Agency: Planning for 2040 starts now

Comments

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How do you envision the Southland in 2040? The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning wants to know.

Last week, only 10 people ventured to a Go to 2040 Invent the Future workshop co-hosted by Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills and the Southwest Conference of Mayors at the college in Palos Hills.

If you weren't there, don't fret, you still can make your opinions count by going to the 2040 Web site.

The majority of the people at the workshop were connected to the Southwest Conference of Mayors, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning or Moraine Valley Community College and resided in a variety of towns, including Palos Hills, Orland Park, Palos Park, Western Springs and Chicago.

The lack of public transportation was discussed at the workshop, particularly a lack of Pace routes, a need for more times for the Metra Southwest Service and more suburb-to-suburb transportation options in general.

The lack of walkable communities also was brought up.

"You have to get in your car to go everywhere," said Victoria Smith, executive director at the Southwest Conference of Mayors and a resident of Orland Park.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning is working on the regional plan expecting there will be 2.8 million more people in the seven-county area by 2040, Palos Hills Mayor Gerald Bennett said.

"The metropolitan area has been growing rapidly," said Hubert Morgan, principal planner for the agency.

The goal of Go to 2040 is to develop a regional vision, understand existing conditions, evaluate potential planning strategies, choose a preferred scenario, choose major capital projects and communicate the final plan, Morgan said.

A preliminary plan will be presented next month, with the final plan expected next year.

Workshop questions started with demographic information and continued on to questions about the desired amount of development density, where new development should be encouraged and how much should be invested in the transit system and road network.

"We are laying out a plan to say, 'This is how these dollars should be spent,' " Bennett said.

Additionally, having the plan in place could cause more "of the federal taxes we are all paying to come back in this region," he said.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has hosted about 60 workshops this summer.

People can give their opinions through September at www.goto2040.org.

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