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Carol Stream upgrading its planning strategy

By Joshua Welge

Carol Stream has nearly tripled in population over the past 30 years, and for the first time in three decades the village is upgrading its comprehensive plan — a document municipalities use that contains goals, objectives and strategies for development.

The village was awarded planning services from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, or CMAP, in 2013 for the preparation of a new plan. With CMAP taking the lead on the project, the village estimates it will save close to \$120,000 it otherwise would spend on consultant services.

The village board approved a resolution of support for the project in January.

This week it appointed a 13-member steering committee to review and offer feedback to documents prepared by CMAP, and to participate in two to three public meetings.

"The comprehensive plan really serves as a vision for the community moving forward," said Trustee Don Weiss, a member of the steering committee.

Carol Stream's last plan was prepared in 1982 by the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission, when the village's population was 15,472. Much has changed since then, and the current population as of the 2010 census is 39,711. The plan, considered a road map in guiding land use laws such as zoning, is generally supposed to be done every 10 years and updated every five.

"A lot of our land area has been developed, there's been changes in infrastructure and roadways, businesses have moved in and out," said Don Bastian, the village's assistant community development director. "The fact of the matter is the 1982 document isn't really something we even talk about."

Bastian said there's no specific development that sparked the push to update the plan.

"However, Carol Stream does have properties that were developed over 50 years ago," Bastian said. "Are the uses of these properties still appropriate today given changing market conditions, the economy, transportation enhancements and community needs? We recognize that the exercise won't have the same focus as it would for a community with large areas of underdeveloped land, but there are a variety of community planning issues beyond simple land use considerations."

Among those issues will be the community's character and quality of life, recreational opportunities and open space, housing, population and economic health.

Bastian envisions the project taking 12 to 15 months. The steering committee plans to meet for the first time at 6 p.m. Feb. 24 to discuss a proposed timeline.