

Fairmont community holds public meeting about long-term plans

 By **Mary Owen** TribLocal reporter
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More park space, community gardens and new housing are just a few elements of proposed long-term plans for the Fairmont neighborhood that will be presented to the public next week.

On Monday, the public can give input on the plans, which were developed after eight months of meetings with stakeholders in the unincorporated Will County community. The meeting will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday at Shiloh Baptist Church, 18101 Oak Ave., Lockport.

The neighborhood, located between Joliet and Lockport, has a long history where employees of the local mills and factories settled for about 100 years. Many families have been there for generations, but the area has lacked a long-term plan, said Trevor Dick, a senior planner with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

CMAP is working with the Will County Land Use Department to develop a long-term plan. The Fairmont community project is one of several projects that CMAP has been able to provide planning help with thanks to a federal grant that the organization received last year.

The Fairmont community is roughly bordered by Illinois Route 171, Dellwood Park, Briggs Road and Rosalind Street. There are roughly 2,100 people in the approximately 2.5-square-mile area, Dick said. About 40 percent of the primarily residential area is vacant, he said, and part of the plans would be to bring in in-fill residential development.

“That will help develop a rhythm on the street and improve safety and strengthen that sense of community,” Dick said. “Having a vacant home every third home is not very good.”

Other parts of the plan include ideas for trailways, public space, transportation and community gardens. Dick said that the community especially wanted community gardens, which he said would be a positive thing for the area. He said the community

gardens have also been looked at as a way to generate economic development, possibly in the form of a farmers market.

The Will County Board is expected to review and vote on the plans in April.

For more information about the project, visit www.cmap.illinois.gov/fairmont.