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Roads not the way to go, transit survey says

Regional report finds broad support for rapid transit

By **BILL DWYER**
 Staff Reporter

Web Extra!

While it's unclear whether the regional planning agency tasked with comprehensive planning for the Chicago area will take over the final phase of the stalled Cook DuPage Corridor Study, a report released this week shows broad, strong support for transit modes other than roads.

The three-month survey was conducted by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, or CMAP. More than 20,000 responses were gathered on a variety of issues, including transportation.

Those results indicate Chicago area residents "tend to share consistent priorities for the region's future." Expressed priorities include "more transit options, compact land development, reduced energy and water consumption, and more parks and open space," according to CMAP.

Among the findings are that fully 90 percent of respondents favor transportation policies that encourage alternative forms of transport over more roads. One percent favored more roads and 9 percent favored the current mix of rail and road options.

The survey, titled "Invent the Future," invited people to comment both online and at meetings around the Chicago area last summer. Questions were predicated on a projected additional 2.8 million residents in the northeastern Illinois region by 2040.

The first of 50 public presentations was held in June at Oak Park's historic Unity Temple.

Rob Cole of the Oak Park Village Manager's Office sits on CMAP's land use committee and has been involved with transportation issues for a number of years.

"The public voice was clear, 90 percent of those who responded expressed strong support for alternative forms of transportation," said Cole.

Under state and federal law, CMAP is the comprehensive regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois region. The agency is formally charged with land use and transportation planning in Chicago, Cook County and the six other collar counties.

The survey process is intended to develop a broad regional vision of what Chicago-area residents want to see 30 years from now. It was launched in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of Daniel Burnham's historic Plan of Chicago.

The survey is part of the preparation process for the 2010 release of a comprehensive report titled Go To 2040. That document will constitute the region's official comprehensive plan recognized by the state and federal governments to "guide development and infrastructure decisions across the region for decades to come."

See the Dec. 16 issue of Wednesday Journal for further details.

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