

CMAP Prepares GO TO 2040 Campaign: Regional Plan Seeks a Better Future for Metropolitan Chicago

by Randall S. Blankenhorn

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) was formed in 2005 to approach planning in northeastern Illinois comprehensively and collaboratively. The new agency and its partners are removing barriers to cooperation across geographic boundaries, and across subject areas like land use, transportation, natural resources, and economic development. By understanding how these issues – and our communities' futures – are inter-related, CMAP wants to change the way planning is conducted in northeastern Illinois.

CMAP is required by state and federal law to produce the region's official long-range plan for land use and transportation. But the agency's planning process goes far beyond those requirements. By also addressing other quality-of-life issues like jobs, housing, water supply, education, and human services, CMAP and its partners intend to create a relevant plan that guides investments and development to 2040 and beyond.

GO TO 2040

This article is the first in an ongoing series on CMAP's regional comprehensive planning process, which is now underway. Called GO TO 2040 (www.goto2040.org), the plan will include a long-term, coordinated campaign to enhance the future of

metropolitan Chicago. This region includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties, with a current population of over 8.5 million people. The plan will extend through 2040, and reflect the shared values of the region's residents. GO TO 2040 will identify policies, strategies, and investments to increase the economic potential of the region. The plan will cover transportation systems, land use and development patterns, the natural environment, economic development, housing, and social systems and services.

CMAP has developed a six-step process to develop the GO TO 2040 plan; implementation will begin in 2010.

Step 1: Develop a regional vision

The regional vision describes desired outcomes for the region by 2040, and builds from results of prior planning processes in narrative form. The vision will touch on environment, the economy, social systems, and governance structures, and will guide the recommendations of the plan. The public will help develop the vision through surveys and meetings in early 2008.

Step 2: Understand existing conditions

CMAP will produce a series of regional snapshot reports on complex planning topics that need to be addressed in the plan, such as overall

sustainability, jobs/housing balance, and infill redevelopment. These reports will gauge the current status of the region on these issues and will recommend how they might be addressed in the GO TO 2040 plan. Quarterly snapshot reports began in Fall 2007 and are free to download on CMAP's Web site.

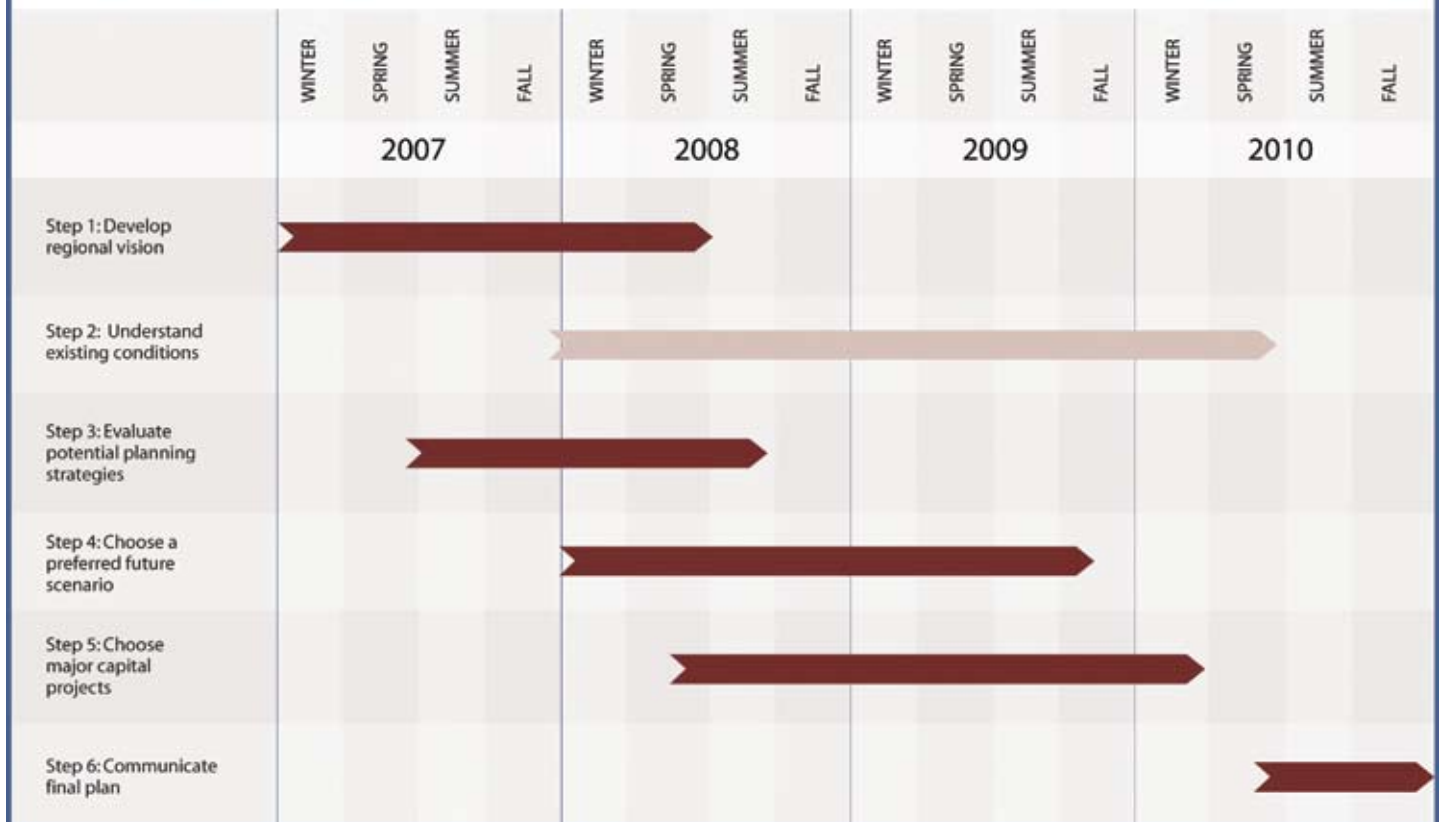
Step 3: Evaluate potential planning strategies

In addition to describing our desired future and understanding our current conditions, CMAP will evaluate alternate planning strategies to reach our regional vision. The evaluation process will help us to understand which strategies are most effective at meeting regional goals. A series of interactive papers on the results of strategy research will be posted on CMAP's Web site starting in early 2008.

Step 4: Choose a preferred future scenario

CMAP will also develop distinct, alternative future scenarios for the region's development, each combining a number of planning strategies. They will be evaluated using quantitative indicators to determine how well they achieve the regional vision. During Summer 2009, in conjunction with the Burnham Plan centennial celebration (www.burnhamplan100.org), CMAP will seek residents' input on their preferred scenario for the region's future. From this, as well as quantitative analysis of the effects of each scenario on traffic,

GO TO 2040 Plan Timeline



public health, the environment, the economy, and many other features, CMAP will identify one preferred scenario that best reflects the region's desired future.

Step 5: Choose major capital projects

Once a preferred scenario has been identified, major capital projects will be recommended for inclusion in the plan, based on how well they implement the regional vision. These will include large transportation projects such as rail extensions or highway expansions. They may also include other non-transportation projects, including water service extensions, or construction of major public facilities. The selection process will take place in Fall 2009.

Step 6: Communicate the plan

The final step is to communicate the plan's recommendations to our planning partners and the public. The document will be prepared and released in 2010, with adoption no later than September

2010. The final GO TO 2040 plan will include recommendations for policies, strategies, and investments in the areas of land use and transportation, as well as other areas such as economic development, environment, housing, and human services. CMAP plays an advisory role in most of these areas, meaning that many of the plan's recommendations will be directed to local governments, state agencies, or other groups. The plan will prioritize recommended actions, however, providing clear guidance to these groups.

Get Involved

Every stage of the planning process will provide opportunities for public involvement. CMAP will organize public meetings, interactive Web media, surveys, contests, and many other means of public input. Visit the GO TO 2040 Web site at www.goto2040.org and learn how you can provide input at every stage.

Biography

Randall S. Blankenhorn is executive director of CMAP, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which is responsible for comprehensive planning across the seven-county region. Mr. Blankenhorn and his staff are developing metropolitan Chicago's first truly comprehensive regional plan, to be published in 2010. He has over 20 years of experience in the planning, development, and implementation of transportation infrastructure projects.