



## Riverside board adopts CMAP plan for downtown

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RIVERSIDE – The community of Riverside is one step closer to a renovated and re-imagined downtown.

On April 15, the Village Board agreed to adopt a plan for the Central Business District. The plan was created by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) through resident feedback, and as part of a Local Technical Assistance Program run by the agency.

The CMAP plan calls for creating a shop local campaign for the village, increasing the diversity of businesses and streamlining the development review process for business proposals in the district. Other aspects of the plan call for the village to increase awareness of Riverside in the surrounding communities by increasing signage at entryways to the village and marketing vacant spaces by public art.

The plan also recommends beautifying the village along the Burlington Norther Santa Fe railway with public art and adding bike lanes that would connect to area trails.

The public was generally supportive of the plan's guidelines at a March 15 forum at Village Hall. Several residents said they want to see more restaurants in downtown Riverside and were excited about improvements that could be made to the village's riverfront area.

The riverfront, by all accounts, is an obvious draw into the community. The construction of a community center in a former Department of Public Works building, providing more riverfront walkways and adding a canoe and kayak livery at the waterfront largely were supported by the public. Green projects, such as river restoration, also are recommended in the plan.

The village was notified in March 2011 that it had been selected from more than 235 applications to participate in CMAP's Local Technical Assistance Program.

"As I have repeated on many occasions... Riverside is not just a place to live. It is a community," Village President Michael Gorman said in a statement. "It has been that special place since Frederick Law Olmsted laid down his plan for the village in 1869. Using this plan as a guidepost, Riverside will continue to preserve – and promote – its heritage while moving forward to address the needs and desires of today's residents."



A Riverside resident, left, talks with a representative of CMAP, right, about a new comprehensive plan for downtown Riverside at a public forum held at Village Hall March 14. (By Matthew Hendrickson - mhendrickson@shawmedia.com)