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MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Board
MPO Policy Committee
Planning Coordinating Committee

Date: September 1, 2010

From: Bob Dean, Principal Regional Planner

Re: Public Comments on *GO TO 2040* and Recommended Changes

The public comment period for *GO TO 2040* ended on August 6. The public engagement process during summer 2010 was summarized for the Board at their August meeting (the memo is available at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=21101>) and also described for each working committee during August and early September.

This memo does not contain any further details on process, but focuses on an analysis of the comments received and the more significant changes recommended to *GO TO 2040* to address the comments. A full report that describes comments and responses in detail is attached; this memo briefly summarizes the overall tone of the comments and highlights several recommended changes.

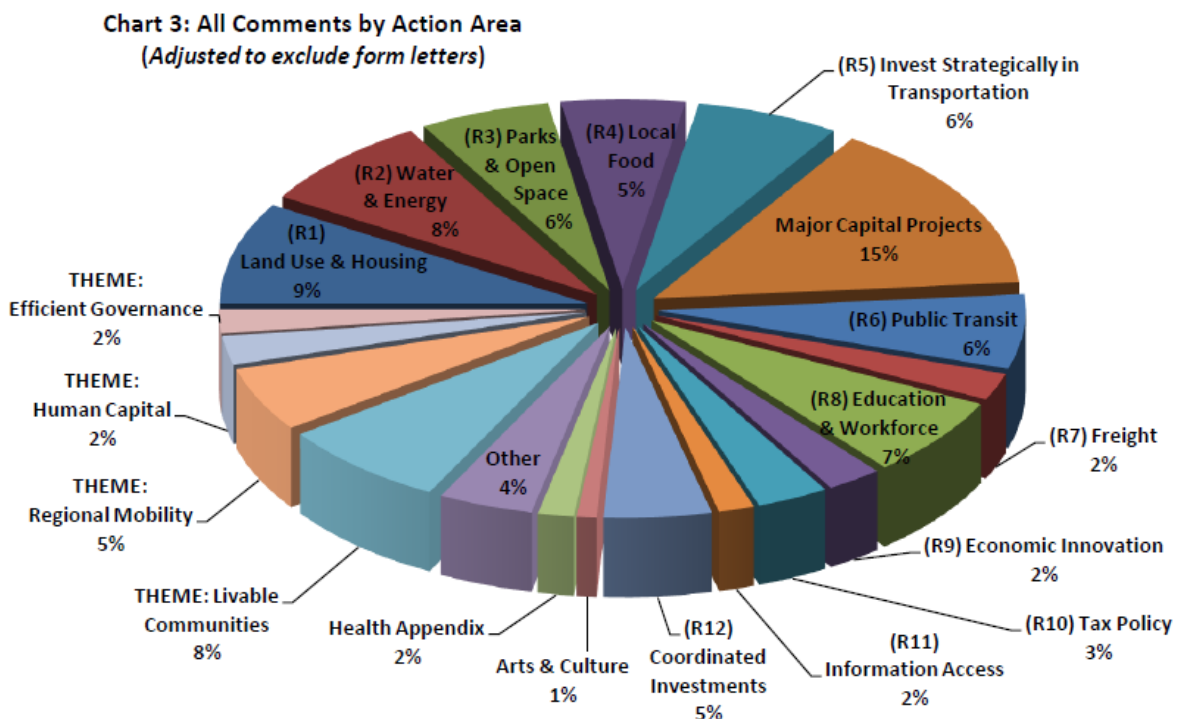
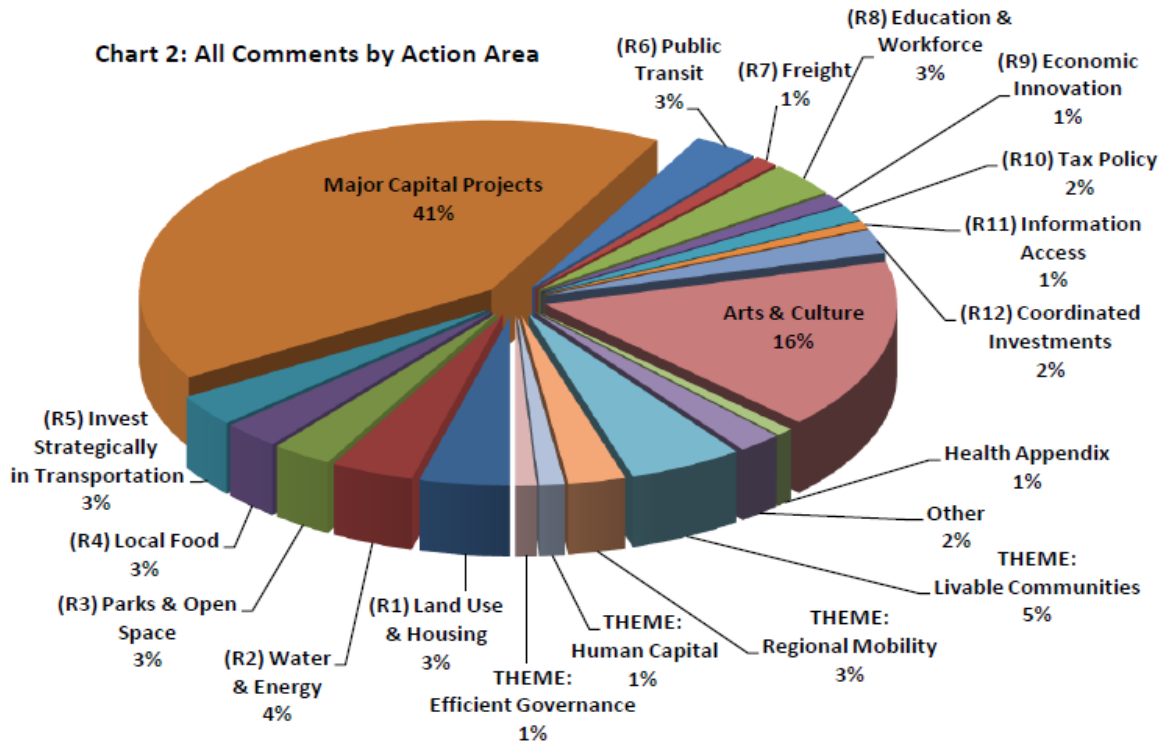
Members of the CMAP Board, Planning Coordinating Committee, and MPO Policy Committee are asked to provide final comments and requests for changes to the plan at their September meetings. The next meeting of each group will include a vote on the adoption of the plan.

Summary of comments

More than 1,000 comments were received during the public comment period. These ranged from simple form letters to very detailed letters that demonstrated serious review and analysis of the plan. Some commenters expressed general opinions about the plan, while others provided word-by-word commentary and requests. As the attached full report shows, comments were received from all over the region, as should be expected.

Most commenters expressed overall support for *GO TO 2040* and its recommendations. Many groups made requests for modifications, but these had to do with specific issues, rather than the overall direction of the plan. This is particularly true for organizations that have been involved

in the development of *GO TO 2040*, as they have had an opportunity to shape the direction that the plan has taken. While there were a few entirely negative comments received, these were generally from individuals, rather than major stakeholder groups. Comments were received on every issue area covered in the plan, as the charts below show. The top chart includes the form letters received, and the other shows comments with the form letters removed.



Recommended changes to GO TO 2040

The recommended changes to the plan based on the comments received are described individually in the attached report. These do not include all corrections of typos or formatting. Beyond these, please note that the document was also reorganized to have the key recommendations conclude with the Regional Mobility chapter. (Also please note that staff will continue to proofread the document, so additional minor changes may be made.)

Several of the more significant recommended changes are described for information and discussion below.

Arts and culture

- **Comments:** Nearly 300 letters were received requesting that the arts be treated more prominently in the plan through a letter writing campaign organized by Arts Alliance Illinois. Specifically, they noted that the arts are critical for economic competitiveness and community livability, and requested that the arts be included as a “top recommendation” of the plan.
- **Response and recommended changes:** The arts are now described more prominently in several sections of the plan. The major addition was made to the Challenges and Opportunities chapter, which now discusses the role that arts and culture play in quality of life in our communities. It also now appears in the Executive Summary, both in the discussion of challenges and opportunities facing the region and the description of community livability (the arts previously had not appeared in this section). Further additions were also made in the Land Use and Housing section (stating that comprehensive plans provide an opportunity to address the role of the arts). Support for the arts had already been included in the Context and Best Practices chapter, but this was also increased. However, staff does not recommend making the arts a “top recommendation”, which would involve writing a new section with detailed policy recommendations on arts and culture. Staff believes that it is important for the plan to support the arts, but making detailed recommendations in this area is beyond its scope.

Demographics

- **Comments:** Several commenters noted that the plan should include a discussion of the region’s expected growth and demographic change.
- **Response and recommended changes:** Staff agrees with this completely, and the Challenges and Opportunities chapter now discusses expected demographic changes, most notably the aging of the population. Discussions of the importance of demographic change have also been added to the Land Use and Housing and Public Transit sections, as demographic shifts have important implications for planning in these areas.

Reorganization of Water and Energy Conservation section

- **Comments:** A number of organizations thought that the organization of this section was confusing. It covered both energy and water, and switched back and forth between these topics in a number of places. Also, the importance of stormwater management and addressing flooding was raised by several commenters.

- Response and recommended changes: The organization of the Energy and Water Conservation section has always been a challenge. It is now reorganized to focus first on water (laying out current conditions, indicators, and recommendations) and then on energy. This is then brought together in the end by a section on the nexus between water and energy. The section had addressed stormwater and flooding previously, but in response to the comments concerning flooding, these elements were strengthened and further emphasized.

Local food and agriculture

- Comments: A variety of comments were received on the Local Food section. It received a great deal of positive comments from organizations and individuals, many of whom also requested specific additions. However, farm bureaus in the region had concerns with some of the elements of the section, which they viewed as taking a hostile approach to conventional agriculture. Finally, a few groups did not think that local food should be a key recommendation in the plan.
- Response and recommended changes: Keeping the Local Food section is recommended, because it did receive significant support from many organizations. However, some significant changes in response to the concerns of the farm bureaus have been made. A number of sentences or phrases that specifically concerned them have been removed. In addition, the section now clarifies early on that while its focus is on local food, it is understood that this is one element of a larger agricultural industry.

Bicycling

- Comments: Several comments had to do with supporting bicycling more strongly in the plan. Some individuals stated that bicycling was absent from the plan, which isn't the case. However, staff agrees that the treatment of bicycling could be improved.
- Response and recommended changes: New language was added in the Land Use and Housing, Transportation Investments, and Public Transit section to emphasize the importance of planning multimodally and pursuing bicycle accommodations. The most significant changes were made to the Transportation Investments section, which now discusses the benefits of bicycling and recommends multimodal approaches to transportation investment. Staff does not recommend that a separate section be added on bicycling, as it is now covered adequately with these additions.

Major capital projects

- Comments: Major capital projects attracted considerable attention during the public comment period. Letter writing or emailing campaigns led to numerous public comments concerning the Red Line extension (supporting it), the IL 53 extension (opposing it due to environmental concerns), and the I-290 multimodal corridor (preferring a transit to a highway improvement). Beyond these, many other comments were received on major capital projects. Generally, these requested the addition of locally-supported projects to the fiscally constrained project list. In addition to these comments, a subcommittee of the MPO Policy Committee met in July and made specific recommendations for modifications to this section. These

included: adding descriptions and a map of unconstrained projects; emphasizing that many of the unconstrained projects do provide benefit, and additional funding for them should be pursued; and confirming that the level of funding for major capital projects, and the specific project list, was appropriate.

- Response and recommended changes: The changes requested by the MPO Policy Committee have been made. Changes to the language of the IL 53 and I-290 projects were made to address the many comments received, but the projects are recommended to remain on the fiscally constrained list. Other locally-supported projects which are currently unconstrained are now described in more detail in the plan, and are encouraged to investigate innovative financing arrangements that could help overcome the financial challenges that they face. Overall, while there have been changes in language, no movement of projects is recommended between the fiscally constrained and unconstrained lists.

Role of workforce boards

- Comments: Several Workforce Investment Boards commented that the Education and Workforce Development section was focused too heavily on community colleges and neglected the role of other workforce providers and intermediaries. Most commenters reacted positively to the inclusion of workforce development in *GO TO 2040*, although some groups thought that it was beyond the plan's scope.
- Response and recommended changes: Descriptions of the roles of additional groups have been added, with particular attention to the role of Workforce Investment Boards. Community colleges are important parts of the education and workforce systems, so the section continues to identify a strong role for them. However, community colleges now have less of a focus in the section, because of the addition of other workforce groups.

Tax policy task force governance

- Comments: The Tax Policy section recommends the creation of a task force that will examine key taxation issues and make recommendations to the Board. Some groups expressed concerns about the governance of the task force, especially in terms of how it will be established and whether it will be representative of the region's diverse local governments.
- Response and recommended changes: The Tax Policy section has been modified to further emphasize that the task force is not a stand-alone group and exists only to provide recommendations to the Board. It also now clarifies that the Board is solely responsible for making appointments to the task force, and states that the Board should ensure that the task force membership has a geographic balance as well as represent the interests of both home-rule and non-home-rule communities.

New draft of *GO TO 2040*

A new draft of the plan that includes the changes described above (plus other more minor ones) is available at <http://www.goto2040.org/plandocs/>. Hard copies were also mailed to members of the CMAP Board, Planning Coordinating Committee, and MPO Policy Committee. Please note that this new draft has not been completely formatted (in terms of page numbers and

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placement of images), because its layout will be changed before its final printing; it also will eventually include additional graphics and illustrations.

Changes to the plan have been tracked, and copies of chapters that show changes are available upon request.

ACTION REQUESTED: Information and discussion.

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