



6°F  
Mostly Sunny

Good Morning  
Thursday, February 3, 2011

Search

Site  All Papers  YAHOO

Home News Sports Business Opinions Lifestyles Columnists Entertainment

Metro Nation World Blagojevich City Hall Crime Data Education Lottery Obama Politics T



**Shipping uncomplicated**

**GET FREE SHIPPING KIT >>**

\*For mailable items up to 70 lbs. Visit usps.com\* for details.  
©2010 USPS®. All Rights Reserved.

Pric

## China shows way to economic growth

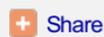
Esther J. cepeda eejaycee@600words.com Feb 1, 2011 2:39AM



Print



E-Mail



Share



Like

On the last day that Chinese President Hu Jintao was in Chicago making nice with mayor Daley — after reassuring President Obama that China will work to be an economic partner, rather than an adversary, to the United States — Tang Dengjie, the vice mayor of Shanghai, was at the World Business Chicago-sponsored U.S.-China Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum revealing the secret behind his city's world-renowned success.

"We planned Shanghai's development," Tang explained, during a panel session on the future of U.S.-China relations. "Everything from how much tourism we wanted to attract, to how many containers our ports would be able to handle, to what kind of education we needed to achieve our priority goals."

Indeed, it was in the early 1980s that Shanghai invested heavily in developing and executing a long-term strategic regional plan that in 30 years transformed it from an already prosperous city into a \$1.5 trillion economy that boasts the world's busiest container port and whose tests scores on math, reading and science are the envy of the world.

The Chicago region can become that same kind of success story. And we have all the key components: an already robust economy with a gross regional product of more than \$480 billion and a plan already under way to grow the region's economy through smart, coordinated development.

To refresh your memory, "GOTO 2040" is the first strategic regional plan Chicago has had since Daniel Burnham's in 1909. It was formulated under the direction of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning with the input of a diverse group of government agencies, social service organizations, planning and business experts who designed it to ensure the entire region grows smartly.

The plan calls for Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties — and their 1,266 independent units of government — to share in the responsibility and benefits of synchronizing efforts in transportation, the environment, economic development, housing, education, human services and other factors that make or break our region's quality of life.

Last week, CMAP and The Chicago Community Trust released the results of an independent review that took a brutally honest look at GOTO 2040 — which took three years to develop and was formally launched last October — in the context of our new and future economic environment.

Basically they vetted the viability of the plan and not only gave it a green light but rendered the verdict that if this region does not come together to execute GOTO 2040, we are in serious danger of falling behind other U.S. cities in economic progress and quality of life.

The report illuminates the challenges the city will continue to struggle against: crumbling transportation infrastructure, sluggish education and work force development, a business environment that doesn't live up to a global city's need to nurture entrepreneurs and spur innovation, and opaque and uncoordinated governance. But the report affirms that those challenges also present unique opportunities.

"We knew from the beginning that because GOTO 2040 is not yet through the implementation stage, the impacts are not easily quantifiable," said Robert Weissbourd, founder of RW Ventures,

LLC, who co-authored the report with Gretchen Kosarko. “But we do know that regions drive the national economy and compete in a global economy, and we know what makes those regions successful.”

“Right now Chicago is literally a world-class city, but it’s not trending positively,” Weissbourd told me. “In our dynamic economy cities are either forging ahead or falling behind, and Chicago is at a critical moment. This plan is a road map that sets up the right structures to forge ahead.”

Replicating Shanghai’s success in becoming a Chinese rock star is within Chicago’s reach. By 2040 our mayor could be in a faraway land bragging about how Chicago came to be a jewel in the United States’ crown. We already have the plan, we just have to keep workin’ it.