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Current Issue:

**SECTIONS**

News

Opinions

Features

Pulse

Sports

**OPTIONS**

About Us

Message Board

Events Calendar

Letter to the Editor

Classifieds

Back Issues

Search

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UIC Home

Inferno

Contact Us

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## Here today, 2040 tomorrow? UIC looks to 2040

Erin Vogel

Issue date: 9/7/09 Section: **News**[Print](#) [Email](#)

Page 1 of 1

Last Thursday, more than 50 people gathered in Student Center East to discuss the future of Chicago. The audience listened attentively as the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) presented an interactive workshop entitled GO TO 2040. The objective of the workshop was to get the residents of Chicago more involved in the planning and decision-making process by asking them how they would like their city to look and function in the next thirty years.



Media Credit: Photo courtesy of  
goto2040.org

Pictured above is a GO TO 2040 Invent the Future kiosk in the Willis Tower where people can interactively create the future Chicago region.

The crux of GO TO 2040 is based on the projection that in thirty years, there will be 2.8 million more people living in the seven-region Chicagoland area. There are certain questions that need to be answered in regards to such a dramatic spike in population. For example: Where are these new people going to live? How will they get to their jobs? How will we manage the water supply? GO TO 2040 seeks to find out how Chicago's current residents would like to answer these and other similar questions.

The main speaker at GO TO 2040 was Andrew Williams Clark, a planner for CMAP; Thursday was his fifteenth workshop since CMAP began conducting them in June. He explained to the audience that the workshop is "not so much about the vision, but about prioritizing what we have to do to achieve the vision." He referred to the 2040 vision as "the heir to the 1909 Burnham plan, with some major differences." One of the main differences is that the plan "will not just be completed and then sit on a shelf"; it will be constantly revised, and flexible with input and feedback."

The first interactive segment of the workshop involved ten-minute brainstorming sessions with the groups at each table, where group members discussed their top three priorities for planning the city's future. Transportation, safety issues, environmental concerns and education were some of the top priorities. The second segment was structured as a number of opinion polls; audience members voted on a number of questions, such as "How will the region invest in the transit system?" and "How much will the region encourage alternative transportation modes?" After the questions were answered, the calculated opinion percentages were fed into CMAP's computer system so that the graph of the scenario devised by the audience could be compared to graphs of current state of affairs in Chicago.

Carly Suita, third year in Urban and Public Affairs, expressed her enthusiasm for GO TO 2040 by saying, "It's really common for UIC students to feel awful about their campus, so it's encouraging to see people are working towards improving things. It's important for students to know that UIC is a target area in this planning program."

The GO TO 2040 plan will be released in October 2010. Clark, who described the plan as a "living document", said that it will then be updated every four years. "The point of the presentation is to get people engaged," he said, "so that they can then hold their leaders accountable."

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**Lindsay B.**

posted 9/08/09 @ 8:53 AM CST

Thanks for this great recap of the UIC Invent the Future Workshop. For anyone who missed the workshop but would like to participate in the online equivalent of the opinion polls (ie. (Continued...))

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