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Mapping the future

Riverside hosts regional planning workshop

By **NICHOLAS MORONI**
Contributing Reporter

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and the village of Riverside will jointly host a workshop on Thursday, July 16, at Riverside Township Hall to promote public involvement in the planning agency's GO TO 2040 comprehensive planning campaign.

The workshop begins at 6 p.m. The township hall is located at 27 Riverside Road in Riverside.

GO TO 2040 is an effort to plan for the estimated 2.8 million additional residents that are expected to inhabit the seven counties of Northeastern Illinois - Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will - by 2040.

In order to accommodate the population increase, CMAP is working to make the region a more enjoyable place to live, work and play by addressing such issues as proper land use and more accommodating transportation through economic and community development, eco-friendly initiatives, affordable housing and an increased attention to human services.

"It's not Schaumburg against Joliet, against Chicago; it's northeastern Illinois against China, against India for jobs," CMAP Executive Director Randy Blankenhorn said on Chicago Tonight, "we need to plan better and we need to plan together."

"If you don't plan for this you're going to have a big problem," said Charlie Pipal, a preservation architect and the chairman of the Riverside Preservation Commission. "Anytime you can include the public, it's good."

The workshop is one of 50 that have been held over the past year and will continue to be held until the end of the year.

According to Lynn Toi Lawson of CMAP's external relations, the organization wants to "develop a plan that reflects a consensus."

"We will take input and make recommendations to our board," Lawson said.

Announced in 2008 to coincide with the Burnham Plan Centennial, a celebratory campaign launched in honor of Daniel Burnham's 1909 Chicago plan, GO TO 2040 seeks to accomplish the same pioneering spirit.

However, unlike the enormous amount of new construction that was taking place 100 years ago, GO TO 2040 is strongly taking into account the environmental toll attached to rapid growth by attempting to balance expansion with consolidation.

CMAP has received funding in the form of a \$1.35 million grant from the Chicago Community Trust for the first year of GO TO 2040 in addition to research support.

CMAP is a public agency that came into existence in 2005 when local government, business, and community leaders informed former Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the Illinois General Assembly of the need for a comprehensive planning organization in northeastern Illinois to prepare for future population growth and the challenges that would follow.

That same year, the General Assembly unanimously approved the Regional Planning Act, which Blagojevich signed into law in August of that year; thus, bringing about the Regional Planning Board, which is now CMAP.

Upon its inception, CMAP merged the region's previously separate land-use and transportation planning organizations - Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) - in an effort to combine the services that each organization provided.

The majority of CMAP's board is comprised of local government officials who should already be in touch with their communities and be in the unique position to relay the ideas of the constituents to other board members.

However, the organization has strived to incorporate the community's opinion in the planning process through such means as the Riverside workshop, one of many that will be held throughout the region before plans for GO TO 2040 are finalized in 2010.

These workshops "allow all communities to have a voice," Lawson said.

"It's important that we have a plan on the local level," said Erin Aleman, CMAP associate planner. "We're trying to get an idea of how much or how little we should invest."

Thursday's workshop will consist of a discussion between the attendees, CMAP representatives and the village of Riverside, and will also allow residents to express their opinions regarding regional development through mediums such as interactive software and keypad polling machines that will be onsite.

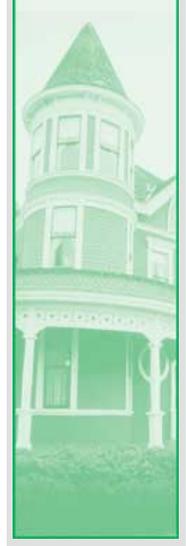


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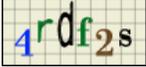
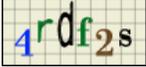
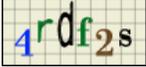


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