



Planners goal for suburbs in 2040: less traffic, less pollution

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On a typical January day in 2040, the average suburbanite could get home in record time because of congestion-free roads, step into a house warmed by solar power and then walk (not drive) to the grocery to pick up some locally produced food for dinner.

That's the hope of planners preparing the region's new blueprint for the seven-county area in the next 30 years.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Thursday released an early report outlining goals for the Go To 2040 comprehensive plan, expected this spring. It was developed in conjunction with the 2009 centennial of Daniel Burnham's "Plan of Chicago."

Priorities include better transportation and less congestion, walkable neighborhoods where amenities like stores, schools and parks are just a stroll away, conserving water and energy, improving schools, offering opportunities to buy local produce, better parks and green infrastructure.

"This is about how to live a different life - it's not the time to leave it to chance," CMAP Executive Director Randy Blankenhorn said.

CMAP is the regional planning organization for Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties.

Communities need to think holistically about issues such as transportation, planners said. For example, a new train station should incorporate other forms of transit and be near housing and shops.

"How do we makes communities think about land use that makes transit possible?" Blankenhorn asked. "How do we get serious about the suburb-to-suburb commute?"

Planners offered up goals for a better future. These included reducing water use in the region from 1.2 billion gallons per day to 1.15 billion gallons in 2040 through denser development. Another was to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions from 15.2 million metric tons a year to 9.5 million metric tons in 2040.

The report also assumed that with better public transit and strategies to reduce rush-hour traffic, drivers getting to jobs could have a better commute. The goal recommended was to go from 779,935 jobs accessible by auto in 45 minutes now to 899,035 in 2040.

For more information, visit goto2040.org.

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