



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning **2021 CMAP Regional Excellence Awards**



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning



A better quality of life for every resident in the region

Over the past several months, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) defined and embraced a vision of building an inclusive and thriving region. The past year brought numerous challenges that have deepened inequities and tested our ability to adapt to unprecedented disruptions. Today, CMAP pays tribute to some of our partners for serving the public with perseverance and passion.

To achieve a better quality of life for people in northeastern Illinois, we must drive innovation and foster shared action. The CMAP Regional Excellence Awards program recognizes projects and leaders that prioritize equity, strengthen the resiliency of our 284 communities, and make them more economically competitive. The award winners exemplify the hard work being done to make northeastern Illinois a better place to live, work, and do business.

The stories behind each project and leader highlight why our region remains a vibrant place that connects people to opportunities. We also need to keep working toward our common vision of a stronger future for all people. I consider each of these successes a shared success — made possible by your commitment to our region and our residents. It is an honor to celebrate all these great accomplishments with you.

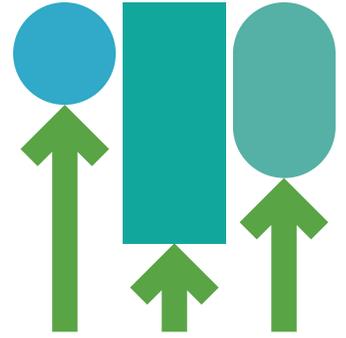
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Erin Aleman', with a long, sweeping underline.

Erin Aleman, Executive Director
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Equity with Impact Award

Recognizes a plan, project, or initiative that advances inclusive regional growth and investment.



Austin Forward. Together Austin Coming Together

A community organization, Austin Coming Together mobilized residents, organizations, and financial resources to improve the quality of life for the people living in the Chicago west side neighborhood. More than 500 community stakeholders contributed to the quality-of-life plan, called Austin Forward. Together (AFT), shaping strategies to address numerous issues. The collaborative effort and plan looks to enhance education, housing, youth empowerment, economic development, public safety, and civic engagement. From growing the Chicago Avenue corridor to redeveloping a closed public school into a workforce development center, AFT outlines a number of opportunities that will benefit the community. **It has generated over \$14 million in investment since its launch in 2018.**



Partners for Progress Award



Recognizes a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional plan, project, or initiative that targets regional investment in fiscally sound and equitable ways.

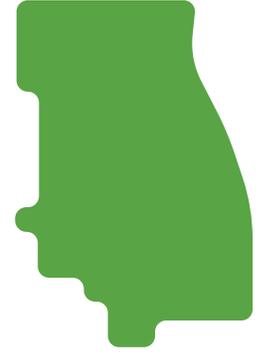
Connect2Work Program

Village of Bedford Park

The Village of Bedford Park partnered with Cook County and the Regional Transportation Authority to develop and launch Connect2Work, a pilot program that helps transit riders navigate Bedford Park. Through a mobile app, the Connect2Work program helps users find the fastest available public transit route, provides free shuttle rides during rush hour, and offers discounted rides for late-night and last-mile rides. The late-night rides bridge the gap during times when public transportation is less frequent or when users feel less safe traveling, and the last-mile rides make it more convenient for those further away from stations to get to transit. This program incentivizes users to choose transit over driving, which reduces congestion and shortens travel times. The village also partnered with Uber, Via, Moovit, Antero Group, and the Shared-Use Mobility Center to operate this program. **More than 2,700 rides have been booked through Connect2Work since it launched in December 2020.**



Regional Resilience Award



Recognizes a plan, project, or initiative that helps communities prepare for and recover from economic or environmental challenges.

Buffalo Creek Reservoir Expansion

Lake County Forest Preserve District, Village of Buffalo Grove,
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

Buffalo Creek Reservoir Expansion increased the region's resiliency against flooding, while improving recreational spaces for the public. The \$9.7 million project added 180 acre-feet flood storage and created two acres of wetland terrace. The innovative wetland terraces hold storm water longer to increase absorption and evaporation, reducing flooding in downstream communities in northeastern Illinois. The terraces also improve erosion control, support a more diverse habitat, and remove pollutants more easily. These and other measures will help communities rebound more quickly from stronger storms and more frequent flooding expected due to climate change. **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimated the project will reduce future flood damages by more than \$26 million.** Additionally, the project better serves users by adding 1.3 miles of trails and seven new boardwalks. It relocated existing trails out of flood-prone areas, expanded public parking, and improved public access to the existing Buffalo Creek Forest Preserve.



Visionary Leader Award

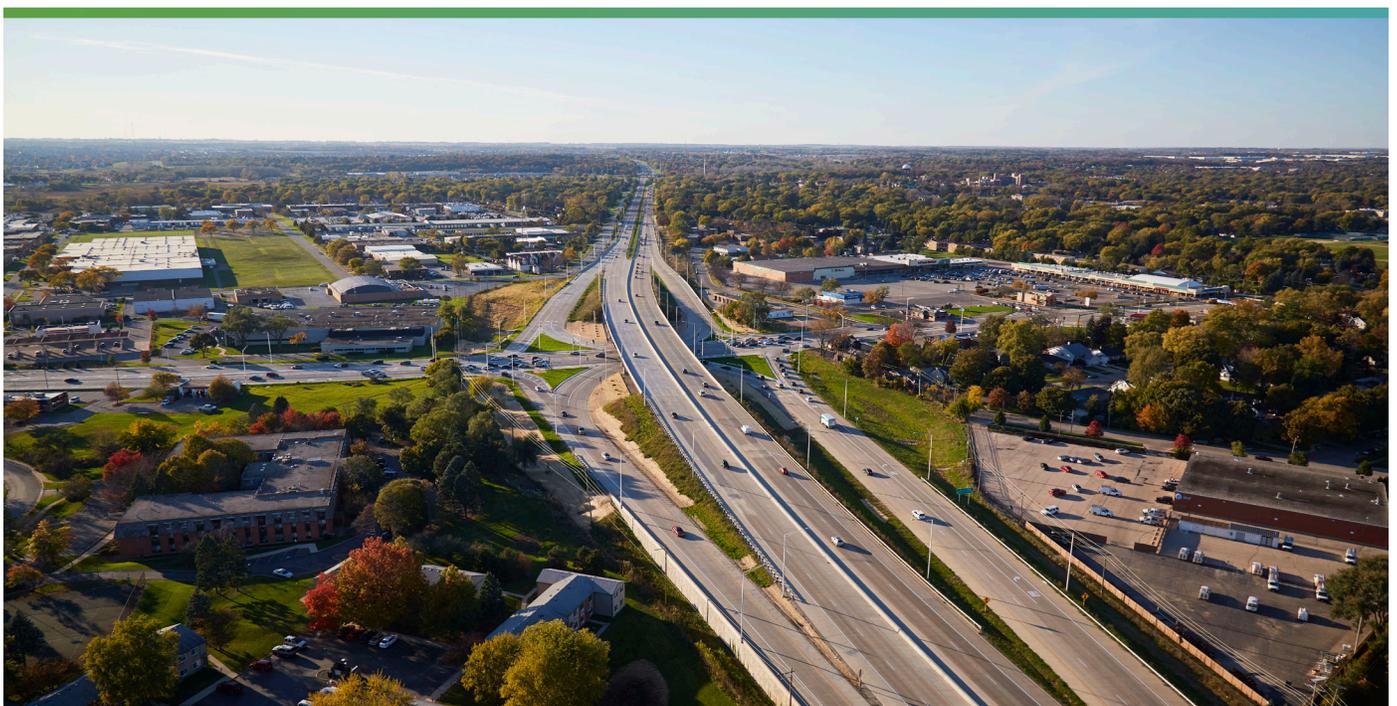


Recognizes a person or organization whose leadership has made northeastern Illinois more inclusive, resilient, and economically competitive.



Dr. Brian Sager

Having served as mayor of Woodstock for 16 years, Dr. Brian Sager worked to make Woodstock more inclusive and economically competitive. Under his leadership, Woodstock gained state support for the improvement and expansion of Route 47, a major thoroughfare for the McHenry County community. He also helped relocate and expand the landlocked Metra railyard from Crystal Lake to rural Woodstock, doubling the number of trains to the area and creating 100 permanent jobs. Facing a rise in homelessness in the area, Brian led the conversion of an old firehouse into a homeless assistance center and chaired a regional team to create the county's first year-round homeless facility. After nearly 32 years in Woodstock government, Brian retired in 2021. From supporting arts and culture to improving quality of life for senior residents, Brian led efforts big and small to make Woodstock a better community for its residents.



Visionary Leader Award



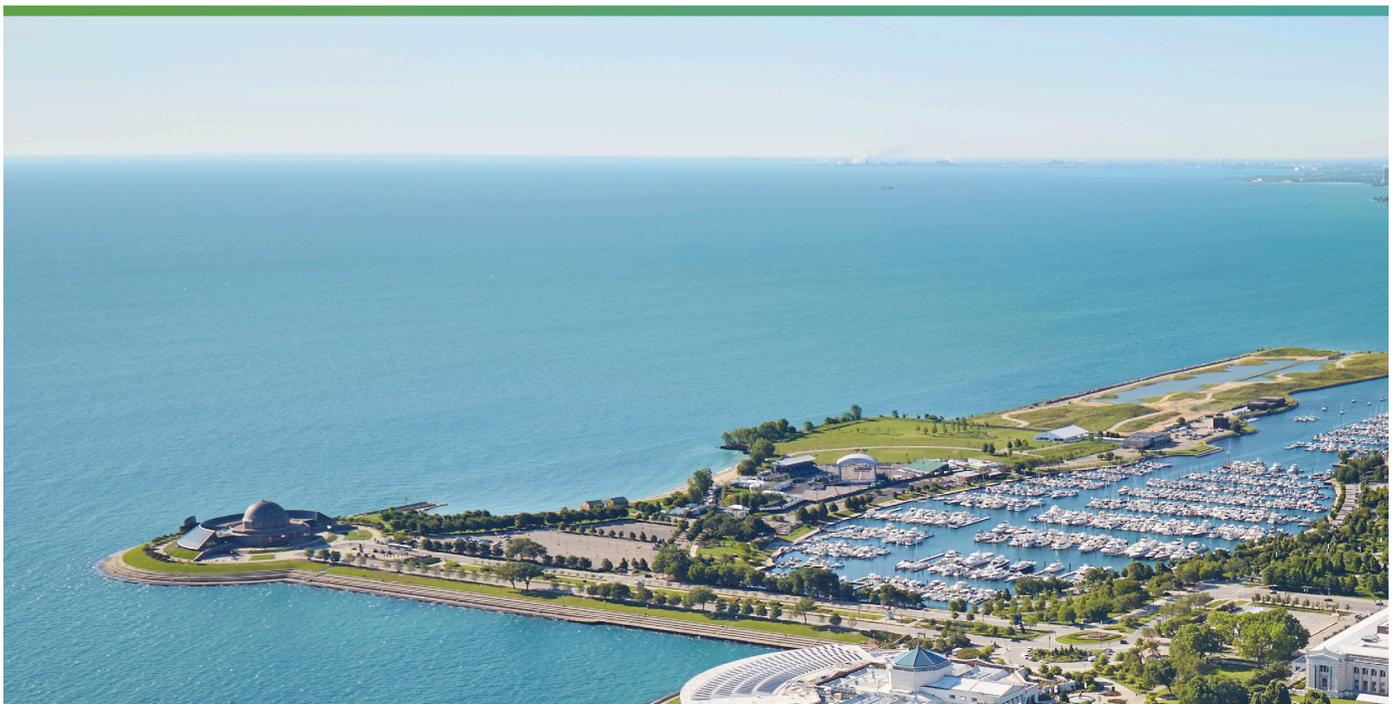
Recognizes a person or organization whose leadership has made northeastern Illinois more inclusive, resilient, and economically competitive.



Allison Swisher

As director of public utilities for the City of Joliet, Allison Swisher led the city through the complex undertaking of securing a new water supply.

Faced with a depleting groundwater source that serves the city, Allison inspired Joliet and neighboring communities to take action. Allison gathered representatives from all over western Will County and formed a planning group to better understand the conditions of the aquifers. At the same time, Allison launched Rethink Joliet Water to explore different water source alternatives, promote water conservation, and provide a regional solution. The city is proceeding with preliminary designs for new infrastructure needed to transport sourced water from Lake Michigan and is set to begin using the system in 2030. Due to Allison's leadership, residents in Joliet will have reliable and high-quality water for years to come.





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**433 West Van Buren Street
Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60607**

cmap.illinois.gov
312-454-0400