

# CMAP program teaches urban planning to high schoolers

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Suburban students seeking to learn about urban planning, civic engagement and how to make their communities better can participate in a free, weeklong workshop with experts July 9 to 14.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning this summer will mark the 10th anniversary of its Future Leaders in Planning program for high school students from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties.

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Roughly 45 students and industry experts will come together to learn about local and regional issues surrounding urban development, such as transportation, infrastructure, agriculture and environmental concerns, and how to plan for the future. The program incorporates hands-on activities, demonstrations, games and site visits -- past field trips have included Google headquarters, the deep water Metropolitan Water Reclamation District tunnels and O'Hare International Airport runways.

High school students from South Elgin, Hersey, Naperville North, Glenbard North, Lake Park, Stevenson, Crystal Lake South and East Leyden participated last year.

"The program began because CMAP wanted engagement and input in our planning process to understand how youth and students approach this topic," said Marisa Prasse, CMAP associate analyst who leads the program. "It's getting them to talk to each other and understand how transportation issues are different based on the communities and how they are all connected."

This summer, students will learn about developing sustainable local economies focusing on the three principles -- resilience, inclusive growth, prioritized investment -- of CMAP's next comprehensive plan for the region, ON TO 2050, releasing in October.

Among the visits being planned is a trip to The Plant, a 93,500-square-foot former industrial space and pork processing facility in Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood that has been converted into a sustainable urban agriculture farm. Students can learn to build their own aquaponics system and about the nonprofit's work providing people and businesses tools to live more sustainably through community-driven, hands-on programs and innovative tech demonstration projects.

CMAP also is partnering with the Chicago Architecture Foundation to develop design-related activities and possibly set up a tour of the Barack Obama Presidential Center site in Chicago's Jackson Park neighborhood. There they'll talk about design aspects and the social dynamics of the surrounding community, said Katanya Raby, CMAP associate outreach planner.

"Each day there's some hands-on component attached to a discussion," Raby said.

Organizers are reaching out to high schools throughout the seven-county region to encourage participation. The program is open to incoming high school freshmen and current high school students. Deadline for applications is May 7. To apply, visit [cmap.illinois.gov](http://cmap.illinois.gov).