

Chicago takes a well-planned step into the future

October 19, 2010
 By [Kathleen Woodruff](#)

Last Wednesday before 800 people in downtown Chicago's Millennium Park, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) unveiled a vision for the Chicago region's future called "GO TO 2040," a document that lays out a roadmap for the future of the city of Chicago and the metro area toward a more sustainable future.

GO TO 2040 serves as the region's first comprehensive plan since Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago. CMAP spent five years compiling the plan with direct input from thousands of residents across the region, resulting in a compelling vision of the future and concrete steps needed to realize it.



Durbin at CMAP GO TO 2040 Originally uploaded by [Transportation for America](#) to Flickr.

Obviously, a large component of the document focuses on transportation planning, where they echo many things T4 America believes about the future of investing in transportation, like using limited funds more wisely, repairing existing transportation assets first, making all investments transparent and accountable, increasing access to different travel options, and making sure that housing and jobs are planned in concert. From the plan:

Our region's congestion is already among the nation's highest. Without new approaches, it will only increase due to the projected growth of our population, jobs, and traffic. Current revenues are not keeping up with maintenance and operation costs. Underinvestment and deferred maintenance have strained our transportation system, leaving us with aging infrastructure that is deteriorating in some places. As a region, we need to make better use of existing funds and identify new sources of revenue that will encourage more efficient travel patterns.

...Our seven-county region needs to take better care of existing roads and transit while strategically investing in the transportation system to reduce congestion, strengthen our communities, and foster a robust economy.

Making our system "world class" is not simply a matter of raising taxes to generate more revenue, nor is it about massive expansion of the system. Instead, the primary goal is to prioritize spending on maintenance and modernization, which will account for more than 97 percent of the proposed transportation funding over the next three decades.

Compared with some other long-range plans, CMAP set fairly modest and realistic goals, such as completing the Elgin-O'Hare Expressway and building a western bypass around O'Hare International Airport. The plan also says the CTA's Red Line should be extended south from 95th Street to 130th Street and a transportation center should be put in the West Loop to improve transfers among rapid transit, buses and all types of rail services. There's a clear call for a national freight plan to keep the economy moving without choking the region with traffic (echoing our Blueprint) and other recommendations include improving several Metra and transit service.

At first many critics of the plan felt it was too conservative "We know the (funding) resources just aren't there to do everything there is to do," said Randy Blankenhorn, Executive Director of CMAP, echoing the call for investing wisely and with more accountability. "We have to invest what we have more wisely and focus on improving the economy and the environment."

However the following day, the Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded a \$4.25 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant to CMAP to help implement GO TO 2040.

Senator Durbin, pictured, spoke at the event, saying in statement, "GO TO 2040 is a forward-thinking plan that will help Chicagoland maintain its position as one of the nation's foremost economic and cultural centers. Today's funding will give GO TO 2040 more resources to achieve their goal of helping the nearly 300 communities around Chicago create and implement a comprehensive plan for a sustainable future," he said.

As the Metropolitan Planning Council States: "GO TO 2040 is both a milestone and a breath of fresh air. Livable communities with ample open space, housing choices, and efficient use of water and

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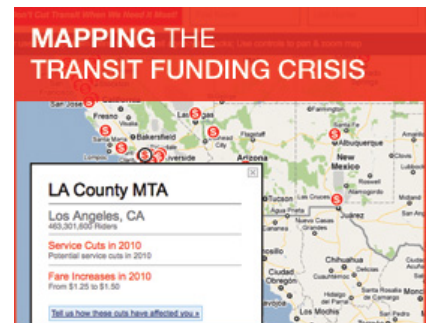
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Senator Durbin and Randy Blankenhorn were joined by Gary Hanning, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation, Sam Skinner, former USDOT Secretary, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Gerry Roper, President and CEO of Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, and John Canning Jr. Chairman, Executive Committee of Chicago Community Trust.

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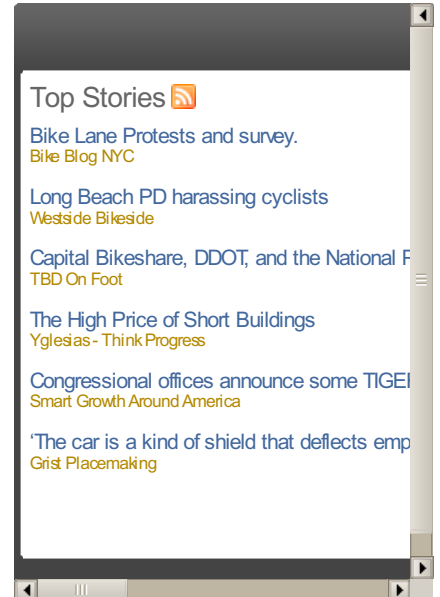
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Transportation for America
1707 L Street NW Ste. 250
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