

Plan offers 'vision' for unincorporated Maine, Northfield neighborhoods, group says



Alice Joseph and Toni Happ Dautel, right, review a map of unincorporated neighborhoods of Maine and Northfield townships during an Oct. 19 meeting with representatives of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. CMAP is working on a comprehensive plan for the neighborhoods. (Jennifer Johnson / Pioneer Press)

By **Jennifer Johnson**
Pioneer Press

OCTOBER 21, 2016, 11:30 AM

For Alice Joseph, there is one big thing missing from her unincorporated Maine Township neighborhood near [Glenview](#).

"My main complaint is that I'm not in anybody's library's district," said Joseph, whose home bears a Glenview postal address, but isn't within the boundaries of the Glenview Public Library. "Libraries are very crucial to communities."

A librarian at the [Wilmette](#) Public Library, Joseph says she wouldn't mind a new line item on her property tax bill if it meant being able to obtain a Glenview library card and check out materials from a variety of other Illinois libraries through reciprocal borrowing agreements.

Extending library boundaries into unincorporated areas is something Joseph says she would like to see included in a new comprehensive plan that is being developed for her area by the [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning \(CMAP\)](#).

Representatives from CMAP met with about 40 residents of unincorporated Maine and [Northfield](#) townships at the Golf Maine Park District's Feldman Recreation Center on Oct. 19 to kick off the planning process.

The plan, estimated to cost about \$150,000 to produce, will be funded by CMAP with a local match from a Cook County community block grant, said CMAP Project Manager John Carlisle. CMAP itself is funded largely through federal transportation planning dollars, with 20 percent of its revenue coming from state and local sources, said spokesman Tom Garritano.

Carlisle told residents they will have input on the plan, which will address various issues facing the unincorporated areas of Maine and Northfield townships and provide some recommendations for the future.

Some of the issues that could be tackled by the plan include housing conditions, flooding, transportation opportunities and public health, Carlisle said.

"A comprehensive plan outlines a vision for the entire community on a wide range of topics," he explained in his presentation. Strategies for achieving various goals will also be included, he said.

There may be recommendations for bringing economic development to the area as well, Carlisle added, though he acknowledged that very limited commercial space currently exists. The vast majority of the unincorporated neighborhoods in Maine and Northfield townships are residential, and it is unlikely that the plan will recommend changes in how land is currently used, he said.

"I don't see that as being especially feasible," Carlisle said.

The unincorporated neighborhoods share borders with Glenview, [Niles](#), Des Plaines, Park Ridge and Morton Grove. Properties have Des Plaines or Glenview postal addresses, but property owners do not receive the same municipal services — like police protection or building permit oversight — that their neighbors within the incorporated municipal boundaries do. For these services, they must look to the township or Cook County.

Margaret Allegretti, a resident of unincorporated Maine Township for 40 years, says she has had good experiences with township employees and is mostly "neutral" when it comes to the question of whether her neighborhood should be annexed into a neighboring municipality, though she did say she would be "delighted" if Niles offered.

Still, Allegretti acknowledged that obtaining a simple building permit from Cook County to repave her driveway has been extremely difficult and she believes the wait has been much longer than it would have been if she lived in an incorporated community.

"The issue is, in certain situations — for me it was this permit — you have to go through two levels [of government]," she said. "My son told me, 'Ma, I walk into Northbrook, and 20 minutes later I walk out with a permit. This is absurd Maine Township can't issue you the permit.' "

Audrey Nankervis, who once served on the Maine Township Town Board, said she's largely "happy with things the way they are" in her unincorporated neighborhood near Niles, but did say that flooding remains a problem. It was a comment echoed by longtime unincorporated Northfield Township residents Toni Happ Dautel and her husband, Randy Dautel. They said they want the comprehensive plan to address flooding and also recommend areas of open space where stormwater can drain.

Residents who added comments to forms that were available at the Oct. 19 public meeting also asked for better water retention, public transportation options, more parks and community programs, and the ability for a specific condominium association to more easily obtain permits for property improvements.

Many positive comments about the current state of the unincorporated neighborhoods were also shared on the forms.

A draft of the completed comprehensive plan should be available by next fall, Carlisle said. The community will have an opportunity to see the plan before it goes to the Cook County Board for adoption, he added.

Carlisle said he hopes the process will bring about a "stronger sense of identity" for the residents.

"It's something we're trying to build here in a place that doesn't even have a name," he said.

The next public meeting for residents to provide input to CMAP representatives is scheduled for Nov. 15, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Crowley Park Field House, 749 Huber Lane in Glenview.

jjohnson@pioneerlocal.com

Twitter: [@Jen_Tribune](https://twitter.com/Jen_Tribune)

Copyright © 2016, Chicago Tribune

This article is related to: [Floods and Flooding](#), [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#), [Glenview](#), [Northfield](#), [Niles](#)