



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Friday, May 27, 2005

Contact: Jim LaBelle, Deputy Director
312-332-6178 phone

GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES LEGISLATION CREATING REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD

Integrates transportation and land-use planning in Chicago region

The Illinois General Assembly has passed legislation creating a new Regional Planning Board to address the development and transportation challenges of Northeastern Illinois.

By a vote of 57 to 0, the Senate sent House Bill 3121 to the Governor on Friday, May 27, 2005.

The legislation would create a new Board and merge the functions of the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), a move long sought by the region's business community. The new Board would be responsible for preparing a plan for the region at least every five years, identifying regional priorities, and preparing a financial plan to meet the region's priority needs.

Currently, CATS handles transportation planning and NIPC is responsible for land-use planning for the region. The separation of these activities has inhibited the comprehensive, long term planning required to reverse the Chicago area's growing congestion problems. Studies show that truck, rail, and automobile congestion is costing the region billions of dollars and is getting worse.

Chicago Metropolis 2020, an arm of The Commercial Club of Chicago, worked closely with the region's public officials to craft the measure. Government organizations participating in the negotiations included the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Metro Counties, and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

"We applaud the cooperation of all the parties involved in this important step toward truly integrated planning for the Chicago area," said George A. Ranney, Jr., President and CEO of Chicago Metropolis 2020. "Sound planning and a rational development of our infrastructure are essential for the region's economic future. This bill is a key step in the right direction."

-more-

Page Two
May 27, 2005

If signed into law, the new 15-person Regional Planning Board would be created immediately. The Board would be granted a 36-month transition period to work through issues of funding and implementation strategy. It would be required to submit recommendations to the General Assembly by September 2006.

Chief sponsors in the House were Reps. Suzanne "Suzie" Bassi (R-Palatine), Julie Hamos (D-Evanston), Sidney Mathias (R-Buffalo Grove), David E. Miller (D-Dolton), and Michael Tryon (R-Crystal Lake). Senate sponsors were Sens. Debbie Halvorson (D-Crete), Dave Sullivan (R-Park Ridge), Susan Garrett (D-Lake Forest), and Terry Link (D-Vernon Hills).

About Chicago Metropolis 2020

Chicago Metropolis 2020 is a nonprofit civic organization created in 1999 by The Commercial Club of Chicago to promote long-term planning, better regional cooperation, and smart investment in the Chicago region and its people.

On the Web: <http://www.chicagometropolis2020.org>

###