

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CMAP Board

**From:** The Century Plan project team

**Date:** April 29, 2026

**Subject:** The Century Plan update

**Action Requested:** Information

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CMAP continues to make progress in developing our next regional plan — The Century Plan — a long-term vision for a better, stronger future for northeastern Illinois.

Recent discussions with the CMAP Board make clear that northeastern Illinois is entering the future from a position of strength. The region benefits from a diversified economy, extensive infrastructure, and natural assets that support long-term prosperity. Yet current trends also signal emerging challenges that could limit our ability to fully realize that potential. One critical factor consistently rising to the forefront is the need for a resilient, modernized electric grid.

A clean, reliable grid is foundational infrastructure that touches nearly every aspect of regional success. It underpins economic development by making the region more competitive for businesses and high-quality jobs. It shapes the future of housing by influencing where and how communities can grow. It enables modern transportation systems, supports climate resilience, and facilitates the transition to cleaner energy, a priority reflected in CMAP's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.

The importance of this infrastructure has been underscored repeatedly in recent Board conversations, as well as through The Century Plan engagement process with Councils of Government and the Catalyst Series policy forums. Across all these settings, one common theme has emerged: the region's ability to thrive depends on a grid prepared to meet future demand and future opportunities.

To deepen this understanding, the CMAP Board will hear from an expert panel on the future of grid modernization. **Stacey Paradis**, Commissioner of the Illinois Commerce Commission; **Mark Pruitt**, Principal of The Power Bureau and adjunct professor in Northwestern University's Master of Science in Energy and Sustainability program; **Desislava Dikova**, Policy and Grant Manager at Pure Lithium; and a representative from ComEd will share perspectives on current modernization efforts, how different stakeholders are approaching long-range grid planning, and where regional collaboration can accelerate progress toward a more resilient and prosperous future.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Information