



Comprehensive Plan for Chicago Region Put Into Motion

Posted by [Matt Baker](#) on October 13, 2010 · [Leave a Comment](#) [Print This Page](#)

Last year, Daniel Burnham was as celebrated here in Chicago as at anytime during his life in recognition of the *Plan of Chicago's* centennial. The 1909 *Plan* supplied Chicago with Navy Pier, Grant Park and Northerly Island, among other public amenities. Today, leaders from across metropolitan Chicago's seven counties voted unanimously to adopt a new plan, *GO TO 2040*, designed to guide development and investment decisions through mid-century and beyond.

The plan's implementation will now be led by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), which was formed for this purpose in 2005 at the urging of local elected officials and business leaders. "As a region, we cannot take our quality of life for granted," said Gerald Bennett, CMAP board chairman and mayor of Palos Hills. "Our 284 communities and seven counties must work together to address our big regional challenges, which require coordinated local solutions. How we respond will be key to preserving our status as one of the world's few global centers. *GO TO 2040* is the region's best chance to achieve prosperity that can be sustained for generations to come."



The greater Chicago metropolitan area is expected to add more than 2 million new residents by 2040. *GO TO 2040* seeks to align public policies and investments to maximizing resources that will be strained by this population growth. [The plan](#) reflects more than three years of research and careful deliberation by CMAP, its partners and stakeholders, including feedback from more than 35,000 residents.

The plan was delivered in four segments: Livable Communities, Human Capital, Efficient Governance and Regional Mobility. These divisions offer detailed recommendations on issues such as land use, housing, water and energy, parks and open space, food systems, education and workforce development, state and local tax policy and transportation.

The plan seeks to make effective use of public resources, including coordinated investments for infrastructure such as transportation. While its primary transportation emphasis is to maintain and modernize rather than to expand the system, *GO TO 2040* contains a handful of major capital projects selected to maximize regional mobility and economic development. Of the estimated \$385 billion available for transportation through the year 2040, less than three percent—\$10.5 billion—is available for new projects, and increasing costs of construction mean that the region must carefully focus its spending.

"With resources so constrained, this region literally can't afford not to implement *GO TO 2040*," said Randy Blankenhorn, CMAP executive director. "The plan comes at a pivotal moment, and most of our challenges are the result of planning decisions made or—too often—deferred in recent decades. Instead of drifting toward an uncertain future, we need to seize this opportunity to make some tough choices and work together toward the plan's clearly stated regional goals."

GO TO 2040 points out that the region has grown in ways that put pressure on infrastructure (including transportation) and natural resources (including water and energy). CMAP estimates that more than 100,000 acres within municipal boundaries are vacant or under-used. The plan promotes the redevelopment of this land with a mix of residential and non-residential uses, which could accommodate half of the region's projected growth.

The plan also calls for increased coordination or consolidation of services between the hundreds of local governments in the region, as well as a reform of state and local tax policies. These, *GO TO 2040* contends, often promote "big box" retail development that has far fewer regional economic benefits compared to office or industrial developments.

Navy Pier was originally named "Municipal Pier 2," later designated since Municipal Pier 1 never materialized. Northerly Island stands as the only incarnation of a planned string of islands. Burnham's *Plan*, to paraphrase its architect, made no little plans, but not all of them were realized. Will *GO TO 2040* suffer the same fate, or will local leaders—public and private—cooperate for a better, more efficient Chicagoland?

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