

Monorail as regional transportation 'visionary' says Kane board member

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Driverless cars may be in the near future, but planning experts looking ahead at the year 2050 could consider a fifth type of transportation mode: the monorail.

"It may fall on deaf ears, but this is kind of visionary," Kane County board member Philip Lewis said during a county Transportation Committee meeting Tuesday.

Chicago and the collar counties have access to four types of transportation, [Metra](#), the L system, [Pace](#) and highways, Lewis said. The current transportation systems work well for off peak hours, but peak hours are "very congested," he said.

What options are there to alleviate transportation demands in the future? The [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#) or CMAP — an agency that leads the comprehensive regional planning for the Chicago area — is currently working on its On To 2050 plan and is looking at the topic of transportation, said Lewis, who is also an adjunct professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

The On To 2050 planning is in the early stages and will be released in October 2018, according to a spokesman.

Lewis said the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning is exploring different ideas that would help with transportation needs. Currently, about 70 percent of people travel on highways alone, he said. It amounts to a lot of cars using the roadways and results in a lot of expenses in maintaining the system, he said.

A monorail would stand 20 feet from the ground and be built on public right of ways throughout the Chicago region, Lewis said. The cost is about \$15 billion — about one quarter of one percent being spent on transportation costs today, he said.

Leaders in the past had the same situation, facing the cost of building a new transportation system like the highways and train routes, Lewis said. "We must look ahead 20 to 30 years," he said. "You have to keep an open mind on this and let it evolve."

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's On to 2050 explores different topics such as land use, environmental, demographics, governance and the regional economy as well as transportation. The agency is hosting an On to 2050 forum "Development at the Edge: The Future of Regional Urbanization" on Dec. 6, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the Two Brothers Roundhouse, 205 N. Broadway, Aurora.

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