

Lake County: American Association of University Women Talking Points

January 17, 2008

Introduction. I'd like to thank Peg Ransom, the American Association of University Women, and the Libertyville-Mundelein Historical Society for inviting me. This is a terrific event, and I applaud you all for your interest and passion about where we've been and where we're headed as a region. One of my biggest challenges as executive director of CMAP is to convey a sense of *urgency* about long-range planning. That might sound like a contradiction in terms, but I believe our region faces a number of urgent issues that -- together -- can determine whether our children and grandchildren will have the quality of life that we've been fortunate to enjoy.

I'd like to begin by telling you how and why CMAP was formed, along with some of the challenges we're facing as a region. Then I'll describe the regional comprehensive plan that CMAP is developing, because we need your active involvement in shaping that plan for the year 2040 and beyond.

How CMAP was formed. CMAP was created recently to consolidate planning for land use and transportation in the seven-county metropolitan Chicago region of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties.

- For decades, people had discussed a possible merger of the staffs of the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), in the belief that planning for land use and transportation needed to be integrated.
- In 2004, a regional task force chaired by then-Congressman William Lipinski included the merger among its recommendations.
- The region's business leaders pushed hard for this, and the enabling legislation passed unanimously in the General Assembly, with support from the region's mayors and county boards before being signed by Governor Blagojevich in August 2005.
- The CMAP Board includes 15 members who are selected by mayors of Chicago, suburban Cook, and the collar counties. We call that "5, 5, and 5" to denote a careful balance of local and regional concerns.
- Most of our board members have held elected office, including 9 current or former mayors. Everyone on CMAP's board understands the extent to which local decisions affect the region at large.

- In 2007, we put forth legislation that became law last fall. It created a Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund with a \$5 million annual appropriation -- including \$3.5 million for CMAP -- to help metropolitan and rural regions in Illinois plan for more effective investment and development decisions.

Why CMAP was formed. There was a consensus that the region needed a fundamental change in how it conducts planning. Our own agency's projections indicate that metropolitan Chicago will have an additional 2 million residents and 1.2 million jobs by 2030, with serious implications for transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and natural resources.

We are at a crossroads due to explosive growth, and CMAP is making fundamental changes in how the region and its communities plan for the future. Previously, the most pressing issues were addressed only in isolation, although in reality they are deeply inter-related.

- For example, transportation is a means to an end, not a goal all its own. When we seek to improve the transportation system, it should be to improve the region's overall quality of life.

- Our regional transportation system is over-burdened, with congestion costing an estimated \$11 billion annually in delays, productivity losses, environmental impacts, crashes and injuries, and freight handling.
 - Transportation is the economic engine of metropolitan Chicago, yet our system strains to meet current needs, much less to add capacity for a projected 2 million new residents by 2030.
 - Transportation cuts across many other topics such as economic development, housing, natural resources, and land use in general. Highway congestion is affected by limited housing choices that make it hard for people live near their jobs.
 - Increased commute times, in turn, have negative side-effects ranging from the personal (e.g., decreased time for parents to spend with children) to the universal (e.g., harm to air and water quality).
 - Another significant congestion factor is our status as the busiest U.S. rail freight hub, a bottleneck that needs to be addressed through a new State of Illinois capital program and innovative federal programs like CREATE.
- CMAP looks at these issues comprehensively. Although that increases the complexity of our planning processes, it also should dramatically increase the benefit.

- So we have defined an ambitious agenda that takes an integrated approach in the following focus areas: Land Use, Transportation, Environment, Economic Development, Housing, and Human Services.

Regional Comprehensive Plan. CMAP recently kicked off its process that will culminate in 2010 with publication of the region's first truly comprehensive plan for land use and transportation.

- On September 12, we held a visioning event for nearly 200 members of our board and committees, along with a few other partners.
 - One of our featured speakers was historian Geoffrey Baer, whom you probably know from his excellent "river tours" and other regional documentaries on Channel 11 (WTTW).
 - Geoffrey has offered to stay engaged in our planning process, and we're taking him up on that offer.
- That meeting resulted in a draft vision that you can view on our web site at www.cmap.illinois.gov/plan. It addresses:
 - Quality of life
 - Sustainability
 - Civic involvement
 - Coordinated planning and government

- Economic competitiveness
 - Education and workforce development
 - Energy and resource conservation
 - Environmental health
 - Equity
 - Future population needs
 - Housing
 - Public health and safety
 - Reinvestment and infill
 - Transportation accessibility and efficiency
 - Water supply
- The vision statement will keep evolving until June, when our board will vote to approve it.

The Process. If you'll look at the "CMAP Regional Comprehensive Planning Process" brochure that we handed out, you will see the steps that will guide the remainder of our work on the plan, which will become final in 2010.

1. Drafting the regional vision is Step 1.

- Before the Board votes in June, CMAP staff is meeting with stakeholders across the region to get their input on the draft vision.

- Soon we'll launch a very fun, interactive web site with multimedia and contests to engage the public, especially young people.

2. Step 2 will involve preparing a series of reports on major planning issues.

- We will be preparing and publishing reports that we are calling Regional Snapshots on major planning issues that we will need to understand and address in the long-range plan.

3. Step 3 will be to develop strategies -- potential ways for us to get from the present to our desired regional vision.

- Strategies include brownfield redevelopment, farmland preservation, improved bicycle facilities, and many others. The recommendations in the 2040 Regional Framework Plan and the 2030 RTP are the starting point for the strategies that we will initially begin to analyze.
- We are going through an evaluation process to determine which of the many potential implementation strategies best meet our region's vision.

4. Step 4 will be to construct approximately five alternative future scenarios.

- These will be combinations of strategies that make sense together.
- We will evaluate these based on how well they meet the regional vision.
- This evaluation will be done both quantitatively (through numeric evaluation measures) and qualitatively (through input from local leaders and the public on their preferences).
- This will result in the selection of a preferred scenario which best meets the regional vision.

5. Once a preferred scenario has been selected, Step 5 will identify the major capital projects that best support that scenario.

- The starting point for this effort will be the major capital projects that were identified in the 2030 RTP.
- As with the scenarios, we will then use a quantitative and qualitative evaluation process to determine which of the capital projects will be recommended for inclusion in the plan.

6. The sixth and final step in the process involves writing and releasing the Regional Comprehensive Plan in 2010.

- Most elements in the plan will already have gone through a public engagement process, but the final plan will also be made available for local leaders and the public to review and provide comments on.
- Ultimately, the Regional Comprehensive Plan will be presented to the CMAP Board of Directors and the MPO Policy Committee for adoption.

Key planning partners. CMAP works with municipalities, government agencies, businesses, and non-profit groups across the region. I want to call special attention to two of these partners

- 2009 marks the 100th anniversary of Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago, which will be the subject of a year-long celebration across the region.
 - The Burnham Centennial is a unique opportunity to build public recognition about the importance of effective planning.
 - We are working closely with the Centennial partners to build awareness of the new regional plan, which builds on Burnham's internationally famous legacy.
 - We want to help increase awareness of Burnham's accomplishments and to capitalize on that increased awareness to promote a new regional vision.

- We are also working closely with the Chicago Community Trust, which for the past 100 years has funded civic-improvement activities like ours across the region.
 - The Trust has a network of partners that we are tapping into for expertise and building public awareness.
 - We anticipate that funding from the Trust will help us do some different, creative work, including a very detailed set of indicators to gauge where the region should be going and how to get there.

Climate Change Summit. On December 11, CMAP hosted its second Innovation + Integration summit. Its title was on "Creating a Regional Agenda to Address Climate Change."

- We believe this event is unique in approaching climate change from a regional perspective -- how will it affect our communities, and what can they do to be prepared?
- Our keynote speaker was Dr. Robert Rosner (ROZ-ner) director of Argonne National Laboratory in DuPage County. His talk provided a broad perspective on energy for our audience of about 200 local elected officials, planners, and business leaders.
- What he said was sobering. Dr. Rosner is head of a half-billion-dollar-per-year federal research lab, and his

only allegiance is to the scientific truth. I doubt that anyone left the room thinking that climate change isn't real or isn't something we need to begin addressing immediately.

- Of all the statistics he cited, the one that stuck with me is that -- without significant reductions in Greenhouse Gas emissions -- at the end of this century, our Illinois climate will be comparable to that of Texas. We would have about 30 additional days per year above 100 degrees.
- You can imagine the social impacts caused by that, including massive influx of people fleeing southern or coastal regions.
- While many alternative fuels are in development, the experts tell us that our number one weapon to fight climate change is conservation. Using fluorescent instead of incandescent bulbs is an important part of that.
- Another important part that CMAP is involved with is to promote compact development that lets people take public transit, walk, ride bikes, and generally spend less time in their vehicles.
- A primary goal should be to reduce the region's "carbon footprint" and contribute to quality of life by reducing congestion and improving air quality.

Water supply planning. One thing I'm sure that Lake County residents care about is water. Please refer to the "State and Regional Water Supply Planning in Illinois" brochure handout. CMAP's comprehensive planning includes a strong emphasis on water quality and supply. In a sense, water supply has become the first major example of our regional approach to planning.

- That's because on January 9, 2006, the Governor issued the executive order mandating a statewide study of water supply.
 - With IDNR funding and support, we formed a Regional Water Supply Planning Group (RWSPG) with a mission of developing plans and programs to guide future use that provide adequate and affordable water for all users, including support for economic development, agriculture, and protection of natural ecosystems.
 - Now just over one year into that project, I believe it is well on the way to being a model of regional cooperation.
- The amount of water that Illinois can divert annually from Lake Michigan is finite. The diversion is fixed by U.S. Supreme Court Consent Decree.
 - The current Lake Michigan water level is very near the lowest level recorded since 1860, which

reminds everyone in the region of the importance of "using water wisely."

- Drawing water from Lake Michigan is not an option for many communities in our 11-county water-supply planning area. As a region, we should be concerned that growth is accelerating in areas that might not have adequate water supplies in coming decades.
- Your county is fortunate to have access to Lake Michigan water, but that doesn't mean you can take it for granted. For the good of your own residents and the region as a whole, I encourage you to think about ways to conserve and protect water.
- In Lake County and elsewhere in the region, there needs to be close partnership with developers to bring about land-use decisions that are in everyone's best interests, especially pertaining to water supply and quality.
- Compact development and other types of conservation design can ease pressure on water supplies and on water treatment facilities, along with other infrastructure, including roads.
- CMAP's regional water supply planning will also take climate change into consideration, as the planning horizon is the year 2050.

- I encourage you to get involved with the RWSPG, whose next meeting at CMAP on January 22nd will feature a detailed discussion of projected water demand scenarios out to the year 2050.
- The regional study should culminate in 2009 with guidelines for local water conservation practices that will become part of an emerging statewide consensus to address water supply.

Jobs/Housing balance. CMAP plans to address housing issues as part of the overall comprehensive plan, particularly addressing housing conditions, type, affordability, and location.

- To meet regional priorities, the location, availability, and affordability of housing needs to balance with that of jobs, access to transportation, and protection of open space and natural resources.
 - The escalating costs of housing force some families to move farther from employment centers to seek out reasonably priced housing options, even though such savings may be partially or even completely offset by the increased transportation expenses of longer commutes.
 - CMAP seeks to explore sound policy decisions that assure residents of northeastern Illinois safe, decent and affordable places to live.

- CMAP promotes a good balance of jobs and housing, which means steering economic and residential development that gives people the option of living nearer to where they work. This is a concept that is gaining favor across the region -- even in areas once considered hostile to "affordable housing." For us at CMAP, this balance means:
 - A good mix of renters and owners.
 - Targeting economic development where affordable housing already exists.
 - Removing regulatory barriers (e.g., density restrictions or limits on multi-family dwellings)
 - Encouraging policies such as inclusionary zoning practices.
 - Creating incentives such as density bonuses or expedited permitting processes.
 - Giving preference to preservation and rehab, which make more sense environmentally and financially than building in new areas.
- CMAP has a Housing Working Committee to advise the Board and agency on housing-related issues.
 - Its members have expertise in housing, including policy professionals, affordable housing developers, government sector representatives (including HUD, IHDA, City of Chicago), financial

sector representatives, elected officials and county appointees.

- The Housing committee has been working to identify housing priorities for the agency, building the 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan vision, and contributing expertise to the draft jobs/housing balance snapshot report, among other activities.
- Many towns and cities in Illinois face shortages in homes affordable to nurses, police officers, teachers, firefighters, secretaries, and others who provide critical community services and help drive the local economy. This shortage can hinder economic development, increase traffic congestion, and limit opportunities for hard-working residents and their children.
 - I often talk to developers who say they'd like to build more affordable developments, but local barriers contribute to this shortage of affordable housing. Exclusionary zoning laws, slow permit processes and a vocal minority of residents with outdated stereotypes of affordable housing can make progress very difficult.
 - The Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act (AHPAA) was signed into law in 2003 to encourage municipalities and counties to incorporate affordable housing into their communities.
 - The Illinois Housing Development Authority has been named the State-administering agency in the

law and "will provide tools and updates to aid non-exempt communities in compliance."

- The target is for municipalities to have at least 10 percent of their housing stock in the "affordable" range. For more, see <http://www.ihda.org/>.

Local technical assistance. Trying to "impose" a regional vision would never work, because our region has a time-honored tradition of local autonomy over land-use decisions. CMAP will never try to undermine that.

- Instead, we provide technical assistance that presents helpful alternatives so communities can plan for the future.
 - For example, we show how they can encourage residential and commercial development that makes this a region where people want to live and work due to the high quality of life.
 - Local communities often don't have adequate planning resources, and CMAP's technical assistance helps fill that gap.
- CMAP's technical assistance programs work cooperatively with municipalities, counties, and development organizations whose decisions determine how land is used. Assistance includes:

- **Issues Identification and Decision Support Technology.** CMAP can help communities convene workshops designed to capture the thinking of participants in an interactive, activity-based environment. Using keypad polling and other facilitation techniques, CMAP helps a community quickly identify its areas for future focus and gain consensus in meeting important planning challenges.
- **Planning Commissioner Training.** Using resources developed in conjunction with its partner agencies, CMAP is designing training sessions to equip planning commissions and other officials with guidance and structure for making better land use decisions.
- **Plan Review.** CMAP can provide a third-party, neutral review of your community's drafted plans, bringing its expertise to bear on the implications for the larger region. We also connect local efforts to others doing similar work to help share ideas and learn from best practices.

Urgent, long-range planning. The main obstacle to long-range planning is, obviously, people's understandable preoccupation with today's problems. But that can lead to pessimism, which only makes today's problems worse.

- When someone tells me we can't afford to focus on the future, I tell them we can't afford *not to*.
 - Most of today's problems -- including the current transit situation -- are the direct result of short-sightedness.
 - If the region had planned more effectively 20 years ago, we wouldn't face nearly so many pressing challenges.
- If you spend as much time around planners as I do, you hear plenty of discussion about "smart growth" or "sensible growth" as opposed to the other dreaded S-word, "sprawl."
 - Well, sprawl has its defenders. A few of them might even be sitting right here in this room today.
 - At least, I hope some of them are here, because I don't like preaching only to the converted.
 - I also don't like to push hot buttons that cause people to choose sides, as if the region's prosperity is an argument that one side or another can win.
- Instead, I believe strongly that our prosperity can only result from the shared values that we all embrace.
 - We all want livable communities, where we don't have to spend hours stuck in traffic.
 - We all want natural resources that include ample drinking water and recreational opportunities.

- We all want a strong economy that create diverse and numerous jobs.
- And we all want to be safe, whether on the street or in our homes.
- I don't think we'll find much of an argument about those values, but CMAP is right now working to define a regional vision that expresses what residents want to preserve and build upon through the year 2040.
- These shared values will be the basis for the regional comprehensive plan. Please visit our web at www.cmap.illinois.gov to learn about and participate in that planning process.
 - By participating, you'll help Lake County's voice be heard at the regional level, and I believe you'll learn about best practices elsewhere that can be applied in your own communities.
 - It's about guiding growth. Growth will happen -- the people and jobs are coming in Lake County and elsewhere.