency.
- Leveraging regional investments for local benefit.

*And CMAP seeks to enhance quality of life by:*

- Improving natural resources that include air, water, parks, and open space.
- Promoting housing options for all.
- Making travel safer, seamless, and reliable whether via car, transit, biking, or walking.



