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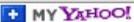
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## Group looking three decades down the road

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May 12, 2010

By SUSAN FRICK CARLMAN [scarlman@stmedianetwork.com](mailto:scarlman@stmedianetwork.com)

Randy Blankenhorn knows about best-laid plans. Sometimes they look good, but draw little real interest or action -- and thus go awry.

The executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning brought an update on the organization's long-term vision Tuesday to the DuPage County Board.

The group, which is combining the efforts of the defunct Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and the Chicago Area Transportation Study, has its sights set on the region three decades down the road. The 15 appointed board members bring representation divided to mirror the population concentration of the metropolitan area: five people each come from Chicago, suburban Cook County and the collar counties.

Work on the GO TO 2040 comprehensive plan is taking into consideration an array of factors. Blankenhorn said the final product is intended to go beyond other documents of its kind that "look nice on a coffee table" but aren't put to practical use.

Begun 3 1/2 years ago, the planning process is including land use concerns, transportation issues, public health and welfare, education and other topics that affect the population.

Blankenhorn said the planners are pondering such matters as the makings of good tax policy; the establishment of public transit, especially between suburbs, that is workable and user-friendly; training, education and other elements of a strong workforce; and robust infrastructure.

The discussions also are focusing on "compact development," Blankenhorn said, with an eye toward bringing back thriving downtowns and making the best use of other public spaces.

The plan is taking form under this timeline, which can be found at [www.goto2040.org](http://www.goto2040.org).

#### Step 1: Develop a regional vision

Approved in June 2008 by the board of CMAP, the vision describes how our region should look in 2040. The vision describes our desired future environment, economy, social systems, and governance structures, and it will guide the recommendations of the plan. From fall 2007 through spring 2008, residents helped to write the vision through surveys and public meetings.

#### Step 2: Understand existing conditions

CMAP is producing a series of Regional Snapshot reports on complex planning topics that need to be addressed in the GO TO 2040 plan, such as sustainability, jobs-housing balance, and infill redevelopment. These

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reports help gauge the region's current status on these issues, with recommendations about how they might be addressed in the plan.

**Step 3:** Evaluate potential planning strategies

Read and comment on dozens of interactive Strategy Papers, the result of rigorous research by CMAP and its partners to define how the Regional Vision should be implemented. Strategies are selected on the basis of whether they are effective at meeting specific regional goals.

**Step 4:** Develop a preferred scenario

On Jan. 21, CMAP released its preferred Regional Scenario -- one last precursor to the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan that will be available in draft form this spring, with implementation of the final plan to begin in October. The scenario is based on residents' feedback (including the extensive "Invent the Future" phase of public input that coincided with the 2009 Burnham Plan centennial celebration) and on quantitative analysis of how various policies will affect traffic, public health, the environment, the economy, and many other "regional indicators." The preferred scenario combines strategies that were evaluated in mid-2009 via several alternative future scenarios.

**Step 5:** Choose major capital projects

From fall 2009 to spring 2010, major capital projects are being considered for inclusion in the plan based on requirements of the Regional Vision and the preferred Regional Scenario. These will include large transportation projects such as rail extensions or highway expansions.

**Step 6:** Communicate final plan

The final step will be to communicate the plan's recommendations to CMAP's planning partners and the public in October, launching implementation of the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan. Metropolitan Chicago's future prosperity will depend on how successfully the region implements GO TO 2040 policies, strategies, and investments in land use, transportation, economic development, environment, housing and human services. The draft plan will be issued for public comment in spring 2010.

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