

[North Chicago to look at new comprehensive plan](#)

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The city of North Chicago is expected to begin a new comprehensive planning process in 2014 thanks to a recently-awarded grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

The size of the grant, under CMAP's Local Technical Assistance Program, has yet to be announced. But Joe Napolitano, North Chicago director of economic development, said he expects between \$100,000 and \$120,000 to pay a consultant who will lead the creation of the plan, which will help the city hone in on its priorities and goals and set long-term policy, in terms of land use, housing and transportation, to achieve them.

"Our comprehensive plan dates back to 1996," Napolitano said. "It is woefully out of date."

"I'm excited," Mayor Leon Rockingham said of the grant. "We've been putting it (an update) off, because we really didn't have the money for it."

Economic development will be key to the plan, Napolitano said.

"We need to focus on how we can better prepare the city to attract new development, to encourage existing development to stay and expand," Napolitano said. "We need to ask where are we expecting new development to occur. We have annexed additional properties since 1996. What do we want to see there?"

Abbott Laboratories, one of Lake County's top employers, owns hundreds of unincorporated acres to the west of the city, Napolitano said.

"If they decide to do something with it, we need to make sure we have infrastructure to support it, that their plans are consistent with what our plans are."

CMAP will work closely with the city to launch what will likely be a year-long planning process. The city will select a CMAP-approved consulting agency that will help lead a series of planning meetings with stakeholders including city officials and residents. The final plan will be adopted by a vote of the City Council.

Mayor Leon Rockingham said input by the park and school district and an emphasis on transportation will be crucial to a comprehensive plan, which looks into the future by 20 years or longer.

"We want to help our residential areas grow and that means an emphasis on transportation," he said. "We need rail transportation out west - Schaumburg, Arlington Heights. We have a lot of residents who commute in that direction."

A new, shorter-term strategic plan is also in the city's future. Rockingham appointed three alderman, Kathy January, Carl Evans and Bonny Mayfield, to a Strategic Plan Committee during a meeting of the City Council on Oct. 21.