

Residents To Discuss Good, Bad, Ugly Of Franklin Park

By **DIANE TURNER-HURNS** Journal & Topics Reporter | Posted: Thursday, March 17, 2016 3:00 pm

How to draw and keep new residents and businesses in Franklin Park is just one of many issues to be discussed at the village's Wednesday, March 23 comprehensive planning workshop.

The public, including businesses, are invited to attend the workshop to develop a comprehensive plan sponsored by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Franklin Park Police Station Community Room, 9451 Belmont Ave.

The workshop is part of a multi-prong effort with CMAP and Franklin Park officials, paid for with federal and county funds, to focus on issues aimed at spurring economic growth, drawing residents back to the village and enhancing quality of life.

The workshop will present and discuss information and next steps garnered through recent focus groups, student and resident workshops and surveys over the past few months in Franklin Park and in local schools. One meeting was held Wednesday, March 9 at East Leyden High School.

Leveraging strengths found by residents and businesses to improve quality of life will be discussed. Those strengths include location to transportation hubs such as O'Hare International Airport, major roadways, rail transportation and three Metra stops.

The robust and supportive businesses, notably industrial, providing jobs, contributing to the local tax base and giving back to the community are also listed as strengths.

Negatives identified by residents include train horn noise, poor north-south traffic circulation, flooding in the core areas of the village, unsafe pedestrian access near rail crossings, lack of bicycle facilities and enhancing the downtown area/Franklin Avenue corridor.

Underdeveloped and underutilized park facilities and limited transit-oriented development around the Franklin Park Metra station on the Milwaukee District-West line are also concerns of residents.

CMAP officials say the workshop will allow attendees to review and share ideas about what Franklin Park should be like by the year 2030.

A shared vision for the future of Franklin Park, with identified specific goals and objectives necessary to achieve that vision, will be a March 23 meeting outcome.

A comprehensive plan document, outlining the policies, programs and actions needed to implement the village's plan, will be presented to the village board for approval and possible implementation, if approved and if funding is available.

Some funding, CMAP officials say, can come from federal funds such as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) signed into law in December.

Franklin Park, located south of Rosemont and Schiller Park, is home to 18,000 residents and 800 businesses.