



northeastern illinois planning commission

NIPC Plans & Policies

Legacy Report



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NIPC Plans and Policies

Purpose

This document is a conveyance by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission of major key NIPC plans and policies to carry forward into future regional planning for northeastern Illinois. . In addition, planning tools such as the NIPC Model Ordinances and *Conservation Design Resource Manual* are described, as they are major products or initiatives stemming from the goals and objectives of the major plans.

Important plans and policies, including the 2040 Regional Framework Plan, the Regional Transportation Plan and others are not included in this report since CMAP has already adopted them, or NIPC and CATS were partners in the plan or policy, such as the Interagency Agreement. The documented 50 year history of NIPC will point out the impacts that selected NIPC papers, reports and recommendations have had on local governmental decision making.

Organization of this Report

This report is divided into seven sections; six of which are titled according to major planning topics. Each section, for example, Natural Resource Planning: Water, begins with a background of previous NIPC initiatives and plans related to that planning topic, and summaries of the major, most recent plans for consideration for forwarding to CMAP, such as the Strategic Plan for Water Resource Management. For each plan or policy, a brief summary of the current status is provided. The planning topic sections also include brief descriptions of related planning tools developed by NIPC. The seventh section is a selection of additional NIPC initiatives that are not covered by the first six sections.

Below is a list of plans included in the first six sections, and a list of initiatives described in the seventh section.

- Section 1 Natural Resource Planning: Water
 Strategic Plan for Water Resource Management
- Section 2 Natural Resource Planning: Biodiversity and Sustainable Development
 Biodiversity Recovery Plan
 Green Infrastructure Vision
- Section 3 Open Space, Recreation, Greenways and Water Trails
 Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Plan
 Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trail Plan
- Section 4 Land Use Planning
 Strategic Plan for Land Resource Management
- Section 5 Solid Waste Management
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- Section 6 Housing
 Metropolitan Mayor's Northeastern Illinois Housing Endorsement Criteria
- Section 7 Additional NIPC Planning Areas and Initiatives: Energy, Economic Development
 Highway Corridor Planning, Full Circle Mapping and Planning Project Forecasts,
 Tri-State Regional Accord, Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency
 Program, Community Visioning and Facilitation, Third Airport

Section 1: Natural Resource Planning - Water

Background

In 1959, the legislature enacted nine bills recommended by the Commission that gave municipalities and counties authority, for the first time, to plan and guide new development in way that would lessen and avoid flood hazards and damage. Shortly after, NIPC and the US Geological Survey began the first large-scale flood hazard mapping program, preparing flood hazard maps in response to the need for information on locations of flood prone areas.

Concerning groundwater, the region's problems were indirectly tied to the issue of Lake Michigan water diversion. In 1958, several Great Lakes states challenged the diversion, but in 1967 the Supreme Court approved it, with the caveat that it could only be obtained after all feasible means reasonably available had been employed to improve water quality in the Sanitary and Ship Canal.

In 1960, the Commission inventoried all sewage treatment plants and in 1966 launched its water resources management effort with the publication entitled the *Water Resource in Northeastern Illinois: Planning its Use*; the first comprehensive examination of water resource issues in the metropolitan area. This document identified and measured the water cycle in the region to provide information for local officials and citizens to better comprehend the future water supply situation.

By 1971, the commission adopted a *Regional Wastewater Plan*, which served as the basis for state and federal grant making for the construction of sewers and treatment plants during the early 1970s. It stressed the need to consider other environmental goals in addition to clean streams.

In 1976, the Commission followed the adoption of its *Comprehensive General Plan* with the development of the *Regional Overbank Flooding and Stormwater Drainage Policy Plan*. The three major goals included: protection of life and property from storm and floodwater damages; protection of ground and surface waters from flood and storm related pollution; and effective utilization of resources for storm and floodwater management.

In 1978, the Commission adopted the *Regional Water Supply Plan* identifying communities who could most appropriately receive new or added allocations of Lake Michigan water. In 1979, the Commission adopted the *Areawide Water Quality Management Plan for Northeastern Illinois*, addressing non-point sources of pollution, and incorporating locally developed facility plans for addressing point sources.

Actions Taken

By the mid-1990s, these policy plans had become, to varying degrees, outdated. Revisions were needed to address updated local, state, and federal laws and policies to reflect improved understanding of evolving technical issues and to build on twenty years of experience in devising innovative techniques to better manage water resources. The recognition of this need was one factor in the Commission's decision to prepare the *Strategic Plan for Water Resource Management*, which was adopted in 2001. The Plan is described on the following page.

NIPC's *Strategic Plan for Water Resource Management*, adopted in 2001, began with a facilitated strategic planning process to identify issues and strategies to address water resource issues facing the region. The process was funded in part by a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. Goals of the Plan included developing a regionwide consensus to influence state policy on behalf of the region, improving management at the regional and local level, and enhancing public understanding of water issues. The Plan is intended to guide the region in responding to its water resources issues: water quality, flooding and water supply. In each of these areas, the Plan recommends a series of strategies and identifies the entities to implement them. A Water Resources Advisory Committee and three task forces worked with NIPC Commissioners and staff to identify a total of 34 issues and 133 associated strategies. Key elements of the three areas of the Plan are summarized below.

– Stormwater and Flooding

In the past, intensive agricultural development and urbanization did not fully consider the long-term consequences of altering the region's landscape. The Plan stated that on an annual basis current flood damages were estimated at nearly \$40 million. The Plan's suggested strategies include improving watershed planning and coordination, increasing funding for floodplain mapping, and educating public officials and the public on stormwater and flooding issues.

– Water Quality

The Plan notes that the most severe impacts on water quality are caused by urbanization and associated discharges of pollutants from wastewater and stormwater sources. Many of our region's rivers and lakes, particularly those in urban and suburban watersheds, are not safe for swimming and do not support diverse, healthy fish communities. Nonpoint source pollution contributions such as agricultural runoff, urban stormwater runoff, and erosion from construction sites are the major sources of water quality impairment. Suggested strategies include establishing more protective water quality standards, increasing funding for wastewater treatment plant construction, and educating local officials, engineers, and the public on best management practices.

– Water Supply

In spite of the region's proximity to one of the world's largest freshwater sources, Lake Michigan, the plan notes that the region faces potential water supply shortages. As land is consumed by an increasing population, greater demands will be placed upon available surface water and groundwater supplies and water supply resources may become inadequate to meet the region's needs. Suggested strategies include educating the public on the status of availability of Lake Michigan water, increasing funding for research on the region's groundwater and surface water supplies, and protecting the groundwater recharge areas.

Current Status of the Strategic Plan for Water Resource Management

The Strategic Plan for Water Resource Management was developed with assistance of over 100 experts in the region serving on advisory committees and task forces. One group, the Water Supply Task Force, recommended 22 strategies. The first strategy was accomplished in January 2006 with an Executive Order requiring that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources lead the state and regional water-supply planning activities, coordinating with the Illinois State Water Survey to define a comprehensive program for state and regional water supply planning and management. It is anticipated that the other 21 recommendations will now have a strong chance of coming to life.

As part of this Regional Water Supply Study, the State selected two priority water-supply planning areas for pilot studies, one of which is northeastern Illinois. CMAP facilitates this process for this region. Lessons learned from the pilot studies will lead to effective planning process in other regions of Illinois, which will reduce conflicts; increase preparedness for droughts and possible climate change; lead to joint considerations of surface waters and groundwater; increase awareness of water as a precious commodity; and increase cooperation among analysts and decision makers. Ultimately, a statewide plan will be produced as a compendium of the regionally-led planning initiatives. By June 2009, scientific information and mathematical computer models will be developed for these areas, and management options will be evaluated on the basis of projected water-supply and demand. The regional groups, working with the Illinois State Water Survey, the Illinois State Geological Survey and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, will conduct extensive education and outreach activities regarding the benefits of regional water-supply planning and the progress being made.

Recommendation for Strategic Plan for Water Resource Management

- Consider water supply planning in the development of the comprehensive plan and update data on a continuing basis.
- Build on past work and current staff expertise to promote consideration of future opportunities to conduct watershed-based planning in the region in order to be in alignment with state and federal guidelines and recommendations on watershed planning.

Water Resource Planning Tools

Model Ordinances

As part of its technical assistance to local governments, the commission developed a series of model ordinances for addressing the topics of floodplain management, stormwater drainage and detention, stream and wetland protection, and soil erosion and sedimentation control. The ordinances contain provisions that reflect significant elaborations and or expansions of NIPC policy plans. Of the planning aids for local municipalities that NIPC has produced, these are some of the most frequently requested publications. The Commission has developed numerous publications on related topics such as stormwater best management practices and flood hazard mitigation.

Watershed Planning

Partnerships of local governments and private organizations develop techniques for controlling stormwater runoff and other non-point sources of pollution in watersheds. NIPC often leads these efforts, providing technical and coordination assistance, as well as producing the plans themselves. Currently NIPC is collaborating with members of the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership to develop watershed plans for Beaver Creek the Upper Kishwaukee River, and Lawrence Creek, with funding provided by IEPA through the Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant program.

Section 2: Natural Resource Planning: Biodiversity and Sustainable Development

Background

The topic of biodiversity protection and restoration, although implicitly recognized in previous NIPC efforts and publications, has become a major natural resource initiative for the agency and the broader region as a whole. The region contains an amazing concentration of rare ecosystem types harboring a high diversity of species, including a large number of those listed as threatened or endangered in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Outside of this broader region, levels of diversity drop off sharply. One study found that more than half of the major community types of the region were at the highest level of conservation concern due either to the small amount remaining or to the poor ecological health of the remaining examples.

At the ecosystem level, biodiversity provides the conditions and drives the processes that sustain the global economy – and our survival as a species. The benefits and services provided by ecosystems are vast, including, but not limited to: detoxification and decomposition of wastes; generation of soils and maintenance or soil quality; maintenance of air and water quality; pest control; climate stabilization; provision of food security and many others.

Recognizing the value of the region's surviving natural communities, which are of national and global significance for conservation, a regional alliance of over 200 conservation-minded agencies and organizations was formed. Chicago Wilderness (CW) was launched in April 1996 as a consortium working together to study, restore, protect and manage the natural resources of the Chicago region for the benefit of the public. The *Biodiversity Recovery Plan* is the most important document in its role as guiding the work of the consortium.

NIPC's Executive Director at that time, Phil Peters, was instrumental in the creation of the consortium. He served as chair until his retirement. NIPC staff chaired the consortium's Task Forces and Committees, and created the first drafts of the *Biodiversity Recovery Plan*. NIPC continues playing an active role at many levels.

Actions Taken

NIPC adopted the *Biodiversity Recovery Plan*, continues to staff the CW Sustainability Team as a Team Coordinator, and serves on the Executive and Steering Committees for the consortium. NIPC has undertaken approximately 40 projects funded through CW, and typically has proposals in project pipelines at any given time. One of NIPC's key CW projects was the creation of the Green Infrastructure Vision, the implementation of which is an ongoing strategy of the Sustainability Team to further the goals of the Biodiversity Recovery Plan. These plans are described on the following pages.

Biodiversity Recovery Plan, 1999

The overall goal of the CW Biodiversity Recovery Plan is “to protect the natural communities of the Chicago region and to restore them to long-term viability, in order to enrich the quality of life of its citizens and to contribute to the preservation of global biodiversity.” It identifies the ecological communities of the greater Chicago region, assesses their condition, identifies the major factors affecting them, and provides recommendations for actions needed to restore, protect and sustain them well into the future. The plan is intended to complement the many other planning efforts that are guiding the region toward a better and more productive future. Foremost among these are the plans of NIPC, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission.

Success of the *Biodiversity Recovery Plan* will lead to the accomplishment of the following goals:

1. Foster a sustainable relationship between society and nature in the region.
2. Involve the citizens, organizations and agencies of the region in biodiversity conservation efforts.
3. Strengthen the scientific basis of ecological management.
4. Protect globally and regionally important natural communities.
5. Restore natural communities to ecological health.
6. Manage natural communities to sustain native biodiversity.
7. Develop citizen awareness and understanding of local biodiversity to ensure support and participation.
8. Enrich the quality of the lives of the region’s citizens.

Key recommendations of the *Biodiversity Recovery Plan* include the following:

1. Land that is already preserved for conservation must be managed in such a way that biodiversity is protected and restored.
2. More land with existing or potential biodiversity benefits must be preserved.
3. Management of streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, and the surrounding lands must be greatly improved by state agencies, local agencies, water reclamation districts, and private landowners in order to protect water quality and biodiversity.
4. More monitoring and other research needs to be conducted in order to understand the effects that human disturbance and ecological restoration efforts are having on biodiversity.
5. Citizens’ awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation should be increased as should the level of opportunity for participation in programs and efforts that enhance biodiversity.
6. Local and regional development policies should reflect the need to restore and maintain natural areas and biodiversity.

Current Status of the Biodiversity Recovery Plan

The *Biodiversity Recovery Plan* continues to be a valuable guide to achieving the goal of protecting natural communities in the region. Four teams (Science, Natural Resources Management, Sustainability, and Education and Communication) made up of different combinations of consortium members, initiate and carry out projects based on the long term goals and short term objectives of the Plan.

The activities of the consortium are a valuable means for coordination and communication across jurisdictional boundaries, due not only to the fact that the consortium is a unique partnership of 200 member organizations, but also that the Chicago Wilderness region extends into northeastern Indiana, southeastern Wisconsin, and Illinois counties outside the border of northeastern Illinois region.

CW members, including CMAP, have access to Small CW grants, Work Plan grants, and, as an ecosystem partnership, CW initiates grants from Conservation 2000. A CW grant review panel evaluates member's proposals, identifying for funding those most closely aligned with the Plan's goals and objectives. As stated earlier, NIPC has received funding and/or partnered in nearly 40 grants. An example of a NIPC project funded by CW is the Green Infrastructure Vision, which is described on the following page.

Recommendation for the Biodiversity Recovery Plan

- In the development of the comprehensive plan, continue partnerships and update data as appropriate.

Green Infrastructure Vision, 2004

The *Green Infrastructure Vision*, a cornerstone project of the agency and of CW, was created by NIPC in 2004. It is a broad-brush vision map of recommended resource protection areas, and a final report of the input gathered from workshops held throughout the region during its development. It is a product of numerous workshops and partnerships. It is a visual representation of the Biodiversity Recovery Plan, and one of the Sustainability Team's key strategies to implement that Plan

The project produced a set of maps that define areas where opportunities for protection, expansion, restoration, and connection of resource rich natural areas exist at the regional scale. The map's Recommended Resource Protection Areas represent the fulfillment of the *Biodiversity Recovery Plan's* call for protection of large complexes of remnant woodlands, savannas, prairies, wetlands, lakes, stream corridors and the related natural communities. These areas were identified during a Chicago Wilderness/Metropolis 2020 workshop of local and regional natural resource experts and other planning professionals. The areas recommended for protection also include land adjacent to and connecting the remnant natural communities that provide both buffers and opportunities for ecosystem restoration. Green infrastructure is defined as the interconnected network of land and water that supports biodiversity and provides terrestrial and aquatic habitat for diverse communities of native flora and fauna.

Current Status of the Green Infrastructure Vision

Implementation of the Green Infrastructure Vision is the top priority of the Chicago Wilderness's Sustainability Team (this team is coordinated by NIPC staff). The strategy is to "Conduct broad outreach and focused implementation of the Green Infrastructure Vision in both newly developing areas as well as built-up areas appropriate for retrofitting, with a focus on sensitive areas at risk and areas most in need of assistance."

Projects have been and will continue to be based on the objective of acquiring and/or preserving land in order to increase interconnected habitat. NIPC has led or partnered in CW projects based on this strategy, including production of the Conservation Design Resource Manual, and both broad and local outreach and technical assistance to local governments, engineers, developers, and other stakeholders.

Recommendation for Green Infrastructure Vision

- Consider the Green Infrastructure Vision map and recommendations in development of the Regional comprehensive plan as it relates to resource protection in both transportation and land use planning

Selected Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Planning Tools

Conservation Design Resource Manual: Language and Guidelines for Updating Local Ordinances, 2003

In partnership with Chicago Wilderness, the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission developed the *Conservation Design Resource Manual: Language and Guidelines for Updating Local Ordinances*. The resource manual is designed to help communities effectively update local plans and ordinances to be more amenable to conservation design practices. Conservation design is a development style that takes into account the natural landscape and ecology of a development site and facilitates development while maintaining the most valuable natural features and functions of the site. Conservation design includes a collection of site design principles and practices that can be combined to create environmentally sound development.

The main principles for conservation design as defined by the project are:

1. flexibility in site design and lot size,
2. protection and management of natural areas,
3. reduction of impervious surface areas, and
4. sustainable stormwater management.

There are many community, environmental and economic benefits to using conservation design. The most effective way to encourage conservation design is to update local comprehensive plans, codes, and ordinances to reflect the community's commitment to conservation. The manual states that most importantly, conservation design should be allowed by right and should be the preferred option for many development projects.

The benefits of Conservation Design are that it

- Reduces construction and infrastructure costs by 11% to 66%
- Preserves natural resources and features.
- Reduces the costs of municipal stormwater management.
- Allows connections to existing natural areas, open space, greenways, and trails.

Sustainable Development Principals for Protecting Nature in the Chicago Wilderness Region

Eight principles for sustainable development are put forth that promote protection and enhancement of the natural environment – land, water, habitat, and soils in northeastern Illinois, northwestern Indiana, and southeastern Wisconsin. The brochure provides guidance to local governments and developers on the planning and design of new development and redevelopment projects that protect and enhance nature as an integral part of the development process. The principals include: promoting infill development and redevelopment where transportation facilities and utilities already exist in order to minimize the development of open lands, such as natural areas and farmland; encouraging development that is compact and contiguous to existing community infrastructure; locating and planning new development in ways that protect natural resources and habitat and provide buffers between sensitive natural areas and intensive use areas; using the development process to enhance and restore streams, wetlands and lakes and enhancing their potential as recreational and aesthetic amenities; preserving permanent open space as an integral part of new development to both protect critical natural areas and to provide opportunities for recreation and environmental education; designing developments to create open space linkages to adjacent and regional natural areas so that nature exists not as islands but as connected habitat; recognizing the value of water as a resource and managing it to protect downstream waterbodies and wetlands; preventing increased flooding; preserving groundwater resources; and maintaining natural hydrology.

Sourcebook on Natural Landscaping for Local Officials, 2004

This reference manual covers basic principles and benefits of natural landscaping and presents successful projects in the region. It addresses how local officials can encourage the use of natural landscaping and avoid the pitfalls that could result in poorly implemented programs. It contains not only tools and techniques but also a full reference guide to additional sources and experts.

Recommendations for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Planning Tools

- Promote use by local, subregional and state governments, developers and other stakeholders of the tools and principles in these documents

Section 3: Recreation, Open Space, Greenways and Trail Planning

Background

Rapid loss of open space was one of the early concerns of the commission, and NIPC pioneered in development of the multiple-use-multiple benefit concept of public open space. It publicized successful examples of flood plains and other marginal lands turned into assets, recommended targets for open space needed, and adopted a policy in 1962 that promoted a standard of 15 acres of county forest preserve and 10 acres of state park land for every 1,000 residents. Local park districts were urged to meet a standard of 4 -10 acres per 1,000 residents. Technical Report No. 2, *Open Space in Northeastern Illinois*, provided the technical background for the 1971 Regional Open Space Plan, which guided open space acquisition in the region from 1971 until the 1980 adoption of the *Regional Open Space and Recreation Policy Plan*. The Commission provided park and forest preserved districts and others information on newly emerging needs and approaches through workshops and seminars. NIPC's open space and recreation planning has since branched off into the areas of non-motorized, multi-use greenways and water trails.

The *Regional Open Space and Recreation Policy Plan, 1980*, expanded concerns beyond land acquisition. It addressed issues affecting open space use and development, the conservation of environmental and energy resources, public recreation, creative use of existing public lands, and the innovative application of new acquisition techniques. It contained policies for the provision of recreation opportunities and preservation, use and management of open space.

Among reasons to protect open space, the Plan described: providing habitat for wildlife; maintaining types of agriculture that must be near the centers of urban population; preventing building in undesirable locations, separating incompatible land uses; and maintaining a rural environment for people wanting to lead a rural life-style. The Plan also stated that its goals and objectives supported the Commission's conservation and development strategy calling for stabilizing development in the region's mature communities by encouraging their maintenance and revitalization.

The 1980 Plan revised the open space standard of 1962, recommending 20 acres of parks per 1,000 people (combining county, state and large municipal parks), and 10 acres per 1,000 people of local parkland . This reflected the standards of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the United States Department of the Interior, but the Plan stipulated that open space acquisition should not be limited by these standards.

Actions Taken

In 1990, NIPC began to take action to create a plan that would propose that the region's protected green areas be linked in a manner that would provide a multitude of benefits. In 1992, NIPC adopted *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan*, and in 1997 adopted the update, called *the Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways and Trails Implementation Program*. These plans identified existing and proposed greenways, and the 1997 Plan recommended creation of a regional water trails plan, which led to the creation and adoption, of the Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan in 1999. Both are described in the following pages.

Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan, 1992 and 1997

In 1992, NIPC created its (and the nation's) first plan for preserving green corridors of open space for recreation and environmental benefits. *The Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan*, adopted in 1992, was developed partly in response to concerns for the fact that less than one percent of Illinois native habitat remained, that residents had less leisure time and access to open space, and that fiscal resources were shrinking at a time when land acquisition, development and maintenance costs were increasing.

Protecting open space corridors, or greenways, in the region offered a cost effective approach to regional resource management and recreation planning. Some of the environmental benefits of greenways include: keeping natural systems and habitats connected; providing effective filter strips along waterways that trap sediment and pollutants that damage water quality; and providing space for streams and wetlands to function naturally to accommodate stormwater flows. Greenways can also preserve historic trails; provide places to teach children the natural sciences, provide places to walk, run, horseback ride, bicycle, fish and other recreation. From an economic standpoint, open space corridors can enhance property values and reduce maintenance costs and pollution through natural landscaping.

In 1997, NIPC adopted the *Regional Greenways and Trails Implementation Program*, an update and replacement to the 1992 Plan map. Since the 1992 Plan, the size of the greenway network had nearly tripled, with the trail component alone doubling from 1000 to 2000 miles. Support for open space protection in the region was evidenced by referenda passed for open space protection as well as by federal and state programs and initiatives. Residents were ranking trails and open space highest on lists of desired community amenities. The 1997 update was partly in response to the increasing population and continuing urbanization imposing stress on stream corridors and other natural resources which need to be identified for preservation. In conjunction with the counties, NIPC identified 2000 miles of streams as part of the proposed greenway system.

This update of the Plan also recommended the development of a regional water trail system, leading to the adoption in 1999 of the *Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan*.

Current Status of the Greenways Plan

The Greenways Plans have been very successful in setting a regional vision and are used by state agencies in prioritizing funding for trails; local governments in creating linkages adjacent to their jurisdictions leading to effective collaborative planning; and by transportation and other entities in corridor planning activities. The Plan is currently undergoing an update of the map, with funding from the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Recommendation for the Greenways Plan

- Continue to promote both broad-based and focused support for implementation of the Greenways Plan as a means to protect resources, provide multi-use, non-motorized transportation and recreation.
- Consider the Greenways Plan in development of the regional comprehensive plan.
- Update the plan at least every 5 years.

Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trail Plan, 1999

By 1996, mid-to large-sized paddling club members in northeastern Illinois totaled over 2,500. In the Des Plaines River Canoe Marathon alone, participants in the 19 mile course typically number well over 1,200. Aside from organized events, paddlers have had to overcome countless obstacles to accessing the region's waters. Even though there are 42,839 registered non-motorized boats (plus the many unregistered) in northeastern Illinois, there is comparatively little public access to the 500 miles of streams that could have potential for becoming recreational trails for paddlers. They'd made due with climbing through holes in fences and putting in their boats at muddy, steep streambanks.

Through the Illinois Paddling Council, an umbrella organization of paddling clubs, paddlers spoke up about the lack of access and coordination between communities to provide access, sites and signage. Advocates in IDNR, NIPC, and the Openlands Project listened, recognized the tremendous opportunities for education, stewardship, eco-tourism and other economic benefits, and envisioned a regionally interconnected system of public access sites for canoes and kayaks with parking, signage and inter-community coordination.

The IDNR, with additional support from Kraft Foods, sponsored NIPC, Openlands Project, and the Illinois Paddling Council to develop the *Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trail Plan*, which was adopted by NIPC in 1999. The Plan established a vision for providing water trails for non-motorized boating on ten of the region's waterways. It is a NIPC plan that responded directly to a grass roots initiative and was inspired and designed by paddlers, representatives from local governments, tourism advocates and conservationists. It designated nearly 500 miles of waterways as recreational water trails.

Current Status of the Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan

Since that Plan was adopted, more than forty new launch sites have been added and more than 200 miles of trails have been improved (as of February 2007). The number of people participating in recreational canoeing and kayaking has doubled. Plan recommendations, such as creating a website for paddlers to access information about the system and plan their trips on the region's waterways have been carried through as well as many others. While originally developed as a planning tool, a new map has been produced by Openlands Project that is geared to paddlers for use as a general reference. It includes such information as the direction of flow of the waterways, and the condition of portages around dams.

Recommendation for the Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan

- Continue to promote the implementation of the Plan with coordination of state, regional, subregional and local levels in providing sites, signs and access for canoes and kayaks.
- Partner with paddling organizations and Openlands Project to continue initiatives to promote use of water trails and the benefits to stakeholders in relation to stewardship, eco-tourism, education, and economic opportunities.

Section 4: Land Use Planning

Background

In mid-1960s, FHWA offered the Commission funds to prepare a development plan for the region, resulting in the region's first plan since 1909: NIPC's *Comprehensive General Plan* of 1968, more commonly referred to as the Finger Plan. The Plan urged compact, contiguous development related to the region's commuter rail system, to conserve the region's environmental resources and to foster intergovernmental cooperation in the management of growth. It was lauded for its strong transportation system, feasibility, and flexibility. In 1977 it was broadened to address concern for older, largely built up communities. Up until then, much of the agency's planning was focused on assisting new towns. The Regional Conservation and Development Strategy Statement was the commission's first effort to re-orient its plans and programs to acknowledge that continued expansion of the Region's urbanized areas was often at the expense of older communities. Of concern during this time was the growth plateau the region reached in the 1970's. The commission appraised its plans and programs to determine how overall economic growth could be stimulated.

In 1978, NIPC adopted the *Regional Land use Policy Plan* (built on the intergovernmental coordination established in the population forecast process as well as the Commission's more recent review and acceptance of the completed comprehensive plans of the counties. It was a twofold conservation (i.e., urban redevelopment) and development strategy, recommending that first, all governments cooperate to encourage the maintenance and revitalization of fully developed communities, and second, to accommodate orderly urban expansion supportive of regional objectives. The plan promoted establishing a review process for developments of regional impact in northeastern Illinois, ranging from a voluntary local review process established by the intergovernmental agreements, to a state review system similar to Florida's.

In 1984, NIPC adopted an update to the *Regional Land Use Policy Plan*. The major changes included recognition of county and municipal land use plans; encouragement of future coordination of land use and water quality management decision-making; recognition of interchanges areas, airports, and areas around regional centers as appropriate for higher intensity; compatible development; emphasis on existing facilities as a development framework for the region; and procedures for dealing with land use conflicts. The Plan also contained maps, including: a consolidated county/municipal land use plan; critical environmental areas; additional areas of regional open space and agricultural protection areas of concern; wastewater facility planning areas; expressway and regional centers, regional transit access areas; fixed route bus threshold areas; and development opportunity areas. In 1990, a two year re-examination and update of the Commission's 1984 *Regional Land Use Policy Plan* was initiated with a series of public hearings on the land development process and how that process could be improved. Work continued on the update of the *Regional Land Use Policy Plan* through the efforts of the Balanced Development Task Force, the Agricultural Protection Task Force, the Environmental Task Force, the Open Space Preservation Task Force and the Implementation Task Force, all chaired by NIPC Commissioners. After two years of extensive public involvement, the Commission adopted the *Strategic Plan for Land Resource Management* in 1992.

The continuing outward movement of the region's people and jobs coupled with dramatic increases in land consumption per resident, and per worker, were critical factors driving the Plan's objectives. Objectives included improving the stewardship of environmental resources and achieving a more balanced development pattern including balancing public and private development; balancing jobs and housing; and balancing Agricultural Area protection with the need for development.

Between 1969 and 1987, local farmland in northeastern Illinois declined 21 percent. The 400 square miles of lost local farmland were being developed even though the region's total population remained virtually unchanged. This Plan adopted Agricultural Protection Areas identified for protection by Kane, McHenry, and Will counties. The provision was that when expansion of a wastewater facility planning area into a designated Agricultural Protection Area was proposed, the applicant must demonstrate the proposed FPA amendment has been planned in a manner that would minimize adverse impacts on agricultural resources and farm operations.

Plan strategies aimed at the following:

- increased use of vacant lands and older buildings in mature communities and infill between suburban communities rather than excessive expansion into agricultural areas
- compact, contiguous patterns of newly developed and redeveloped land
- a network of land and water-based greenways throughout out the region
- an improved balance of land for jobs and affordable housing throughout the region to maximize economic opportunities for all people
- the preservation of the region's land-based historic and cultural heritage
- state and federal support of local objectives through acceptance of this region's planning policies and related growth forecasts.

The Plan's two design recommendations for the region's shape and form were: 1) to complete the regional greenways network, and 2) consider the implementation of a diversified regional centers policy. This Plan also recommended that the process of intergovernmental land resource planning be employed for all major expressway and transit facilities, and expressed the need for identification and implementation of a development of regional impact and geographic areas of regional concern impact assessment.

Actions Taken

The 2040 Regional Framework Plan, adopted by NIPC and subsequently CMAP, is the successor to the Strategic Plan for Land Resource Management.

Land Use Planning Tools

Environmental Considerations in Comprehensive Planning

In 1994, NIPC published *Environmental Considerations in Comprehensive Planning*, a manual of techniques for responding to environmental challenges and opportunities in community planning. It was designed to help local planning commission and planners, as well as developers, to achieve environmental protection and restoration goals in ways which would also reduce development costs, increase market appeal, and contribute to community viability. Topics include the relationships between land use planning and water resources, air quality, wastewater management, energy conservation, and farmland preservation.

Building a Regional Framework Series

NIPC planning staff produced nine reports in the series called “Building a Regional Framework.”

These reports are designed to educate the public about particular issues and spark greater public input into the regional planning process. They describe the elements and challenges of “smart growth,” e.g., better ways to grow that boost the economy, protect the environment, and enhance community vitality both locally and regionally. Titles in the series include:

- Transit-Oriented Development
- Enhancing Main Streets and Town Centers
- A View of Economic Activity
- Intergovernmental Planning and Cooperation
- Managing Development to Protect Agriculture
- Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Achieving Balance: Jobs and Housing
- Guiding Development to Protect our Natural Resources
- Designing Interactive Communities
- Brownfields and Greyfields: A Resource for Community Development

Building Sustainable Communities Series, 2004

This is a research series to guide local and regional development. It was developed by NIPC with the Campaign for Sensible Growth partners. Fourteen fact sheets emphasize land use and development practices to promote economic prosperity, environmental integrity and community vibrancy.

Rural, suburban and urban development is addressed. Each document in the series provides case studies, describes implementation and benefits, and lists resources and research for more information. The series includes the following planning topics:

- Agricultural Land Preservation
- Air Quality Protection and Improvement
- Building Green Infrastructure
- Community Character and Historic Preservation
- Conservation Development
- Creating Livable Communities
- Energy Efficiency and Green Buildings
- Reusing Built Environments
- Strengthening Local Economies
- Sustainable Sites and Natural Landscapes
- Transit Oriented Development
- Water Resource Protection
- Workforce Housing

Recommendations for Land Use Planning Tools

- Continue promoting, distributing and conducting outreach on the concepts in each of the topics included in Building a Regional Framework Series and Building Sustainable Communities.
- Consider the concepts in these tools in the development of the comprehensive regional plan.
- Update and add to these documents as appropriate.

Section 5: Solid Waste Management

Background

NIPC's concern with solid waste management dates back to 1963 with the publication of *Refuse Disposal Needs and Practices in Northeastern Illinois*, which was updated in the 1973 Solid Waste Report. The first *Regional Solid Waste Management Policy Plan* was adopted in 1976.

Regional involvement in solid waste issues came to a peak in the mid-1980. The Commission received a two-year grant from the Chicago Community Trust in 1983 to study what to do with domestic waste over the next two decades. One of the initiatives the Commission undertook was to conduct an areawide survey of waste management needs and local planning efforts. The president of NIPC announced the results of the Commission's survey: the six county areas as a whole had landfill capacity sufficient to handle current waste volumes for only 8.2 years. (An update of the survey revealed that the region's 22 landfills had a combined remaining capacity sufficient for handling projected volumes of waste for only 7.3 years. In addition, a conference on the status of solid waste management planning in northeastern Illinois was held, where a frequent theme of the presentations was that counties were preparing to handle locally generated waste, but not that which might come from outside their jurisdiction.

Actions Taken

A 30-member advisory committee reviewed the first draft of the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan in 1985 (an update to the 1976 Plan) and adopted it in 1986. NIPC also helped build consensus on a comprehensive solid waste management bill enacted by the Illinois General Assembly. The following year, NIPC completed the first area-wide inventory of inactive landfills and dumps in the region. The 1986 Plan is described on the following page.

Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, 1986

The *Regional Solid Waste Management Plan* was adopted by NIPC in 1986 as an update of the 1976 Plan. The issue of solid waste disposal was of great, growing, concern due to dwindling landfill space, increasing knowledge of environmental risk, and changing public attitudes, making it a priority issue for local officials. As county and municipal plans recognized the importance of land filling, they also called for the implementation of a broader range of disposal strategies, incineration and energy recovery, recycling and composting. The Plan notes that if those strategies were carried out, it would be possible that the portion of the waste stream which is landfilled could be reduced from 94% to 50% by the year 2000.

During the development of the 1986 Plan, principal debate centered on the proposed tightening of standards for landfill siting and design, the promotion of recycling, and the introduction of local solid waste plans as a factor to be recognized in Illinois siting law.

The Plan contains policies that would create a better legal and financial climate within which county and municipal governments can work to implement their plans. It seeks to advocate conditions in which each local area may choose, from among a range of proven technologies and management approaches, those which best suit its needs and objectives. For example, some local governments were seeking to build incinerators to be financed in part by the sale of energy. The NIPC plan offered policies seeking protection from proposed adverse changes in federal tax law, and for assistance in Illinois Commerce Commission regulations. For areas anticipating the demand or need for controversial new or expanded landfills, the Plan recommends that state design standards employ the principle of “best available technology” including leachate collection, management of decomposition gases, and longer post-closure monitoring with financial guarantees. For recycling measures, the Plan promotes seeking state authority and financing capability to boost markets for recycled materials to help defray startup costs for recycling programs.

The Plan’s 20 recommended policies fall into the following major areas:

- Regulation and oversight of the development and operation of landfills in order to mitigate environmental and public health hazards
- Cost-effectiveness of and financing mechanisms for waste-to-energy facilities
- Responsiveness of waste disposal facility siting decisions to local solid waste planning
- Encouragement of waste reduction and recycling

Recommendation for the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan

- Siting decisions, recycling, and waste to energy should be carried into land use and open space policies. Environmental regulation does not need to be addressed as it is now covered by state and federal law.

Section 6: Housing

Background

In 1976, the Commission, as the federal A-95 comprehensive planning review and comment body for the region, adopted a policy which focused on 53 of the region's 260 communities anticipated to experience employment growth of 5,000 or more, had less than 2% minority populations and who had less than one unit of low-moderated income housing for every 3 jobs. These communities were strongly urged to study their housing needs. Failure to follow this recommendation did not mean automatic disapproval of their requests for federal funds, the commission instead would "raise a flag". The policy was intended to get communities to begin thinking about incentives in their housing plans for low-income housing. In 1978, NIPC developed the *Regional Residential Policy Plan* which addressed the entire spectrum of housing problems and opportunities facing the region over a 20 year period. Special attention was given to the need for affordable housing. The Plan identified a need to provide 440,000 units of assisted housing by 1985.

The focal point of NIPC's 1980 housing activities was spreading the word about successful approaches and programs for housing and residential activities, including rehabilitation, new construction, and assisted housing needs. In 1980, the Commission launched a Residential Planning and Public Information Program which utilized slides, video tapes, brochures, and experiences of local governments.

In 1984 NIPC adopted interim guidelines for linking job growth and affordable housing: "For every 100 jobs added to an area which already lacks an adequate supply of affordable housing, a need is generated for an additional 15 affordable housing units within a reasonable commuting distance of the new jobs. NIPC adopted this guideline in 1990 as "*A Guideline for Linking Job Growth with Affordable Housing*": "For every 100 jobs added to an area which already lacks an adequate supply of affordable housing, a need is generated for an additional 15 affordable housing within a reasonable commuting distance of the new jobs." The same year, the City of Chicago requested the assignment of a NIPC Fellow to provide staff support to the Mayor's Task Force on the Homeless for one year. The focus of the NIPC appointed fellow (NIPC Fellowships were established in 1981) focused on research and policy development on the long-range aspects of homelessness and its causes.

In 1992, the Commission brought together officials from Cook County, the Northwest Housing partnership, and 10 suburban municipalities to develop an intergovernmental consortium agreement under the federal HOME Investment Partnerships program. This would increase the amount of housing development and rehabilitation funds available to the County and municipalities.

In 1994, the Commission's Jobs/Housing Working Group published a packet of information on employer-assisted housing programs. It was designed to help employers who may wish to consider providing housing assistance such as low interest or forgivable loans to group mortgage organizations as an aid to recruiting or retaining staff or contributing to community stabilization. This same year the Commission endorsed a five-point Housing Action Work Program to address issues through the provision of model intergovernmental agreements and ordinances and other technical assistance to local governments and housing providers.

In 1998, eleven communities were invited by NIPC to initiate a residential planning process. Municipal and county officials from northeastern Kane and southeastern McHenry counties convened as a Subarea Housing Congress to receive information and recommendations on meeting the future residential needs of their area.

Actions Taken

In the early 2000's a *Housing and Community Development Framework Plan* was developed geared toward building balanced communities that provide jobs, housing, social support, and amenities. In 2003, NIPC developed the Greater Chicago Housing and Community Development Website with information on the housing market and housing issues in the Chicago region. It serves people looking for affordable housing, as well as housing advocates, developers, planners, legislators and policy makers, real estate professionals, and researchers. It also links to housing information and research; detailed Census data; links to housing assistance programs; and detailed reports about specific housing markets or redevelopment and subsidy programs.

In 2002, NIPC endorsed the *Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Northeastern Illinois Housing Endorsement Principles*, intended to promote housing and mixed-use developments that meet community needs while also addressing broader regional sensible growth goals.

Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Northeastern Illinois Housing Endorsement Principles

In 2002, NIPC endorsed the *Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Northeastern Illinois Housing Endorsement Principles*. The purpose of the principles is to promote housing and mixed-use developments that meet community needs while also addressing broader regional sensible growth goals. The Housing Endorsement Criteria provide general principles regarding the type of housing communities should be working to develop and attract.

A variety of recent housing studies document that the median home price in most job growth corridors places homeownership out of reach for many working families. Furthermore, during the 1990s, the six-county Chicago region grew by 11 percent in population and 16 percent in jobs, but lost more than 28,000 apartments. Private sector interest in housing investment is becoming stronger. For our region to remain competitive, we must expand the supply of housing options to meet growing demands. By securing broad-based support for these Housing Endorsement Criteria, municipal leaders, neighbors, employers and community-based organizations can more effectively attract, identify and promote proposals for quality developments.

The general principles are:

– *Promote Economic Development and Sustainability*

Housing, when appropriately located, encourages the expansion of existing and the location of new businesses and industries within the region. The mismatch between where the jobs are and where workers can afford to live has significant costs. Increasingly, employers recognize that local housing for all levels of their workforce promotes stability and productivity for the workers as well as the individual company.

– *Encourage an Array of Quality Housing Options throughout the Region*

Developments with units at price points accessible to a wide range of income levels are needed to provide the local workforce and residents with a housing supply that is critically needed and currently lacking.

– *Support Innovative Community Development and Design*

Quality residential and mixed-use developments maintain, enhance, or create livable streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces oriented to the pedestrian. A variety of housing types provides a healthy mix of residents from different age groups, racial and cultural backgrounds, income levels, and household types. New developments foster a sense of community, while promoting people's choice of housing, privacy, and convenient access to nearby amenities.

– *Provide for Mixed Uses within a Neighborhood*

In order to enhance community livability and decrease auto dependency, a mix of land uses within a neighborhood combine residential with retail, restaurants, schools, and other amenities in close proximity. The location of schools, entertainment districts, parks, businesses, institutions, and recreational facilities will be consciously integrated with new and existing residential developments to encourage ease of pedestrian access.

– *Minimize Cost of Municipal Services*

Clustering housing near existing infrastructure minimizes the per capita costs of municipal services by allowing for more efficiency and economies of scale.

– *Promote the Use of Public Transit*

Housing, together with commercial space and public amenities, should be planned for, and built first, within walking distance of existing or planned transit service in order to strengthen transit ridership and decrease traffic congestion.

– *Support Sensible Growth*

There are ample opportunities within existing service areas of our older cities and suburbs to provide for a portion of projected housing needs over the next 20 years. Infill development and redevelopment within existing municipal areas and conservation developments are of tremendous value. Adhering to development policies that encourage compact, mixed-use development will promote an array of housing types and expand individual choice. This will advance other regional and community needs, such as the protection of open space and the growth of the local tax base.

Current Status of the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus Housing Endorsement Criteria

These principles, while they apply to housing, are integral to achieving the characteristics of centers as outlined in the 2040 Plan. One of the 2040 Plan strategies, “to provide affordable housing opportunities”, calls for NIPC to “be a leader in advocating for affordable housing issues with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and other groups committed to address affordable housing issues”. Also in the 2040 Plan is the recommendation that local governments adopt the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus Housing Endorsement Criteria.

Recommendation for Housing Principles

- Continue supporting these Principles and tie the effort into transportation, open space and recreation.

Section 7: Selected Additional NIPC Initiatives

Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE)

Background

Freight infrastructure is a critical need nationally, and it is especially acute in Illinois. One-third of the nation's rail and truck cargo moves to, from, or through the Chicago region, which is already the busiest U.S. rail freight hub and getting busier. Northeastern Illinois is also among the top five inter-modal ports in the world. The U.S. Department of Transportation predicts substantially increased freight traffic nationally, and the federal government has a central role to play in addressing national freight issues. An important response to this is the CREATE program, which takes an innovative approach to freight, with significant benefits related to rail passengers, motorists, and safety.

The State of Illinois and the city of Chicago joined with passenger and freight railroads serving the region to identify critically needed improvements to the Chicago region's rail and highway transportation infrastructure. This program is intended to be an important part of a broader, national freight strategy.

Some of the potential approaches for managing freight include:

- Enabling the expansion of barrier-free tolling technology -- similar to the transponder-based open road tollways in Illinois -- with variable pricing and user fees to give truckers and other drivers an incentive to use highways in non-peak periods and reduce rush hour congestion.
- Promoting suburban freight centers by targeting public and private industrial investments in corridors that can most efficiently support new development and minimize freight trips.
- Maximizing the rail system's capacity for freight. It is recommended that action take place immediately to preserve land for future rail corridors and intermodal terminals where freight can be transferred efficiently from rail to trucks and moved quickly to customers.

Actions Taken

In 2003, NIPC adopted Resolution 03-5 endorsing CREATE.

Recommendation

Continue to support the CREATE freight management strategies to achieve necessary improvements in the region's rail and highway transportation infrastructure as identified in the program.

Community Visioning

NIPC advises and collaborates with communities and intercommunity councils throughout the region to identify the best ways to generate redevelopment and accommodate future growth. This frequently takes the form of community visioning which involves organizing and facilitating local workshops in which residents can assess their community's resources, articulate their hopes for the future, and consider alternative ways of getting there. The workshops make use of the tools developed in Common Ground and the forecasting process, including facilitated group deliberation, keypad polling, computer-aided visualization and analysis of alternative land use patterns.

Economic Development

Background

In 1985, NIPC released the *Economic Interdependency Study* revealing a region composed of a number of economically interdependent sub-regions. It looked at market relationships, service interdependencies, and other facts which revealed the extent of subregional linkages. One measure of interdependency was the pattern of commutes in the region. The growth of a commuter economy in the suburbs reflects residential dispersion, which means that a larger geographic area is required to contain a given number of workers. Many suburban businesses require a variety of different education and skill levels among their employees; managerial, technical, clerical, and skilled and unskilled labor. But, people possessing these different skills are frequently not clustered together residentially, so there is a need to draw employees from a large “labor shed” in order to have sufficient pools of the right kinds of labor. Other interdependencies are based on cultural institutions, common needs such as access to Lake Michigan water, to a major international airport, or to sites for solid waste disposal.

Current Status

CMAP has established a department of Economic and Community Development in the structure of the agency.

Recommendation

In the development of the comprehensive regional plan, address the interrelationship of economic and community development with land use, transportation, the environment, and quality of life.

Energy

Background

NIPC’s 1980 annual conference highlighted ways local government’s regulations and practices could allow and promote the incorporation of energy conservation techniques in residential construction and rehabilitation. Subsequently NIPC, with the Illinois Institute of Natural Resources, developed detailed energy conservation guides, including guides on energy – *Guidelines for Efficient Community Development* (Site Development and Subdivision Design); *Guidelines for Energy-Efficient Rehabilitation and Retrofit*; and *Guidelines for Energy-Efficient New Construction*. During 1984, NIPC staff conducted energy audits of over 100 public buildings to help local governments save energy and money in operation of their buildings. The audits consisted of a systematic inspection and analysis of the building’s envelope, lighting and energy systems. Utility bills were also analyzed and reports were prepared which detailed suggested operating approaches, low cost improvements and capital improvements.

In the early 1990’s, NIPC staff provided local governments with examples of energy codes, code evaluations, and other information on energy planning. An annual survey in 1992 determined that 216 municipalities had adopted energy codes.

Recommendation for Energy

- Address issues related to the source and use of energy in the development of the region’s comprehensive plan, and the interrelationships with land use, transportation, environmental concerns, sustainability, and human health and safety.

Forecasts

Background

First forecasts were published in 1965 which indicated a 1980 population of 7,960,000 based on the 1960 count of 6,220,913. The actual 1980 Census count was 7,103,625. NIPC's growth monitoring program provides data, at the quarter section level, to the forecast program, other NIPC departments, governmental partners, and the general public. NIPC staff prepares small area (quarter section) employment estimates every 5 years, and housing unit estimates yearly. Primarily used as base data for NIPC's long range forecasting, the employment and housing estimates are also used by transportation agencies and researchers.

In 1978, NIPC established the Forecast and Growth Strategy Task Force to provide overall guidance and direction in development methods and procedures for the forecasting process. The goal was to achieve agreement on county and municipal forecasts by mid-1980. NIPC also entered a "Memorandum of Agreement with the Illinois Bureau of the Budget to expand the use of forecasts as an effective policy tool. In 1980 NIPC published the "Regional Data Report" of population forecasts, 1980 census preparations, and monitored housing and population changes

Paint the Region was created for NIPC in 2002 as a tool for gathering local expectations about future growth in order to increase the accuracy of its forecasting. Staff used a portable GIS system to map land uses in real time, based on data and anecdotal information gathered at one-on-one meetings with local officials. This data informs future growth forecasts. Areas of specific land uses are painted and the tool simultaneously calculates the numbers of new households and jobs being added to the specific area, or an entire community. NIPC has also used an enhance version of Paint the Town as an interactive tool in local planning workshops. Information entered into the system – geographic reference, resource constraints, census data, existing land use, local plans – is used to create models with which to gauge the future effects of current uses or assess the potential impacts of alternative proposals and policies.

Full Circle Mapping and Planning Project

Background

With funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Full Circle project began in 2004 with six communities in the City of Chicago. It now includes parts of suburban Cook County. The primary goal is to empower local residents and community organizations to plan the future development of their neighborhoods. The project develops wireless web tools to help communities identify how land parcels are being used, and how they could be used more effectively through a coordinated local participatory planning strategy. The tools are made available to municipalities or non-profit agencies that lack the capacity to buy or build their own data applications. The project also provides training and technical assistance to users of the system.

Full Circle's growing list of partners includes city planners, community and economic development organizations and other non-profit groups

The purpose of the Full Circle project is to create a well-informed, shared vision of the future by:

- Ensuring that neighborhood concerns are clearly articulated locally and within larger (e.g., city or regional) public planning processes.
- Giving residents access to the best available tools for planning the future of their communities.
- Establishing mechanisms for seamless exchange of data, creative ideas, goals and intentions from neighborhood residents to planners and back again.

Full Circle hinges on two core activities:

- Data collection using wireless, handheld devices for real-time input to a central server that is accessible from any web browser, with seamless mapping and data retrieval. Vacant lots, commercial investments, historical architecture and hundreds of other attributes can be updated on a daily basis.
- Face-to-face planning sessions in which residents and neighborhood leaders express their goals, concerns and ideas about the future of their communities.

Current Status

A MacArthur Foundation grant in 2006 has let the project expand its community mapping and planning efforts. The three-year, \$600,000 MacArthur grant will increase to 25 the number of communities using Full Circle technologies. In addition to the MacArthur Foundation, current sponsors include the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). Selected deployments of the project include: identification of sites by a Bronzeville economic development group that have historic significance that can be marketed to attract businesses; Logan Square partners tracking the availability of nutritious food in local groceries to identify under-served areas; a Rogers Park agency monitoring the conversion of apartments into condominiums; and Humboldt Park and Garfield Park community organizations identifying vacant lots and monitor building conditions to promote affordable housing;

Recommendation on Full Circle

Continue to seek resources to include additional communities and users.

The Greater Chicago Housing and Community Development Website

This website, a collaborative region-wide project hosted and managed by NIPC, is designed to guide and assist policy makers, housing/community development professionals, planners, researchers, developers and people seeking to buy or rent a home.

Highway Corridor Planning

Background

Corridor Planning Councils are formed to address local concerns regarding land use and environmental compatibility of a major existing or proposed transportation facility. The corridor planning concept was co-authored by the then Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation, Kirk Brown, at the time of NIPC's adoption of the Year 2010 Transportation System Development Plan. Preceding (and after) adoption of that plan, the Route 53 extension proposal met with much controversy. The fact that IDOT funded the Council development was considered a landmark advance in state – local cooperation considering that one of the purposes was to negotiate with IDOT over the standards to be utilized for the proposed highway.

In 1989, the Corridor Council of Central Lake County operated, informally, under the leadership of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. The purpose was to seek a coordinated approach to the overall growth and more particularly to the prospect of a major expressway – the north extension of Route 53 proposed to bisect the area. The Council established itself as a legal entity in 1991. By laws were adopted by a large majority of the 17 jurisdictions. They established principles of agreement: 25 growth management standards to guide local community growth and the design of the proposed expressway. Clusters of member communities and the county worked on joint land use plans for key portions of the corridor through which the expressway might pass, with the intention for the clusters to adopt the joint area plans under the provisions of the Local Land Resources Management Planning Act. The principal agreements and official planning documents were anticipated to number in the mid-teens.

This council prompted interest in the development of similar councils within the region. Councils have developed joint land use plans for expressway corridors, agreed on development standards for incorporation in local ordinances, prepared environmental impact assessments, and provided forums for local interaction with state transportation agencies. The council model has also been used to coordinate local planning and action in stream corridors and watersheds.

Current Status

NIPC/CMAP remains active in corridor planning initiatives.

Recommendation for Corridor Planning

Continue agency support and facilitation of corridor planning throughout the region

Model Ordinance for Traffic Flow and Air Quality Benefits

This model was developed and tailored to five communities in a demonstration project. The ordinance was designed to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution through use and promotion of alternatives to driving. Included in the options for an ordinance were, for example, allowances for higher density and mixed uses, cross-access easements between developments, access management, accommodation of non-motorized facility, and decreased building setbacks to encourage walking and public transit use.

NIPC Development Database

Background

The NIPC Development Database (NDD), established in 1987, tracks all significant development and re-development in northeastern Illinois. NIPC staff prepares small area (quarter section) employment estimates every 5 years, and housing unit estimates yearly. Primarily used as base data for NIPC's long range forecasting, the employment and housing estimates have also been used by transportation agencies and researchers. The database contains information on over 10,000 developments across the region. Through our Municipal Link program, municipalities can gain password protected access to the database, allowing them to edit and update data.

Current Status

The NDD is an important element of the forecast process. There have been discussions regarding potential for extending access to users in addition to forecasters.

Third Airport and the 2020 NIPC Forecast Process

Background

At the beginning of the 2020 RTP process it was recognized that the decision regarding whether to construct a third regional airport or to accommodate future air travel needs at O'Hare and Midway airports was not likely to be resolved before the plan's completion. Previous forecasts had shown 2 separate forecasts - one with the South Suburban Airport and one without. To deal with the controversy over this, NIPC used two future airport scenarios, both assuming that adequate air carrier capacity would be provided such that economic development of the region would not be inhibited. One scenario assumed that all of the capacity would be provided through improvements at the existing airports, O'Hare and Midway. The other assumed that the proposed South Suburban Airport would be built and additional enplanements would be served by a combination of O'Hare, Midway and the South Suburban Airport. In the 2020 RTP it was stated that neither the feasibility nor desirability of either airport scenario was addressed in the plan.

In the 2030 Plan, an agreement was reached to have only one airport scenario, which assumed that both O'Hare would be expanded and a third airport would be constructed in the region.

NIPC staff created a land use plan with a formal report for the 5 towns surrounding the proposed airport site. In addition, NIPC staff prepared draft legislation for a proposed intergovernmental land development district around the airport.

Tri-State Regional Accord, 2002

On April 2, 2002, representatives of four planning agencies from Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin signed the nation's first tri-state regional planning agreement, named the Wingspread Tri-State Regional Accord. This accord acknowledges that the multi-state region is characterized by socio-economic-environmental interdependence and improved coordination in the tri state area is needed. The signatories were the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), and the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS). Together, the four agencies serve 17 counties across nearly 8,000 square miles and more than 1,500 municipal governments.

Key commitments of the accord are to:

- Provide a forum for local government leadership, engage business, civic and institutional sectors to leverage the combined strengths of individual states to support approved regional plans for the benefit of the region
- Enlist federal and state governments to play key roles as partners and funders of such tri-state planning initiatives in coordination with existing agencies and activities
- Increase interstate and interagency communication using a variety of techniques and technologies with the goal of sharing information more efficiently and creating new opportunities for collaboration
- Develop methods to improve planning efforts for the region as a whole with emphasis on border areas and interstate coordination
- Work to coordinate approved plans, programs, and projects so as to more effectively and efficiently serve residents and visitors alike.

NIPC's priorities under the accord are to coordinate adjacent land use issues and major transportation programs and resolve water resources issues

Current Status

The Lake Michigan Watershed Academy is an outgrowth of the Wingspread Accord. The Academy works with local agencies which regulate land use in the lake's watershed to develop plans and policies to conserve water reduce pollutant runoff and preserve the Lake's ecosystem.

Since the accord was signed, collaborative approaches to addressing water-supply issues around Lake Michigan have been led by NIPC, NIRPC, and SEWRPC. With participation by the Indiana and Wisconsin planning agencies, NIPC organized and hosted a February 2005 conference called "Straddling the Divide", which brought together technical experts and local officials to exchange research and views regarding how to head off impending water shortages.

Recommendation for Tri-State Regional Accord

- Continue the dialogue for Lake Michigan states especially in the areas of transportation and water resources where dialogue has been established.

