



**CHICAGOLAND**  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**2010 Legislative Agenda**

**BUSINESS CLIMATE**

**1. Workers' Compensation Reform**

The Chamber supports ongoing efforts to reduce the high cost of Workers' Compensation insurance, including:

- Monitor the implementation of the 2005 Workers Compensation law.
- Review need for additional legislative and regulatory changes and reform, particularly modifications to the medical fee schedule and utilization review process.
- Support instituting effective data collection regarding workers compensation costs on statewide basis.
- Support a policy of continuous improvement of the state workers compensation program and collaborate with other groups toward this goal.

The Chamber strongly supports the agreed-bill process and believes this open process is essential to developing a system that addresses the concerns of employers, medical providers, insurers and workers.

**2. Structural Work Act**

The Chamber strongly opposes the reinstatement of the Structural Work Act. The Act needlessly increases construction and insurance costs, limits economic development and prevents job-creation.

**3. Unemployment Insurance Reform**

The Chamber will oppose any changes to the unemployment insurance system outside of the agreed-bill process. The Chamber supports collaboration with the joint employer's groups to monitor and improve the Unemployment Insurance system.

**4. Health Care**

The Chamber continues to research ways to lower healthcare costs for our members. The Chamber is working with the State of Illinois to investigate alternative health insurance solutions for small businesses across the region and throughout the state. Our strategy focuses on empowering small businesses with information about health, wellness, and the cost of care, so that they can make informed decisions, manage their internal costs, and keep annual trends to predictable levels. The Chamber opposes any effort to expand health care coverage without legislative approval.

**5. Class Action Lawsuit Reform**

The number of class action suits has increased dramatically in recent years. The Chamber supports legislation to address abuse of class action in Illinois including: limiting Illinois class action filings to Illinois residents; limiting class actions filings to appropriate jurisdictions; and establishing reasonable procedural protections for class members.

**6. "Sunshine" in Litigation**

The Chamber supports efforts to pursue settlements with appropriate protective orders.

## **7. Pension Funding**

Pension funding requirements, employee benefit and contribution structures, their administration and their effect on Illinois fiscal policy all affect the state's taxpayers and business community. The Chamber supports a moratorium on adding new benefits or extending expiring pension benefit programs until long-range financial plans for the pension systems can be adopted that address funding shortfalls, maximize returns on investments, limit management costs and eliminate unfunded benefits.

## **8. Venue Reform**

The Chamber supports legislation to prevent "venue shopping" to deter plaintiffs from filing lawsuits in counties with a reputation for large jury awards and with no meaningful connection to the basis for the lawsuit.

## **9. Immigration Reform**

The Chamber will continue to work with the U. S. Chamber to build support for federal immigration reform to:

- Continue to push for comprehensive immigration reform that: increases security; has an earned pathway to legalization for undocumented workers already contributing to our economy, provided that they are law-abiding and prepared to embrace the obligations and values of our society; creates a carefully monitored guest or essential worker program to fill the growing gaps in America's workforce recognizing that, in some cases, permanent immigrants will be needed to fill these gaps; and refrains from unduly burdening employers with worker verification systems that are underfunded or unworkable.
- Urge Congress and the administration to address delays, backlogs, and disruptions in our immigration and border management systems that impede the movement of legitimate cargo and travelers across U.S. borders.
- Ensure the continuity and expansion of H-1B, L-1, and EB visas for professionals and highly valued workers.
- Lobby for reform to enable seasonal and small businesses to continue to use the H-2B temporary visa.

## **10. Public/Private Partnerships**

The Chamber opposes legislation and regulation that restricts the ability to do business with the government.

## **11. Employee Free Choice Act**

The Chicagoland Chamber supports efforts of the U.S. Chamber to defeat the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) and related labor-relations legislation, which would have a devastating impact on businesses. EFCA and related legislation would radically transform the process by which a union organizes employees and make it much easier for a union to be established in a workplace. It would virtually eliminate the right to secret ballot elections, undermining long-standing principles of workplace fairness and democracy.

EFCA would also impose binding interest arbitration on first-contract negotiations after 120 days, giving government-appointed arbitrators the authority to dictate union contracts. This would dramatically expand government's reach into the private sector, and let arbitrators mandate wages, benefits, and work rules on private sector employers. Workers would be denied an opportunity to ratify their contracts as well — losing their vote, and their ability to hold union bosses accountable for the promises they made to convince workers to join a union.

Alternative proposals could possibly include "snap" elections, institute mail-in balloting, allow union organizers access to employees at their workplace and impose last-best-offer arbitration. These ideas would disallow employer's adequate time to state their case — violating their First Amendment rights; disenfranchise both employees and employers, and subject employees and employers to harassment at home and at work. They should be rejected.

## **INNOVATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce supports:

- 1.** The continued promotion and expansion of the hospitality and gaming industries to provide sustained economic development and increased employment for Chicagoland. Specifically, the Chamber supports Yes! Chicago - a collaborative effort among Chicago's business, labor and civic leaders to leverage the economic benefits of a, land-based gaming development in downtown Chicago as part of a comprehensive, long-term economic expansion plan.
- 2.** Efforts to transform Chicagoland and all of Illinois into global centers of innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity through the expansion of the InnovateNow Initiative, a joint initiative of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, World Business Chicago, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.
- 3.** The appointment of an Illinois Innovation Czar to promote, foster, and coordinate the State's innovation initiatives and assets.
- 4.** The appointment of an United States Innovation Czar, reporting to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, to promote, foster, and coordinate the country's innovation initiatives and assets and assist state and local innovation czars/officers fulfill their mission.
- 5.** Providing appropriate tax incentives for small and medium size enterprises and their investors across a diverse range of industry sectors.
- 6.** Increased public funding for public universities' tech transfer departments, the Chicagoland Entrepreneurial Center and other entrepreneurial support centers.
- 7.** Providing incentives that foster, enhance and reward collaboration and public-private networks among organizations and governmental entities and encourage unified community action via resources and organizations that encourage collaboration, like the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce.
- 8.** Efforts to improve venture capital policies that stimulate economic growth by attracting, assisting and retaining high-growth businesses. Creation of the second State of Illinois' Technology Development Account (TDA) with the potential for \$100-\$150 million in new venture capital and investments. Additionally, encourage state pension funds to establish policies for local private equity investments and economically targeted investments.
- 9.** Coordinated, sustainable policies and programs for technology-based economic development to boost Illinois' competitiveness by (1) creating a \$50 million angel tax credit, (2) starting a \$5 million proof of concept fund to assist technology companies in advancing research into a commercial product, and (3) a \$10 million seed capital fund to make early stage investments in promising, entrepreneurial advanced technology companies.
- 10.** Expanding the innovation talent pool by developing a new breed of innovation talent in Illinois that can start new businesses and drive innovation in existing businesses in Illinois. The Chamber also supports initiatives designed to attract and retain the most innovative and entrepreneurial workforce talent in the world.
- 11.** Efforts to enhance entrepreneurial activity and eliminate barriers for startups and the ongoing development and growth of small and medium enterprises.

- 12.** Eliminating or streamlining onerous - and often duplicative - regulatory permitting and fee requirements, as well as reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, which impede economic development and discourage business growth. The Chamber also supports working with local governments to improve business permitting, fee assessment, collection systems, and increase regulatory efficiencies that allow businesses to better manage their licensing, permitting and regulatory obligations and responsibilities.
- 13.** Updating the Illinois telecommunication law in order to attract jobs and build the infrastructure needed to compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Because Illinois' law is out-of-date, we are losing jobs and investments to neighboring states. By modernizing its law now, Illinois can seize the opportunity to attract jobs and investment in advanced telecommunications services.

The chamber supports a rewrite of the telecommunications law that creates a level playing field among all providers and modernizes the rules to recognize the competitive nature of the wire line, wireless, broadband and entertainment marketplace.

A progressive telecommunications environment will encourage infrastructure improvements and enable businesses to operate more efficiently and effectively in a global economy. Vigorous competition will provide benefits to consumers in the form of competitive prices, expanded choices, and better service.

## **EDUCATION & WORKFORCE**

Education and workforce development systems that produce a qualified workforce are essential to the health of the regional economy and prosperity of communities.

### **1. High Student Expectations, Standards & Accountability**

The Chamber opposes legislation that delays or diminishes:

- Implementation of the 2005 approved high school graduation requirements;
- Continuation of the statewide annual assessment system aligned to rigorous academic and technology standards.
- A P-20 integrated data system and collaboration among all those serving students in the system.

The Chamber supports legislation that:

- Removes the caps on the number of charter schools statewide and number of campuses;
- Reduces barriers to college and career success and need for remedial education.

### **2. Highly Qualified & Effective Teachers, Principals, Administrators & Post-secondary Educators**

The Chamber supports legislation that:

- Addresses the shortages of teachers in critical academic and career instructional areas;
- Evaluates, enhances and rewards education personnel in relation to performance and student outcomes;
- Preserves and geographically extends the Chicago Public Schools' reforms of 1995 while allowing a voice for all union members through a Labor-Management Council.

### **3. Connecting Schools with Families & Communities**

The Chamber supports initiatives that build local capacity for:

- Community schools, which prepare children for success in school and better citizenry by linking students, parents, families, and community members to resources, programs, and services designed to meet their needs, using the school as a "hub" for activities, and maximizing existing investments in community-based resources;
- Enhancement of parent engagement, community involvement, cultural diversity and violence prevention in all students' learning and development environments;
- Expanding early childhood education that includes diagnostic assessments.

### **4. Highly Skilled Workforce & Engaged Citizenry**

The Chamber supports legislation that:

- Strengthens the articulation and accessibility between our education systems and workforce demands, as well as particular legislation that strengthens the links between secondary and post-secondary institutions and employers through community-based learning programs, workforce development programs, and community/institutions school partnerships that foster employment-related skills building;
- Promotes access to high quality, life-long career development for the region's present and future jobs with minimal administrative expense;
- Encourages career and technical education leading to internationally and nationally industry-recognized credentials;
- Maximizes voluntary employer best practices and minimizes mandates.

### **5. Affordable Housing**

The Chamber supports continued growth in affordable and accessible housing, with particular concern for attainable housing near major job/industry concentrations. The Chamber encourages policies that reduce the regulatory burden on housing development, rehabilitation and remodeling. Policies should ensure and protect local community affordable housing over land use, growth and planning and provide maximum flexibility to allow developers and local government to work together to meet community needs.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. Green Jobs**

The Chamber supports the inclusion of alternative energy, energy efficient and other infrastructure investments as part of any economic stimulus package developed by the government, in which programs should focus on providing resources for job creation and retention rather than towards bureaucratic programs.

In addition, the Chamber supports significant green investments to Illinois businesses to improve competitiveness among the state and region.

### **2. Air Quality**

The Chamber supports voluntary programs such as Clean Air Counts and the Partners for Clean Air as methods for reducing emissions. In addition, the Chamber supports research and development of clean energy technology and infrastructure that improves air quality, spurs investment in Illinois, and enhances reliability of the electricity system.

### **3. Aquatic Invasive Species**

Invasive species continue to enter the State, particularly, Lake Michigan and the Chicago River, with serious implications for the safety and economic viability of State waters. The Chamber supports funding and development of effective state and local barriers and programs designed to stop access of invasive species to the State's waters and the Great Lakes that threaten recreational value of water resources, increase infrastructure costs, and threaten public health and safety. As a note: the Chamber opposes federal legislation that would preempt the states from adopting and advancing laws/policies to address the threat of invasive species themselves.

### **4. Wetlands**

It is anticipated that legislation promoted by Illinois environmental organizations to regulate isolated wetlands under Illinois law will be introduced in the General Assembly. The Chamber will monitor and analyze any legislation that regulates isolated wetlands under Illinois law, and present testimony to protect the interests of Chicago regional businesses regarding legislative proposals. The Chamber will monitor and analyze any such legislation to ensure a long-view balance is maintained between environmental protection and economic interests.

### **5. Water**

The Chamber supports funding of the State's River's Edge Initiative to spur environmental investment through a capital bill.

The Chamber will monitor Illinois EPA proposed changes to Chicago area water quality standards, which will affect the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, to ensure that a balance of environmental and economic interests are met.

The Chamber supports efforts to incorporate environmental construction, including green infrastructure (green rooftops, permeable pavement), and Chicago's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) initiatives to promote construction of water efficient infrastructure.

Permit Fees: Legislation instituting fees for state water permits was enacted in 2003. The Chamber will continue to monitor and analyze the fees to determine if they are tied to reasonable costs incurred in operating those state and local programs to which they are dedicated.

## **6. Energy Sources and Issues**

The State of Illinois has adopted legislation encouraging energy conservation. The Chamber will continue to monitor and participate in the development of such legislation pursuant to the following points:

- The Chamber supports policies and programs that spur investment in energy reliability and economic development opportunities regarding infrastructure and new technology.
- The Chamber continues to support significant energy legislation, such as a state wide energy code and renewable energy and energy efficient portfolio standards.
- The Chamber continues to support the inclusion of renewable energy sources in the state's power supply where demand is supported by the market, and where investment in renewable energy will create jobs, support economic development, and spur competitive benefits to Illinois.
- The Chamber supports research and development of clean coal technology that promotes use of Illinois coal, adds to the reliability of the electricity system and controls emissions from power plants. The Chamber also supports use of ethanol, biodiesel, and other renewable/cleaner fuel technologies that possess the ability to significantly reduce emissions and increase efficiency. Any renewable policy must however, balance economic and cost impacts with environmental objectives.
- The Chamber opposes regulations that will negatively impact reliability of the electricity generation and delivery system in Chicago and Illinois. Any disruption of energy reliability has public health, safety and economic implications for Chicago and Illinois. These implications must be considered when assessing new regulations for power generation facilities.

## **7. Climate Change**

The Chamber supports the development of a nationwide-strategy, for greenhouse gases that is consistent with market-based efforts, such as that of the Chicago Climate Exchange, and will provide companies with effective baseline protection. The Chamber will monitor and participate in any planning initiative and subsequent legislation and regulatory proposals directed towards the reduction of greenhouse gases.

## **8. Conservation, Reuse and Recycling**

The Chamber also supports efforts aimed at environmental education, conservation and wise use of resources, and the promotion of reuse, reclamation, recycling and materials exchanges.

## **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

### **1. Coverage Expansion Issues**

Many uninsured individuals are unable to afford the standard policy required under state law. Insurance products that offer basic benefits are more affordable and allow individuals to purchase a health benefits package that better meets their needs.

- Establish an insurance product and provide regulatory flexibility to Division of Insurance to approve innovative products that are designed for uninsured populations.

### **2. Wellness Coverage**

Wellness equals long-term management of health care costs. Public pay and private health plans must encourage employee wellness. Resources and strategies to support a “wellness culture” must be utilized on a consistent basis. Consumers need to be empowered to take personal responsibility for the health care services they want and need.

- Allow healthcare benefit plans provide financial incentives for wellness within the guidelines recently enacted by the federal government.

### **3. Healthcare Reform**

Health reform is critical to the business community – businesses voluntarily pay over \$500 billion every year for employees’ health insurance, and cannot afford the cost increases. We support reforming the health system with a simple three-pronged approach:

#### **I. Get costs under control. Use an all-of-the-above strategy.**

- Medical liability reform
- FDA pathway for biosimilars
- Health information technology
- Comparative effectiveness research
- Wellness and prevention
- Coordination of care and medical homes
- Pay-for-Performance reform
- Combating fraud and abuse
- Living wills and end-of-life issues
- Reinsurance
- Consumer-driven health options
- Small business pooling
- Administrative simplification
- Long-term care reform
- Tax parity: Let individuals/small businesses deduct the full cost of insurance expenses

Without spending a trillion dollars or raising taxes, we could implement these and many other reforms that would help us start to bend the cost curve.

## **II. Reform the insurance system.**

- Eliminating the use of pre-existing conditions or health status
- Guaranteeing that any individual or entity will be issued a policy
- Guaranteeing that policies will not be revoked
- Place reasonable limits on rating differences
- Subsidies for those who cannot afford coverage
- An individual obligation to obtain coverage

For negligible costs to the taxpayers, we could make the insurance system work. Insurance companies support it. An individual obligation is necessary to the equation, and would raise billions for the government that could be spent toward subsidies for the poor. New rating rules would make the system fair for small business and the self-employed.

## **III. Create a vibrant market place.**

- Create a national all-inclusive connector/exchange that removes fragmentation
- Should allow individuals and businesses from anywhere in the country to enroll
- Should facilitate improved pooling mechanisms, choice, and competition

These three simple steps, at low cost to taxpayers, could make the insurance system work for everyone (thereby increasing access for the uninsured), improve our health care delivery system, and make serious progress toward controlling costs. They have support from a vast array of stakeholders. We do not need a \$1-2 trillion dollar possible government takeover of health care – we need simple, pragmatic reforms.

## **TAXATION**

### **1. Elementary & Secondary Public Education Funding Reform**

The Chamber believes that property taxes are too heavily relied upon to fund essential government services, such as public education. The Chamber, supports a structural change that: freezes the dollar level of property tax revenues for school districts; relies on alternative state sources of revenue to fund future increases in state funding for education; and achieves efficiencies in delivery of educational services and brings spending into line with available revenue.

We will work with our business alliance partners to develop acceptable alternatives to proposed “tax swap” plans.

### **2. Modification of the Cook County Property Classification System**

The Chamber supports modification of Cook County’s property tax classification provisions to reduce commercial and industrial tax assessment levels that are significantly higher than in other counties comprising Chicagoland and other general reforms that improve the fairness of the system to all taxpayers.

### **3. Taxpayers' Rights of Appeal of Property Tax Assessments**

Cook County taxpayers deserve parity with other taxpayers in Illinois. The Chamber supports the rights of all classes of Cook County property taxpayers to seek relief before the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board. The Chamber supports the rights of all taxpayers to equitable property tax refunds awarded in successful appeals and opposes unreasonable intervention in the process by taxing districts.

### **4. Cook County Assessment Cap**

The Chamber supports the phase-out and expiration of the existing 7% property tax assessment cap legislation.

### **5. City, County and State Revenues**

The Chamber will actively oppose any proposed new city, county and state taxes and fees when we believe that sound fiscal management and cost-cutting measures have not been fully achieved.

### **6. Cook County Taxpayers’ Bill of Rights**

The Chamber supports a Cook County ordinance creating a Taxpayers' Bill of Rights that mirrors those passed by the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago.

### **7. Repeal of Chicago’s Head and Lease Taxes**

The Chamber supports efforts to eliminate Chicago’s Employer Expense (Head) Tax and the Transaction (Lease) Tax. The Head Tax is a \$4 per employee per month tax for employers with 50 or more employees.

### **8. Sales and Use Tax Simplification**

Chamber generally supports national efforts to streamline and simplify the state sales and use tax collection and bring about uniformity among the states, while reserving the right to oppose certain provisions that may be detrimental to Chamber members. In addition, a strong and representative governance system and a physical presence test for business activity taxes are advocated as part of the streamlined project.

The Chamber also supports any administrative reforms in the state sales and use tax refunds procedure.

### **9. Maintenance of Existing Business Tax Structure**

The Chamber supports the continuance or re-enactment of tax credits, exemptions and other provisions adopted to enhance the business climate and to encourage economic development and job creation.

## **10. Fee Accountability**

The Chamber supports changes in the imposition of statewide fees, including criteria for establishing or increasing fees, analyses of costs and benefits, and regular review of fee-supported programs and their administration.

## **11. Reliable Research**

The Chamber encourages and may support our business alliance partners to produce credible research on state and local tax trends and the effects of tax policies adopted by state and local governments. In all cases, we reserve the right to review and subsequently reject or endorse the studies and findings as presented.

## **12. Tax Litigation Responsibility**

In tax disputes concerning Chicago Tax Ordinances, the Department of Revenue may take positions clearly inconsistent with such tax ordinances, Department regulations and/or the Illinois and U.S. Constitutions. The taking and pursuing of clearly unreasonable and non-justifiable tax positions by the Department of Revenue results in unnecessary administrative, compliance and litigation costs for Taxpayers.

The Chamber supports an Ordinance, similar to state legislation, that allows a taxpayer or tax collector to recover from the Department of Revenue costs and fees (including reasonable attorney and accountant fees) incurred from an audit, protest and/or litigation as a result of the Department's position if the taxpayer or tax collector prevails in an administrative hearing or court appeal.

## **13. Repeal 10/25 Percent Classification Ordinance**

The Chamber supports rescinding the recently passed amendment to the Cook County Real Property Assessment Classification Ordinance, which reduced the number of property classes to two – 10% for residential and 25% for commercial and industrial property. We believe that establishing a 25% level for commercial property will result in a tax increase for businesses and commercial taxpayers. We support reducing the ordinance level of assessment to the actual or de facto level of assessment.

## **TECHNOLOGY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

### **1. Vibrant Information Technology Industry**

The Chamber supports creating incentives to encourage and support entrepreneurial activity in Illinois' information technology sector. Furthermore, the Chamber supports initiatives focused on the attraction and retention of information technology businesses.

### **2. Green Technology and Sustainable Businesses**

The Chamber and Entrepreneurial Center support incentives to further the growth of green technology companies in Illinois. Additionally, the Chamber supports the adoption of sustainable businesses practices in the public and private sector.

### **3. Private Equity Investment**

The Chamber supports creating incentives to encourage private venture capital and angel investment in Illinois companies. Additional investment in Illinois companies will increase the number of jobs for Illinois residents.

### **4. Partnership with the Illinois Venture Capital Association**

The Chamber and the Entrepreneurial Center encourage an ongoing relationship with the Illinois Venture Capital Association and its agenda as a means to achieve legislative goals, encourage private equity investors to remain in Illinois, and support Illinois-based companies.

### **5. Publicly-Funded Development Assistance**

The Chamber supports financial instruments, such as Industrial Revenue Bonds, that encourage business development. Funding caps and definitions of "industry" should be updated to better support emerging companies and new technologies.

### **6. Partnership with the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition**

The Chamber and the Entrepreneurial Center will encourage and support the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition in its mission of increasing resources for research and development initiatives in Illinois-based institutions and businesses.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **1. Federal Transportation Funding and Matching Funds**

Closely monitor inclusion and prioritization of regional and state projects in the next implementation of SAFETEA-LU, the federal surface transportation-funding bill, and strenuously advocate for Federal funding of the projects referenced below and maintain involvement in the search for state and local matching funds.

### **2. State Capital Expenditure Plan**

Advocate for a revised comprehensive state capital plan with critical business enabling regional and state transportation projects as the key components to trigger growth. A small Capitol Bill was passed in 2009 that was too small with dubious funding sources. Champion casino/gaming revenue as a fundamental funding source for these new capital projects.

### **3. Establishing Public-Private Partnerships (PPP's) as Economic Development Tool**

The Chamber will work toward passage of public-private partnership enabling legislation and promoting PPP's as the visionary, pro-active approach to identify, initiate and execute local and state transportation projects for economic development. Emphasis will also shift to specific projects to promote growth. Examples of Pursuits:

- Enacting the proposed PPP enabling legislation on state level together with partners in Business Leaders for Transportation
- Seek Western Highway Access to O'Hare
- Embrace Chicago Vision Plan II projects critical to business growth
- Selectively explore and identify PPP's for state/regional projects to expedite implementation

### **4. Expansion/Renovation/Accessibility of O'Hare/Midway Airports**

Provide continuing and intensified business support to complete the O'Hare Airport Modernization Program and all other expansions, improve related surface and transit accessibility routes, additional flight capacity, technological advances in air traffic management and freight and travel time improvements to the region's other air facilities to position Chicago as a global gateway and "dual hub" (rail crossroads and aeropolis). Examples of Pursuits:

- Monitor status on O'Hare Expansion and prompting public officials to execute plan.
- Seek as a priority, Western Access to O'Hare, the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway extensions and the O'Hare Bypass (between I-294 & I-90).
- Aggressively press on Federal/FAA level for technological advances in Air Traffic Management System in lieu of congestive pricing during high demand periods.
- Identify issues/projects for airports from the newly constituted Air Cargo Supply Chain Committee and build a critical mass of industry leadership for continued regional growth.

## **5. Railroad associated Economic Growth**

Embark upon new business initiatives to leverage and build on Chicago's rail legacy through retention, expansion and development of industrial and distribution corridors within the greater metropolitan area.

Examples of Pursuits:

- Lead and Collaborate on Chicago Railroad Economic Opportunities Strategy
  - Conceive Public/Private Policy Agenda to foster Rail Projects
  - Target appropriate areas in Metropolitan Chicago for Rail Oriented Development
  - Meet with Industrial Brokers to pursue and plan the above
- Identify and promote specific Rail associated projects that enable economic development
- Explore organization of a Railroad Industry Committee to address the industry challenges and form a critical mass of rail leadership
- Support implementation of Midwest High Speed Rail Network (and Investment Act) with Chicago as its hub. State and local efforts through alliances with other associations should focus upon securing funding to cost effectively connect Chicago to other Midwest cities. The Chamber further calls for a substantial portion of operating costs of such a network to be funded through fares and that management of such a network be open to competition.
- Reevaluate cost/benefits of CREATE package of projects for economic development potential and support projects as indicated by the analysis for the next SAFETEA-LU funding bill.

## **6. Northeastern Illinois Mass Transit**

The Chamber supports the efforts of the Regional Transportation Authority to develop and implement a comprehensive regional transportation plan and explore long term funding solutions for the RTA transit agencies. The Chamber will participate in the RTA's planning process and engage efforts to identify viable funding sources linked to growth and development in the region. Formulating a strategy to efficiently replace aging transit infrastructure, increase ridership and present transit as a development tool for growth is essential to the region's economic well being. Use of high profile private sector leaders will be sought for advocacy in this regard.

## **7. Regional Planning Board**

The Chamber will monitor the work of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and will stress to the CMAP Board the importance of ongoing business input in its broad mission to coordinate regional land-use and transportation planning and in its specific duties, The Chamber supports the greater efficiency of regional planning resources that is expected from CMAP, but will further be aggressive in emphasizing business and market based solutions.