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Vision Development Description, Appendix 5: draft vision statements released for comment in October 2007

After the visioning event, staff modified the statements developed at the event to clarify language and to remove redundant statements. In addition, some statements that were not rated well at the visioning event were modified more heavily to incorporate ideas from the discussions that the working committees had over the summer. In October 2007, these draft vision statements were presented to the Planning Coordinating Committee and were released for public comment. These statements as released are attached.

DRAFT Regional Vision Statements

October 3, 2007

In 2040, the northeastern Illinois region will be a magnet attracting new, diverse residents from all over the world. The region will be known for a high quality of life, based on its sustainable, equitable, and inclusive approaches to planning.

Quality of Life

- The region will consist of attractive, interdependent communities with distinct identities. These identities will be built on their histories, natural and physical assets, and aesthetic preferences reflecting the unique values of their residents and businesses.
- Northeastern Illinois will remain a global destination for tourism and culture because of its internationally-recognized architecture, arts institutions, entertainment options, and other cultural amenities.
- All parts of the region will have diverse housing, transportation, and recreation choices and will feature equitable access to employment, education and other regional assets.

Sustainability

- A high quality of life in the region will be possible only if the leaders of today and the future consider the sustainability of the region's systems and activities.
- Between now and 2040, our leaders will weigh the environmental, economic, and social impacts of their decisions, both locally and globally, and will consider the needs of future generations.
- The region will actively mitigate the environmental effects of its activities -- including climate change -- and will be prepared to adapt to future environmental conditions.

Equity

- Equity will be pursued as a regional goal to create a high quality of life in all parts of our region. Regional decisions will strive to not create "winners" and "losers," but will improve the lives of all residents equitably.
- Policy and investment decisions will benefit all parts of our region, and all residents will have equitable access to the region's assets.
- Regardless of age, income, ethnicity, culture, or disability status, all residents will be healthy, educated, safe, mobile, and involved in their communities.
- Building on the many ethnicities and cultures that have strengthened our region's society, the diversity of northeastern Illinois will continue to be celebrated in 2040.

In 2040, decision-making in northeastern Illinois will be informed by considerations of environmental health, energy use, and water supply.

Environmental Health

- The region will be a world leader in implementing innovative measures to protect the environment, including air quality, biodiversity, natural and human communities, water quality and supply, and the overall ecological health of the region.
- The region's nationally-recognized system of forest preserves, conservation districts, and parks will continue to shape regional identity. Especially along sensitive waterways, open space will be preserved and expanded, creating green infrastructure networks that enhance people's connection with nature and serve as habitat corridors.
- The tremendous ecological diversity of the region and its native plant and animal species will be recognized and celebrated.
- Lake Michigan will be protected in a coordinated effort with other states, regions, and countries as an irreplaceable natural resource for health, recreation, tourism, and economic prosperity.
- Water quantity and quality will be sufficient to sustain aquatic ecosystems, both in Lake Michigan and in other water bodies.

Energy and Resource Conservation

- Abundant transportation options, mixed-use infill development, and a balanced supply of jobs and housing will reduce pressure to develop in environmentally sensitive areas and will reduce regional energy consumption.
- Development that occurs in previously undeveloped areas will be designed to limit energy use and minimize disturbance of sensitive environmental land.
- The region will remain an innovative leader in green building techniques and conservation design, promoting energy efficiency and conservation of resources. The region will also take national leadership in the research, development, and production of green energy.

Water Supply

- Water will be treated as a critical natural resource, and water resource planning will be a high regional priority. The region will continue to be known for its high quality of water and recognized for its efforts to protect it.
- The quality of water supplies for human use will be protected, with water demand and supply managed responsibly to ensure equitable availability.
- The contribution of water supply to the economic well-being of the region will be recognized and reflected in planning and development decisions.

In 2040, our region will have equitable and inclusive social systems that foster an educated, healthy, safe, and involved populace.

Housing

- The region's communities and institutions will recognize that housing is a basic human need.
- All residents of the region will have access to a variety of options for decent and safe housing. The region will pursue progressive, inclusionary housing policies that respond to national trends and market conditions.
- Housing in the region will continue to be affordable compared to other major metropolitan areas, both for homeowners and for renters.
- Supplies of housing and jobs will be balanced regionally, allowing residents to find work near their homes and businesses to attract workers from nearby areas.

Public Health and Safety

- Residents across our region will be able to choose healthy lifestyles that benefit from the availability of open space, transportation and recreation options, and the availability of healthy food and clean water.
- The region will strengthen its system of health care and medical institutions, protecting public health and economic competitiveness.
- Our communities will be safer due to improved design, effective law enforcement, and social responsibility through increased civic involvement.
- The region and its residents will be served by robust, comprehensive systems for managing incidents -- both large and small scale -- related to public health, transportation, stormwater, fire, natural disasters and national security incidents.

Education

- Our region's schools will have adequate and equitable funding, with well-qualified instructors, performance accountability, and fiscal efficiency across the region.
- Learning opportunities beginning with early childhood will prepare young people across the region for a dynamic future that will enable them to participate fully in society.
- Appropriately funded and aligned educational institutions will allow all residents to benefit from seamless life-long learning.
- Our world-renowned institutions of higher education will continue to be centers for innovation of research, attracting students and researchers from around the globe to study and live in northeastern Illinois.

In 2040, the economy of northeastern Illinois will enjoy a global status that ensures superior job opportunities for all socio-economic groups.

Economic Competitiveness

- The economic strengths of downtown Chicago and suburban employment centers will complement each other, with the entire region benefiting from its international recognition as a diversified center of commerce. Our reputation as the “city that works” and the “city of broad shoulders” will continue to be relevant, attracting employers in search of skilled workforces in a variety of industries and other fields to the region.
- Long-term economic benefits will be created through planning and implementation that makes efficient use of resources and enhances our environment, public health, social equity, cultural amenities, education systems, and physical infrastructure.
- Investments in the region’s human capital will occur through workforce development programs or other training that prepares students and workers to excel in the diversified jobs of the future.
- Our farmland, which is among the most fertile in the nation, will be valued as an important regional resource because of the economic contribution it makes, the food and fuel it produces, the scenic value it provides, and the soil and water it protects.

Reinvestment

- We will maximize the competitive advantage of existing physical infrastructure by encouraging reinvestment in our communities through development that is mixed-use, compact, and in infill locations.
- Public and private reinvestment in people and places will contribute to community prosperity, affordability, and vitality across the region.
- The region’s existing multi-modal transportation system will be maintained and enhanced, leading to environmentally sensitive and fiscally efficient outcomes.

Transportation Accessibility and Efficiency

- The transportation system, which is the region’s link to the global economy, will continue to be a major cog in the competitive advantage of northeastern Illinois compared to other metropolitan areas.
- Our regional systems of interstates and toll roads, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, airports, freight and intermodal facilities, and water-based transportation options will continue to serve the region’s needs and support its quality of life.
- Through investments that reflect regional priorities, the region will have a broad range of integrated transportation choices that are accessible, inviting, easy to navigate, and affordable.
- Congestion will be managed effectively in all parts of the region, fostering sustainable economic activity and a high quality of life.
- Building on its history as the nation’s freight capital, the region will thrive as an international hub of goods movement and intermodal logistics, due to an efficient, fluid and expandable transportation system.

In 2040, governance systems in northeastern Illinois will feature a high degree of coordination and civic involvement.

Coordinated Planning and Government

- Our region's leaders will look beyond political boundaries to address inter-related challenges and to find solutions that maximize quality of life across the region.
- While celebrating the diversity of the region's municipalities, we will share resources and plan collaboratively to promote efficiency and equity in planning our region's economic, environmental, social, and infrastructure systems.
- Planning for physical infrastructure and the use of land will be coordinated, creating links to social systems like health care, public safety, education, and social services.
- On major inter-regional issues, our leaders will coordinate with their counterparts in Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, other neighboring regions, and Canadian provinces.
- Intergovernmental cooperation based on mutual benefit will structure taxation in the region to promote reinvestment and equitable access to resources among communities. The region will make decisions concerning physical infrastructure that consider long-term sustainability in terms of both operational and capital expenses.

Civic Involvement

- Between now and 2040, residents from across the region will take civic pride in their communities and will actively help shape action on the full range of regional issues that contribute to a livable region.
- Planning processes will encourage, respect, and value contributions from people of all backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and ages.
- Residents of the region will stay informed about issues and decisions through planning processes that create frequent, manageable, and meaningful involvement.
- The region's strong history of advocacy by neighborhood, civic, and business organizations will continue, and these organizations will contribute to public policy discussions.