Project Description:

BACKGROUND

On behalf of Cook County, this proposal seeks technical assistance from CMAP to provide a detailed assessment of the Cook County Comprehensive Land Use and Policies Plan (the Plan), make recommendations on updating sections of each chapter of the Plan, and provide updated information for specific components of the Plan. Through the LTA Program we would like to request CMAP’s assistance for the following components of the Plan.

1. Complete a detailed assessment of the Plan and make recommendations on what sections in each chapter need updating
2. Update the demographic data in the Plan
3. Provide updated maps of environmental sensitive areas in the Plan (Flood Plain)
4. Provide updated maps of unincorporated areas in the Plan

The Cook County Comprehensive Land Use and Policies Plan (the, Plan) was adopted in April, 1999 and amended in September 1999. It has been over seventeen years since it was last updated or revised. During that time span Cook County and its unincorporated areas have experienced significant changes both physically and demographically. When the Plan was completed in 1999 Cook County had 230 square miles of unincorporated land. Today it has been reduced to approximately 125 square miles. One of the County’s goals has been to encourage voluntary annexation which is already happening. Assessing the Plan will examine what has been done and make adjustments where needed.

Suburban Cook County has changed demographically since 1999. Its population has decreased by over 100,000 people, and continues to decrease. While many areas of the County have been stagnant, or experienced little growth, the south suburbs has experienced significant decline both economically and demographically. New strategies and incentives are needed to help existing businesses and industries survive and expand. Demand for new and flexible land uses will be needed in many distressed areas as new strategies are developed to create and implement multiple large scale, transformative initiatives in targeted sub-regions of the County. Assessing the Plan will examine each of the sub-regions and make recommendations about the need for revisions or updates.

As flooding issues become more prevalent in the Chicago Region, how and where development occurs has become more important. The suburbs of Cook County have experienced some of the worst flooding in the Region over the past decade. Sprawl and development in areas prone to flooding are partly to blame for the problem along with other factors. Assessing and updating the Plan’s environmentally sensitive area maps is needed and will help County Departments plan and make decisions on relevant matters.

Planning and land use concerns that affect Cook County as a whole such as, housing and economic development, transportation, infrastructure, urban sprawl, business and industrial expansion, and environmentally sensitive areas need to be updated and adjusted. The current Plan addressed many pressing issues that are still relevant today, but it needs to be assessed to determine if more recent issues that affect the County have been left out. Assessing the Plan will determine if this is needed and make the recommendations. We believe CMAP has done most of this work already through its GO TO 2040 Plan and its ongoing updates as well as the ON TO 2050 Plan.

Project Location: This project is located sections of unincorporated Cook County within twenty-three (23) Townships. The area includes approximately 125,000 residents. Maps and tables are attached.