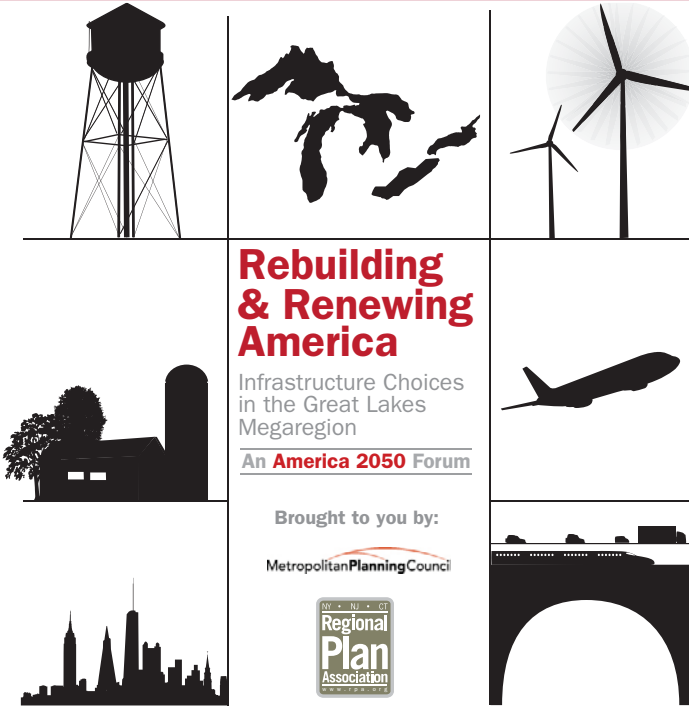


CONFERENCE SUMMARY



Funding support generously provided by:

The Rockefeller Foundation
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Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

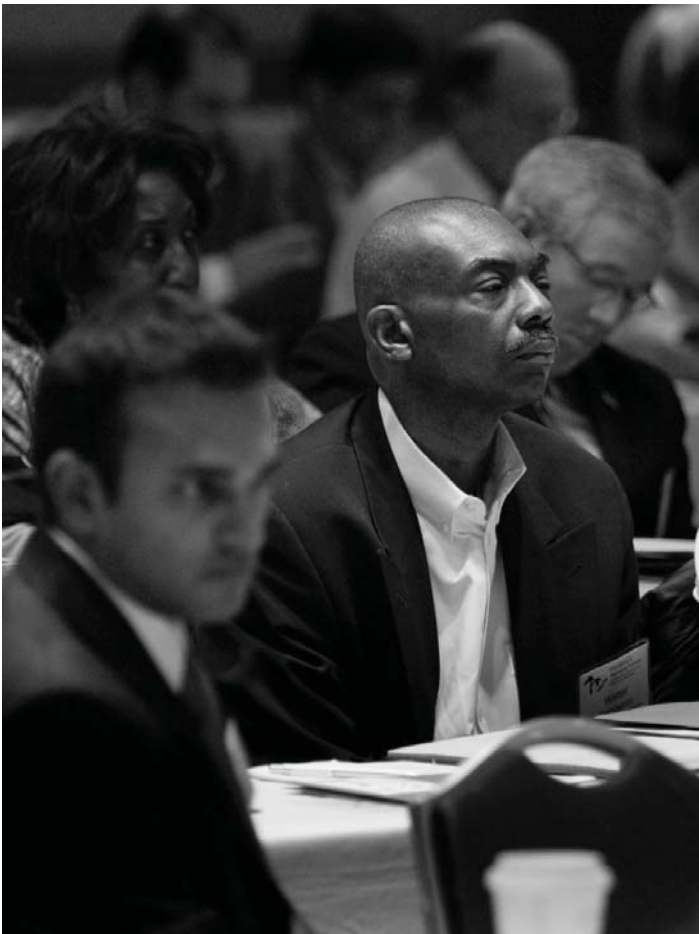
Local sponsors include the Builders Association, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd., CN, Illinois Railroad Association, and NIPSCO.

Late 2008 will be remembered for its highs – the promise of the historic election of President Barack Obama – and its lows – the burden of a steadily weakening national economy. As we become increasingly aware of the need for action on both short-term economic recovery and long-term economic sustainability, we are simultaneously coming to terms with our insufficient rail networks, aging road and water systems, overstressed electricity grids, underutilized ports, and untapped sources of renewable energy. Nowhere is this truer than in the Great Lakes Megaregion - hub of the nation's freight system, home of the world's largest freshwater ecosystem, and increasingly the epicenter of wind energy and biofuels production.

On November 17th, 2008, more than 250 infrastructure experts gathered in Chicago for “Rebuilding and Renewing America: Infrastructure Choices in the Great Lakes Megaregion,” an America 2050 forum, co-hosted by Chicago’s Metropolitan Planning Council and New York’s Regional Plan Association. The goal of the forum was to brainstorm a national infrastructure overhaul, with a focus on Great Lakes megaregional investment priorities in energy, transportation, and water. Featured speakers included Anne Pramaggiore, executive vice president for ComEd; U.S. Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) and Thomas Petri (R-Wis.); and the Hon. Peter Gordon MacKay, Canadian Minister of National Defense and the Atlantic Gateway.

As the day unfolded, several major themes emerged:

- While the economic crisis is dire, we cannot merely throw money at quick fixes, but instead must link investment decisions with national and regional goals – for instance, congestion relief, climate change mitigation, water conservation, and improving quality of life – and set objective criteria for rating projects against each other.
- Much of the Great Lakes Megaregion’s existing transportation, energy, and water infrastructure is in disrepair, of insufficient capacity, or woefully inefficient. A national infrastructure plan must balance the need for a strategic reinvestment in existing assets with the desire to build new roads, rails, and pipes.
- The needs of metropolitan regions – greater Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland, for instance – must be stressed in any plan. Expansion of mass transit, modernization of water treatment and supply, and other heretofore “urban” issues must be recognized as megaregional and national priorities.
- The threat of global climate change and water shortages must inform any national plan. An infrastructure plan for the 21st Century must reduce greenhouse gas emissions, expand renewable energy production, conserve and restore water supplies, and where possible, utilize “green” infrastructure by preserving natural ecosystems.



PURPOSE



MarySue Barrett, President, Metropolitan Planning Council

Ms. Barrett wants to see the Great Lakes region as a leader in defining a new metropolitan-federal partnership, and to serve as a prototype for other megaregions to develop solutions regionally for energy, water, and infrastructure issues. She strongly advocates:

- Working cross-jurisdictionally, on a cross-issue basis, to break down silos, which she characterized as the toughest work in public policy
- Megaregions joining forces politically to advocate for their common interests
- Reforms to federal and state programs to reward public and private investment consistent with established regional plans

As the opening speaker of the conference, she was quick to point out that, "... this is not a talking heads conference, not just experts brought in to share their expertise, but to roll up our sleeves, to get to work – and we'll need your help to make that a success.

If our Great Lakes region can define what the new metropolitan-federal partnership looks like, what we need - on energy, infrastructure, and water solutions - we are not only going to jumpstart our own economy, but also provide a prototype for other megaregions to adapt to fit their own particular dynamic, to join political forces to get something done."



Robert Yaro, President, Regional Plan Association

Events such as the levee failure in New Orleans and bridge collapse in Minnesota have starkly demonstrated our infrastructure's increasing age and disrepair. The convergence of an infrastructure crisis and an economic crisis presents the opportunity to shape a bold agenda for economic recovery in the United States that is driven by a national infrastructure plan. Mr. Yaro envisions:

- Investing in new systems of public transit, high speed rail, green ports and inter-modal freight facilities, the electricity grid, and green infrastructure to protect our drinking water, streams, and rivers
- An ambitious agenda of national infrastructure investments and the policy reforms that are needed to bring about a more strategic approach to transportation, water, and energy investments at the national scale, and in the Great Lakes megaregion
- An infrastructure plan that puts Americans to work in jobs that can't be outsourced, and creates economic growth for the U.S. to compete in the global economy, wean the nation off foreign oil, and provide opportunity for all Americans

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Anne Pramaggiore, Executive VP of Customer Operations, Regulatory and External Affairs, ComEd.

Physical geography matters greatly. Any new facility will locate itself where there are the best services to support it, the best physical access to the world, and the best human resources, which will bring energy and ideas to the organization. This locus must also offer resources for people: strong universities, healthy, livable areas, easy access to work and play, and world-class amenities, all at a reasonable cost. Some of the ways Ms. Pramaggiore sees that happening are:

- Conversion to smart grid technology that enhances accountability and potentially detects weaknesses before outages occur.
- Enactment of smart policy at all levels of government that supports research, development, and energy efficiency.
- Evolution of the institutions that support our energy infrastructure to meet the demands of the new global economy.



U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.)

Rep. Blumenauer, characterizing the nation's current infrastructure situation as both a challenge and an opportunity, advocates that we need to 'shift the default' action, and adjust our philosophy of government, not only to save our economy, but our planet. As he says, "It's not going to be free, or easy, but it has become inevitable, for we've reached a point in which economic, fiscal, energy, and development patterns are no longer sustainable." His stated goal is to "create a new political reality," and he wants the federal government to lead by example, and reinforce thoughtful, comprehensive planning. His goals include:

- First and foremost, figure out how to do more with the systems we already have in place.
- Restructure partnerships between thousands of utilities, private and public, and the federal government.
- Update regulatory systems to allow utilities to finance energy-saving, water-saving applications, development, and application.



Hon. Peter Gordon MacKay, Canadian Minister of National Defense and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway

Minister MacKay wants the U.S. and Canada to develop a shared vision to bring prosperity to both sides of our border, and work together on infrastructure issues, reinforce our connections, and create new opportunities. He advocated that both countries work together to:

- Build better transportation infrastructure, have more direct access to markets, and be more cost effective in the way we transact business.
- Strengthen a historic relationship that has seen Atlantic Canada's exports to the United States grow by more than \$16 billion per year, especially through Chicago.



U.S. Representative Thomas Petri (R-Wis.)

Rep. Petri spoke about goals to upgrade infrastructure through the Midwest Rail Initiative, improve locks and dams on the Mississippi, cut down on wasted time in the Chicago Rail Transit Hub, and work with Canada on Great Lakes issues. In response to a question from the audience about priorities for the new Congress and new administration, Rep. Petri said he would first look to short-term, ready-to-go projects, but that long-term projects, like CREATE, could get funding for certain pieces of a larger project. Additional priorities for Rep. Petri include:

- Federal incentives in programs to encourage states to adopt programming in particular areas.
- Relief for state and local governments, but also the private sector, to help stimulate the economy, especially through maintenance and upkeep projects.



Katherine Baer, Senior Director for Clean Waters, American Rivers

Ms. Baer advocates broadening the definition of infrastructure to include green infrastructure. Natural infrastructure solutions, which can be used to mitigate floods, reduce stormwater runoff, and handle sewer overflows, can also be very cost-effective. However, even with great progress on green infrastructure in Chicago and elsewhere, some challenges include:

- How green infrastructure will translate to the national level
- The role for federal funding, and how to make that happen



Cameron Davis, President, Alliance for the Great Lakes

As described by Mr. Davis, climate change not only presents new challenges, especially in water issues, but offers us a chance to recalibrate our policies and institutions. Climate change not only has the potential to change water levels in our lakes and rivers, but also disrupt entire ecosystems. Opportunities, but also challenges, for the future include:

- Water conservation and efficiency, and sustainable infrastructure, as fixes to remedy the effects of climate change
- Growing demand on state revolving fund, which will limit funding opportunities over time



MaryAnn Dickinson, Executive Director, Alliance for Water Efficiency

With populations rising in water-scare states like Colorado, and other states expecting water shortages within five years, Ms. Dickinson advocates water efficiency as the answer to many different problems. Saving water can also save energy, which, in turn, reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Key components of her agenda include:

- Smart metering, appropriate water pricing, and retrofitting structures with water efficient appliances and technologies
- Require all process water to be recycled, and use captured rainwater for irrigation
- Require water/energy connections in cap-and-trade proposals



Debra Shore, Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

According to Ms. Shore, the federal government has a key role to play in water planning and management. Metro regions have been very innovative, but to make this work, there needs to be strong city and state leadership as well. Federally-funded projects to support state and regional activities include:

- Planning grants for regional authorities to prepare water supply plans, and study grants for states to develop quality standards for groundwater
- Demonstration projects for innovative water technologies
- Guidance to states and regions to foster intergovernmental agreements



Samuel W. Speck, Commissioner, International Joint Commission

Mr. Speck praised the Great Lakes Compact, in which the megaregion reached a consensus on water management and resource protection. He sees the Compact's major advantages as:

- A great deal of latitude left to the states and provinces in how to implement the Compact's goals locally
- An oversight process that evaluates states and provinces individually, but also assesses what the system is doing collectively
- A collective advantage to improve the quality of life for people regionally, but also for our nation as a whole



Moderator: Al Appleton, Former Commissioner, New York City Department of Environmental Protection

As budgets for maintenance overwhelm budgets for new construction, outdated and obsolete infrastructure has become a huge problem. Mr. Appleton argues that we need a 21st century outlook, and that sustainability is no longer just interesting or important, but absolutely unavoidable. Most of all we need budget discipline and to extract more value from the value chain that is water supply.

Panel Themes

- Water is more place-based than transportation or energy issues. Water supplies and water quality vary within states and regions, and between neighboring communities. We need federal and state programs that support regional planning and interjurisdictional solutions.
- We need to move away from supply expansion, which is environmentally and economically draining, and toward demand management. Infrastructure modernization, conservation pricing, and smart metering can create jobs and save water.
- Our water infrastructure is old and inefficient. There is a shortage of funding, partially because water prices are held artificially low in order to stimulate economic development. More federal money is needed for the funding programs that enable improvements, but with caveats – communities need to adopt pricing systems that cover more of the full costs of water supply, and funding should support repair and enhancement over expansion.
- Natural, green infrastructure should be used where it has a competitive advantage over other means. It can lower long-term economic and ecological costs. Green infrastructure has been used successfully at small scales, but translating that to the national level – both in terms of policy and technology – is where we need to turn our attention.



Kyle Barry, VP of Business Expansion, McGuire Woods Consulting

To accommodate the ever increasing demand for energy, Mr. Barry advocated that we need to upgrade and expand the current energy system. He highlighted the potential for growth of wind energy in this region, and said that systems are in place in all Midwestern states.

- Location is key, wind energy production potential does not always match demand
- Transmission or transmission capability is critical; it costs about \$1 million to make the connection between the wind plant and the power grid



Anne Evens, Director, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Energy

Ms. Evens supports the Illinois Smart Grid Initiative, which will improve system functionality and reliability, and will allow two-way communication between the grid and the consumer. Other initiatives that she supports include:

- Encouraging participation in renewable sources of energy
- Increasing the supply of hybrid and electric vehicle stations
- Exploring the possibility of selling energy back to the grid, and increasing the efficiency of central power plants
- Finding ways to protect vulnerable customers, who could be easily cut off



Val Jensen, VP, Marketing and Environmental Programs, ComEd

Mr. Jensen said that, in fact, using money for programs with the highest cost-benefit ratio might not always be the most effective. Rather, long-term projects, which he called “cathedral investments,” in which we lay the foundation for the future, could produce greater benefits over time, and should be explored. He also recommended:

- “Intergenerational empathy” in project decision-making, for we should always take into consideration how our decisions will affect generations to come
- Small investments in many different places to increase total efficiency



Sadhu Johnston, Chief Environmental Officer for the City of Chicago

Mr. Johnston spoke of the City of Chicago's Climate Change Action Plan, which provides a framework for the City to implement environmental reforms, specifically targeting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. He spoke about the need to act as a region, and to foster public/private partnerships. Other reforms include:

- Retrofitting 350,000 residential structures to decrease GHG emissions by 30%, including some commercial retrofitting (like the Sears Tower)
- Education through “Energy Assistance Caseworkers,” who will provide a one-stop shop for retrofitting information, and serve as an outreach post to the community



Wally Tyner, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

Professor Tyner highlighted new types of renewable energy, and spoke about the need for new investments to make biofuel usage sustainable. These include investments in infrastructure, renewable fuel standards, and future pathways. We are at the limit of how far ethanol can grow, and scientists have now begun to focus on other biofuels.

- We must now consider bio-chemical conversion as well as thermo-chemical conversion.



Moderator: Catherine Morris, The Keystone Center

Ms. Morris spoke about the disconnect between what our infrastructure was originally built to do, and what we use it for now. Our systems, demand, and the way that we buy and sell electricity has evolved. She highlighted her organization's work on transmission infrastructure in the Midwest, which became a part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. However, even with great progress in policy, she said that we are still in a stalemate in terms of our infrastructure investments.

Panel Themes

- The infrastructure demands of renewable energy are more complicated than for conventional forms. Wind energy needs transmission lines, while biofuels need processing facilities and then to be moved to market. Production capacities are stunted until we expand infrastructure to unlock their potential.

- Our electricity is not as smart as our electronics. The Smart Grid, which would enable two-way communication between users and the grid, would spur efficiency, lower long-term costs, and improve service.

- Demand management – measured in terms of negawatts – is often more cost-effective than supply expansion, but we need to make long-term infrastructure investments that avoid future problems instead of just solving present ones.

TRANSPORTATION



Ann Drake, CEO, DSC Logistics

For Ms. Drake, freight costs are all about time and space. When it comes to freight going through the city of Chicago, congestion is a huge problem. We need radical transformation. If we don't create a national vision for how this looks and how this works down the road, then we're just going to hurt ourselves with incrementalism.

- The future competitiveness of the Midwest will depend on whether we can remain a viable corridor for goods.
- Easing rail, road, and port congestion in urban areas will require a national vision and investment strategy.



Michael McLaughlin, Deputy Chief of Staff for Federal Affairs, Chicago Transit Authority

The way we've been funding our transportation system is not working. Mr. McLaughlin offered some suggestions:

- Cost-benefit analysis could serve as a model for our transportation and infrastructure projects seeking funding. We need a plan, this is true; but we also need to spend people's money wisely and set expectations for funded projects early on.
- We have to look collectively at the Great Lakes mega-region, and spend money reinforcing its presence as a key hub of transit.



Maureen McAvey, Executive VP, Infrastructure Initiatives, Urban Land Institute

America's challenge will be to "ante up or fall behind": 70% of population growth will be in suburban areas – we must integrate those areas. Secondly, the majority of cars on roads are not work-to-home trips, so land use has to be a key component in how we think about getting around in our urban areas. How do we make sure that the Midwest is connected to multiple modes of transportation and that transfers between modes is viable, safe, and expedient?

- Transit networks often connect suburbs to the urban core, but not to each other. Increasing access within and between suburbs is a must.
- Land use planning cannot be overlooked. Homes, jobs, and stores must be connected by a range of transportation choices.



Ilana Preuss, Director of Campaign Partnerships, T 4 America

Ms. Preuss argued that we already have a model for a national vision. "We built the interstate highway system. We have a whole lot of maintenance we need to do, but the system has been built out. We set the plan, figured out costs, and we spent that money. We need to do that for the rest of the system. We need to connect our people to their jobs, destinations, and each other in more ways so that our economy can prosper."

- Transportation and land use need to serve the needs of people, not cars.
- Oil prices will continue to fluctuate, but increase overall. Cities, suburbs, and rural areas will need a transportation system that offers real choices for efficient travel.



Rob Puentes, Fellow, Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institution

For Mr. Puentes, the federal transportation system is not just broke; it is also broken. It has three fundamental flaws that need to be addressed: it is absent, outdated, and highly compartmentalized. We don't need a second interstate system, but we do need the federal government to deal with the increase in metropolitan population.

- Metropolitan regions are the strength of the national economy, but also where the transportation system is most strained.
- The federal government should establish investment goals, but give states and metros flexibility on the means.



Moderator: Petra Todorovich, Director, America 2050

Ms. Todorovich stressed that the era of the interstate system, as an organizing framework for development, is drawing to a close. It is reaching capacity in many of the metro regions around the country. But are new capacity and bigger systems the answer we should be seeking? What are the goals we should be pushing? What are the criteria we should be using to measure progress? America 2050 is about answering those questions.

Panel Themes

- The federal government needs to establish goals for a 50-year transportation investment framework, then reward states, regions, and communities that plan and invest accordingly.
- Current federal funding streams prioritize highways, so that other modes must compete for a small piece of the pie. A new strategy should stress outcomes, not means, and fund investment accordingly.
- States, regions, and communities receiving federal need to be held accountable for their decisions. Clear federal goals, matching funds, and competitive allocation processes can induce investment choices consistent with federal priorities.

Moderator, Robin Snyderman, VP of Housing & Community Development, Metropolitan Planning Council

Randy Blankenhorn, Executive Director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

“We need to build an era of partnerships between federal agencies and regions. Regions are our main concern. They are where our economic activity is. They produce 70% of our nation’s GNP, and are home to about 70% of its citizens. That’s where change is going to happen. Transportation is no longer a goal – it is a strategy, a way to do business to build stronger communities, new economic vitality, and new ways of life. And MPOs have to change in order to make that happen. Infrastructure needs to be looked at more comprehensively. You can’t talk about transit without talking about land use and its impact on our natural environment. You can’t talk about economic prosperity and not talk about housing and education.”

Terry Kohlbus, Executive Director, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

“I strongly support the idea of coordinating transportation to land use decisions with resource planning, the environment, and also economic development. If the MPO had more ability to control the funding process, what I think you’ll find are better solutions, because our mandate is to care about all of these factors, and we would have the ability to take planning to the level of implementation, which would be a good thing for both MPOs and the communities we serve.”

David Warm, Executive Director, Mid-America Regional Council

“Performance measurement and accountability are critical to this debate about how we define infrastructure, because they get to the very heart of what we need to put in place to drive a different kind of decision than the decisions made in the past 50 years. We need to have clear goals for what we want to achieve and meet the national interest as well, then give flexibility to metropolitan areas to accomplish those goals.”

Steve Ernst, Study Director, Rockford Area Transportation Study

“Our economy is intimately tied to the auto industry, but we have to look at multi-modal, intelligent transit systems, instead of building to capacity standards. We avoided projects that were tough. We drifted away from projects in housing, urban development, neighborhood development, in favor of projects that could go quickly, or could get permitted quickly. Unfortunately, the areas most suited to sustainability are the very areas in which we didn’t invest.

We need a new vision that looks at overall community health and ties the decisions that we make in transportation back to decisions that are being made in neighborhood development, urban development, and housing.”



Chester Jourdan, Executive Director, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

“For the past 50 years as MPO’s, we’ve been living in a “if you win, I lose” scenario; that is not going to be a successful paradigm for the success of our regions, our states, or our countries in the 21st century. As we think about the challenges of the future, we need to start thinking about what they mean to each of us, and to our communities, our children and our grandchildren. We are very much in danger of passing off a worse environment and a worse quality of life than was passed to us. The challenges are huge – it is not just about ‘more money.’ The public and private sectors need to come together to think about a strategic investment in our region for tomorrow, and ensure that what we do adds value for our citizens, to their lives, and to the places in which they live, work, and play. It is imperative to the success and future of our nation.”

John Swanson, Executive Director, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

“The economic futures of Indiana and Illinois are, as I like to say, ‘joined at the wallet.’ There have been some limited efforts to transcend state borders, and we’ve achieved some limited results. We decided to jointly undertake a household travel pattern survey – not just home-to-work trips, but all trips. It doesn’t sound like anything big, but it is something that has never been done before. We hope to be able to do some of the same collaborative planning as we move into our own comprehensive plan, which is intended not to be just about transportation, but integrate land use, the environment, economic development, transportation, and social equity.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

Infrastructure is not the ends, it is a means to an end. We're here to build a thriving Great Lakes Megaregion, we're here to jumpstart the economy, to improve not only the destinations, but the connections between the places that make up our communities. It is about the outcomes of the decisions being made. Think about the actionable. Think about your part. Think about things that we can move on together quickly.

U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.)
U.S. House of Representatives

This conference is well-timed; there are not only structural proposals that align with those of the White House, but also specific investment strategies. We need an inside and an outside game. We need to assist officials to ensure that their broad concepts are on track with what we see as a collective vision. Let's give those kinds of ideas away, and help shape the new leadership team being formed in Washington today.

MarySue Barrett
President, Metropolitan Planning Council

The one word I have heard used most today is the word 'vision.' How do you take the ideas here and translate it into something that will be articulated by a leader somewhere? It may not be as simple as putting a person on the moon in ten years, but if we're going to do this - how can this process help make that happen?

David Ullrich
Question from the audience

Planners like visions. Entrepreneurs like opportunities. The challenge here is to balance long term visions with immediate term opportunities. But we must ensure that money is not spent on the wrong types of things. Tackle the easiest and the hardest problems first, and then converge in the middle. The hardest first because you won't get it solved, but if we don't start them, we won't create any momentum.

Randy Blankenhorn
Executive Director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

[Chicago] is the capital of "Can Do." It has transformed itself after multiple natural disasters, economic disasters, to create this great metropolis in the center of the country, and the Midwestern region in general has done the same on so many occasions. There is the spirit of overcoming adversity that lives here more than almost any other place in the country. We can rise to the occasion, but it is up to us to shape that vision. And the strategies for coordinated regional development must come from the bottom up - from the business, civic, government leadership. The strategy must be locally based, strongly supported, and effective.

Bob Yaro
President, Regional Plan Association

8 - Rebuilding & Renewing America



8:30 – 10:00 am: Morning Session

National Context for Infrastructure Investment

MarySue Barrett, President, Metropolitan Planning Council
Robert Yaro, President, Regional Plan Association

A Business Perspective on Infrastructure Investment

Anne Pramaggiore, Executive VP of Customer Operations, Regulatory and External Affairs, ComEd.

Featured Speakers

U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.)
Hon. Peter Gordon MacKay, Canadian Minister of National Defense and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway

10:00 – 10:45 am: Plenary Panel: Meeting Great Lakes Megaregion Needs in a National Infrastructure Plan

U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.)
U.S. Representative Thomas Petri (R-Wis.)
Moderator: John McCarron, lecturer, Medill School of Journalism

11:00 am – 12:20 pm: Concurrent Roundtables on Cross-Border Infrastructure Challenges in the Great Lakes Megaregion

Water

Katherine Baer, Senior Director for Clean Waters, American Rivers
Cameron Davis, President, Alliance for the Great Lakes
MaryAnn Dickinson, Executive Director, Alliance for Water Efficiency
Debra Shore, Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Samuel W. Speck, Commissioner, International Joint Commission

Energy

Al Appleton, Former Commissioner, New York City Department of Environmental Protection
Kyle Barry, VP of Business Expansion, McGuire Woods Consulting
Anne Evens, Director, Center for Neighborhood Technology Energy
Val Jensen, VP, Marketing and Environmental Programs, ComEd.
Sadhu Johnston, Chief Environmental Officer for the City of Chicago
Wally Tyner, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

Transportation

Ann Drake, CEO, DSC Logistics
Michael McLaughlin, Deputy Chief of Staff for Federal Affairs, Chicago Transit Authority
Maureen McAvey, Executive VP, Infrastructure Initiatives, Urban Land Institute
Ilana Preuss, Director of Campaign Partnerships, T 4 America
Rob Puentes, Fellow, Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institution
Petra Todorovich, Director, America 2050

12:30 – 1:50 pm: Luncheon Program: MPOs in the Great Lakes Megaregion

Randy Blankenhorn, Executive Director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Steve Ernst, Study Director, Rockford Area Transportation Study
Chester Jourdan, Executive Director, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Terry Kohlbus, Executive Director, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
John Swanson, Executive Director, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
David Warm, Executive Director, Mid-America Regional Council
Robin Snyderman, VP of Housing & Community Development, Metropolitan Planning Council

2:00 – 2:50 pm: Report out from the Roundtables

MarySue Barrett, Al Appleton, Catherine Morris, Petra Todorovich

2:50 – 3:00 pm: Closing Remarks

MarySue Barrett and Robert Yaro

After the conference, guests enjoyed a screening of *Liquid Assets*, a documentary that explores the history, engineering, and political and economic challenges of the nation's water infrastructure and engages communities in local discussion about drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater issues. Stephanie Ayanian, the film's producer and director, gave a special presentation about the making of the film and a final word on the need for infrastructure improvements during a reception held immediately after the screening.

The screening was supported by:



ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE



As 2008 came to a close, it was increasingly clear that the infrastructure systems this nation relies on were deteriorating, underperforming, and inadequate for sustainable population and economic growth in the future. Moreover, neither the means of prioritizing new investments, nor of funding maintenance and operations for existing ones, were necessarily in line with the goals of reduced congestion, cleaner water, renewable energy, climate change mitigation, higher quality of life, government accountability, and return on public investment.

The challenges are many – crumbling pipes, clogged highways, an electric grid pushed to the brink of collapse time and time again – and vary from one region to the next. The Great Lakes megaregion is trying to grow its economy in the face of a shrinking manufacturing sector, to restore the ecological integrity of the Great Lakes, and to revitalize its many existing assets, from transportation hubs to research centers, and to capture the value of potential ones, from untapped wind to underutilized ports. However, questions abound and no plan to reinvest in the infrastructure of the Great Lakes megaregion has been developed.

In the words of Bob Yaro, president of the Regional Plan Association, “The spirit of overcoming adversity lives here, in the Midwest, more than any other place in the country. I think we can rise to occasion, but it is up to us to shape that vision and that plan. The strategies for coordinated regional development most come from business, civic, and government leadership. They must be locally based, strongly supported, and outcome driven in order to be effective.”

On November 17th, 2008, more than 250 infrastructure experts gathered in Chicago for “Rebuilding and Renewing America: Infrastructure Choices in the Great Lakes Megaregion” in order to begin to answer those questions and to develop that plan. Co-hosted by Chicago’s Metropolitan Planning Council and New York’s Regional Plan Association, and part of the America 2050 initiative, the goal of the forum was to brainstorm a national infrastructure overhaul, with a focus on Great Lakes megaregional investment priorities in energy, transportation, and water.

This document provides a summary of the conference. For a complete audio recording, go to www.metroplanning.org and search for “Rebuilding and Renewing America”.

The America 2050 effort is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, Surdna Foundation, and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Local sponsors of the conference and the evening film screening include the American Society of Civil Engineers, Builders Association, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd., CN, Illinois American Water, Illinois Railroad Association, and NIPSCO.

The Metropolitan Planning Council and Regional Plan Association are extremely grateful to our funders and sponsors.


Metropolitan Planning Council

