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MAYOR EMANUEL, METROPOLITAN MAYORS HOLD QUARTERLY MEETING

Discuss need for sustainable transportation funding bill

At the quarterly meeting of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined suburban mayors and regional planners to discuss the need for sufficient and sustainable funding to improve, enhance and expand Illinois transportation systems.

"Over the past ten years, Illinois has been stuck in neutral while its roads, rails, and runways have deteriorated without repair," said Mayor Emanuel. "We're facing a historic moment, and we owe it to residents, businesses, and visitors of Illinois to find a lasting solution so that we can continue to invest in a 21st-century transportation system to back up our state's 21st-century economy."

While other nearby states such as Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, and Ohio have all recently raised transportation revenues, Illinois hasn't passed a statewide bill to fund its critical transportation infrastructure needs since 2009. The region needs \$24 billion in added revenue through 2050 to maintain the current system, according to research from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). But the cost of inaction is even higher as decades of underinvestment have created a significant backlog of projects to reach a state of good repair. CMAP estimates that another \$32 billion is needed to improve the condition, enhance and expand the current system.

"The public deserves a safe and reliable transportation system," said Mayor of Palos Hills and Chair of the CMAP Board Gerald Bennett. "We can't miss this opportunity to pass a new kind of capital bill – one that offers reform and uses real and sustainable funding – not gimmicks – to fix our roads, bridges, and transit."

Since 2011, Mayor Emanuel and the region's other mayors have invested billions in improving its transportation infrastructure but without state a state capital bill and serious state funding needed, repairs for roads, bridges and public transportation networks in the city, in the region and across the state continue to pile up. Investments in transportation have proven to not only increase access to jobs, education and other necessities but also provide significant and lasting benefits to communities that have historically been excluded from the economy.

“The public deserves a safe and reliable transportation system, and we need a new kind of capital bill to get us there,” said Hillside Mayor Joseph Tamburino, Vice Chairman of the Mayors Caucus. “Illinois requires a long-term funding solution that is accountable, fair, equitable and flexible.”

Chicago has been aggressive at creating and using TIF dollars to fund transformational projects like Red and Purple Line Modernization. Under Mayor Emanuel, the CTA has completed, begun or announced more than \$8 billion of transit projects to modernize the rail and bus system. And though much of the CTA’s infrastructure is decades old and needs rebuilding or replacement, nearly 30 percent of CTA stations have received major upgrades and rehabs since 2011.

Federal and state revenues that support transportation investments have not kept up with costs or inflation. Recent signals from Washington point to a growing reliance on state and local revenues to fund these needs.

The northeastern Illinois region is the economic engine of the state, accounting for 80 percent of the economy and two-thirds of its population. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus represents 275 communities and over 9 million residents of northeastern Illinois.

The Caucus provides a forum for metropolitan Chicago’s chief elected officials to collaborate on common problems and work toward a common goal of improving the quality of life for the millions of people who call the region home.

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