

Dreaming big: Carpenter students envision 2040

By **ANDREW SCHNEIDER**
aschneider@pioneerlocal.com

When the year 2040 rolls around, how will Chicago-area residents commute to their jobs?

Probably rocket-propelled skateboards, if you ask the fourth graders at Carpenter Elementary School in Park Ridge. Or maybe flying cars.

Thanks to a grant from the Chicago Community Trust — the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), lead agency for the "Go To 2040," regional planning campaign — has polled students at three schools, including Carpenter in Park Ridge-Niles District 64, and Pulaski Elementary School and Whitney Young High School in Chicago, to get their sense of what the region should look like when they're adults.

These pilot contests, called "Bold Ideas" were designed to get kids thinking and acting creatively about the future.

The students were asked to imagine that the year is 2040. What would the region look like? What would a trip to the supermarket look like?

Is there even such a thing as a supermarket any more?

"It's important because

we as adults need to understand young peoples' hopes and concerns about the future," said Tom Garritano, communications director for CMAP.

"They're the ones who'll be around in 2040 and hopefully reaping the benefits of a good regional plan."

The Go to 2040 campaign is envisioned as the Chicago-area's first comprehensive regional planning initiative.

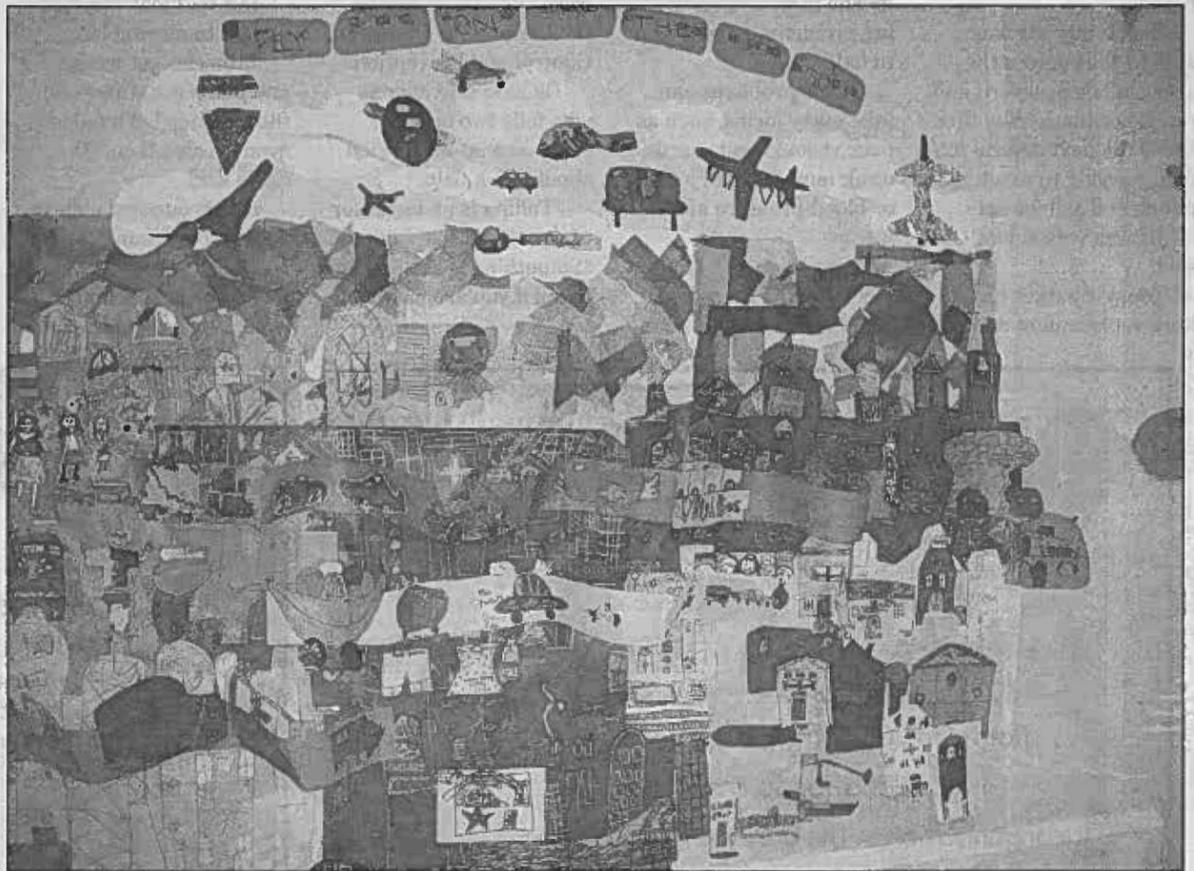
Completed, the plan will identify and prioritize the region's most critical problems and guide implementation including investment and development for the next 30 years.

Carpenter teachers Matthew Toren and Fred Klonsky led student efforts to develop ideas that, while innovative, probably won't end up in the final plan.

Those ideas include super fertilizer, rocket-propelled skates or skateboards, and even the long sought but never realized flying car.

"A lot of our ideas were sort of science fiction ideas," Klonsky said.

But the real value of the exercise wasn't in developing the ideas. Klonsky said they asked the students to imagine life 32



Carpenter School fourth-graders in Park Ridge created this montage of flying vehicles and new buildings — what they think the area will look like in 2040. They were one of three Chicago-area schools invited to think about the future for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency on Planning's Go to 2040 campaign. Public hearings later in the process will give adults a chance to discuss their own visions.

years in the future by thinking what life was like 32 years in the past: no cellular phones, no MP3 players and only very primitive computers.

"It's a really interesting exercise," he said. "They're very interesting questions for kids to ponder."

And by encouraging students to view submissions from other schools,

it helps them better appreciate the Chicago region outside of Park Ridge, Klonsky said.

"It will put them in contact with kids from different areas," he said. "They become aware of the diversity of the Chicago area."

The push to involve young people, Garritano said, is more about teaching them the value of good

planning and raising public awareness of the initiative than about walking away with serious ideas for the plan.

"It's really critical that young people understand it's important to plan for the future," he said.

With Chicago celebrating the 100th anniversary of Daniel Burnham's famous "Plan of Chicago" next year, CMAP hopes

residents of the area will appreciate the legacy great planners have left for the region and get involved in planning for the future.

More information on the Go To 2040 campaign and video and photos from the students involved in the project are available on the campaign's Web site, www.goto2040.org.

0119
024