



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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## Vision Development Description, Appendix 7: results of Community Conversation meetings

Between February and April 2008, CMAP began outreach to the general public to receive input on the direction of the vision statements. Meetings were held in conjunction with several community-based organizations and also with members of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Attached are summaries of both of these types of meetings. Each of the ten community-based organizations who worked on this project submitted a report on their activities, and these are attached in full. Also, CMAP staff have prepared summaries of the meetings held with members of the Citizens Advisory Committee, and summaries of these meetings are also attached.

## **Bethel New Life – Friday 4/18/08 CMAP meeting Notes/Summary**

The parents were asked four questions that were answered as a group. Three elementary schools in East & West Garfield Park were present. (Biedler, Tilton, Marconi). Here is the parent's input.

### **1) What will education look like in the future?**

- There will be a physical classroom with computers as teachers
- No teachers
- All students will have the opportunity to go to college
- I would like to see all of us more financially involved and thrive harder to secure our future
- Good financial literacy for everyone
- Conference classrooms with telecommunication
- We should continue with the tradition school building
- Go back to creative activities with subjects (social science, geography) more subjects for students to learn
- Learn about life skills
- More advance writing skills
- More Math & Science

### **2) What are the positive and negative effects of education?**

- School children will be more obese (-)
- Less physical activity (-)
- Less in social skills (-)
- Less in misbehaviors (+)
- Less street smarts, more educated/ critical skills and cognitive skills
- Less common sense
- Help when needed (+)
- Learning at own speed (+)
- Share Ideas (+)
- Everyone will be better educated (+)
- I feel schools should stay to the traditions that are in place now. I think a computer link-up or via- satellite will possibly teach kids.

### **3) Will the traditions that we do now, continue in the future? (After school programs, physical activities, and social programs)**

- Yes, they will need physical and social activities to keep them growing as well as going.
- After school programs are also good

- 50/50 chance- depends on staff
- Yes, depends on staff- after school

4) How does this, “ Future Education,” effect you and your child?

- Must start at home and at a early age
- Parent and Community involvement needs to continue, and pick up more parent support.
- Less parent and adult involvement
- Don't like the transition of small schools in one
- To much stress/ more conflict within the schools
- Parents will have to go to school to learn themselves
- No role models
- Without more involvement from parents, and your communities, outside forces will and are taking over schools, which will lead to parents and communities, losing there voice in the school system.
- Children who don't take notes will not keep up.
- Graduation is important.
- How will children be motivated to go to the next grade?

## Bethel New Life – Thursday 4/24/08 CMAP meeting Notes/ Summary

The community was asked four questions that were answered as a group. The residents that were asked questions were the Austin community. Here is the community's input.

### 1) What will transportation look like in the future? (2040)

- Hybrid vehicles may be solar energy
- More car pooling to save energy
- More use of public transportation
- Less pollution because of the type of fuel that will be used
- Electric cars-battery operated and charged
- Electric trolleys will come back
- GPS will drive the cars- must be coordinated with traffic lights
- Smaller cars
- Faster trains
- Plane shuttles, more use of flying
- Jetpacks

### 2) How will transportation impact where we live? (Give examples)

- Less traffic jams
- Less pollution, less accidents
- Location of where we live will be of importance (public)
- Develop more housing (villages) units around transportation
- More choices with where we live
- Where we live will impact transportation
- Employment, education, schools (all public transportation) businesses.
- Easy assessable state wide
- Mini cities/ gated communities

### 3) How will transportation affect the environment (i.e. physical, social, and economic)?

- Less pollution, less congestion
- Green environment needed (more trees)- plant life-oxygen
- More time at home with families if transportation is faster
- More work will be done on computers which means less time travel (schools, shopping, work, entertainment, theatre)
- People will save more money- economy will be better

- Less people on the street because of the internet
- Less physical activity/ unhealthy population

4) What could we do now to improve how we utilize our transit system to prevent other problems in the future?

- Make transportation safer, on time and faster
- Systems in place to check on intoxicated drivers
- More safety checks: seat belts, breath test
- Easy accessible for everyone
- Gear or set up for people with physical disability
- Every stop should be mobile with elevators and ramps (trains) and (buses)
- Special bus stops/trains for people with disabilities, wheelchairs, strollers

# **Casa Central**

**Community focus groups  
2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan  
Community Engagement Assistance program**

Summary Report to CMAP  
April 2008

Over the past three months, Casa Central has engaged program staff and program participants in information gathering sessions intended to give staff and participants a voice in what they hope the Region will look like in 2040. The process included Feedback Sessions with a total of 107 youth, parents and seniors. Included in this report are: process, participant information, and information gathered during sessions. We are grateful to have been included in this ever important planning process with CMAP that will help shape the future of our communities.

The first phase of this project was to schedule meetings with directors and staff of each department we were using for focus groups. These meetings provided Casa Central staff an overview of CMAP and the project.

The Directors and staff of the Senior Wellness Center suggested that I narrow the conversations to one or two topics because of the different capacity and ages of each participant. They also suggested that we divide the group and host smaller groups instead of one larger session in order to get a personal, up close response and participation from each group.

When meeting with the directors and staff of the After School and Early Childhood programs it was suggested that a feedback session be conducted at a monthly parent meeting. With parents having busy schedules, it was determined that the best way to conduct a focus group with this population would be to conduct it during a time where parents were already scheduled to be on site.

The Director and staff of the Y.O.U program said that it might be a bit challenging to get all of the youth needed in one room in one day given the fact that they are youth and have varied schedules and participate in the youth program on voluntary basis. The Project Coordinator met with the youth during regularly scheduled activities and meetings and was able to get feedback from the youth participants.

After meeting with staff and directors, the Program Director began framing the questions and structure of each group given the information and suggestions from my meetings. At this time we also began making a list and ordering supplies needed for each focus group. Each participant was given a phone card and target gift card.

There was an overall enthusiasm and interest from all participants to give feedback and talk about their communities in a forum that was open to expression. Many of the conversations focused on the drastic changes in near by communities and the effects they have had on children and families that have been in these communities for years. The most striking similarity of each conversation was that a lot of participants felt that as members of their communities they were being forgotten and ignored because of their economic status, race, age and documentation and feel that the changes in communities like Humboldt park and Logan have forced them to think about moving to communities that aren't as safe and lack the resources and public facilities that they are used to.

### **Senior Focus Group Adult Wellness Center**

Total Participants: 30

The two major topics of this session were Public transportation and recreational opportunities for seniors but participants also expressed other ideas concerning their communities. A repetitive topic was safer communities by adding more police lights and having more police presence in areas close to their homes. Public transportation was also a big factor in our conversations as participants showed concern in the lack of busses running in their communities and feel that it is a public safety issue for seniors to have to wait so long for the bus. Most Participants feel that the housing situation has become very unfair for seniors that have been part of these communities for so many years. Condos and new business are slowly pushing them away to places were they feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

Discussion question:

How much do you depend on public transportation?

10 said they frequently use public transportation

12 said they mostly only use public transportation on the weekends

4 said they only use public transportation if they have no other options

4 said they no longer use public transportation

### **How can we better the Public Transportation system in your community?**

- Would like to feel safer riding busses and trains. Many seniors are assaulted or robbed on busses
- A more consistent bus and train schedule so that older residents didn't have to wait so long at bus stops
- Cleaner busses in our communities, many participants felt that the busses in their communities were older and dirtier than the busses in nicer areas
- More bus stops closer to residential areas as it is difficult for older residents to walk so far to catch a bus.
- More accessibility and awareness of senior citizens riding on CTA bus and trains. We often feel mistreated
- More police presence on busses and desolate bus stops



- More busses in the winter
- Youth should pay less to ride busses as they have to ride to school then to work

**What types of recreational/wellness opportunities would you like to have in your neighborhood?**

All of the participants participate in Casa Central’s Adult Wellness Center where they participate in therapeutic and recreational activities three to five days per week. Most participants expressed that on the weekends they really do not have anywhere to go or anything productive to do. Participants expressed a number of things they would like to participate in during the weekend when they are not at the Adult Wellness Center:

- Exercise classes for seniors
- More activities at community based organizations like the YMCA
- More senior activities through the park district
- Weekend job training opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities

**Youth focus groups**

Total Participants- 32

At the beginning of the focus group each participant was asked to mark their place of residency on a map provided by facilitator:

- 15 living in Humboldt park
- 8 Living in Logan Square
- 6 living in west Town
- 2 Living in Cicero
- 1 Midway

Survey questions and group discussion

**For each topic please specify what Changes you like to see in your community**

Most youth participants felt disconnected from their community expressing that the gentrification of their neighborhoods has made them feel like they are no longer wanted. Participants expressed that the recent condo surge in neighborhoods like Humboldt Park and Logan Square has limited future possibilities of them building productive lives in their communities. Many expressed the lack of job opportunities in their neighborhoods

and feel that the new business owners only hire a certain type of person. Most of the participants are from the neighboring communities and would like to continue to be part of their neighborhoods as they gentrify.

#### Education

- Cleaner schools and teachers that really care about students
- Less graffiti
- Less school hours and more job opportunities
- Would like lockers, more teachers and cleaner restrooms
- Cleaner schools
- Teachers who care and less expenses, acceptance as an equal individual
- Education needs some type of improvement and some type of agreement to offer higher education to all students
- Cleaner schools

#### Public Transportation

- Transportation should be less expensive
- More busses on the road because we have to wait too long
- More busses and nicer drivers
- The CTA should think more green and also offer more discounts to younger and older residents
- Nicer busses coming through our community
- Faster service it is unsafe to wait too long for a bus in certain communities
- No fossil fueled busses
- Cleaner and safer trains and train stations
- More lights at bus stops in bad neighborhoods
- Lower transportation fees so that more people could ride the bus in order to get to work
- Cheaper and better running busses and trains
- More accessible transportation in my community
- Transportation in my neighborhood needs to be more efficient by having a consistent schedule

#### Housing

- More affordable housing in better areas. We shouldn't be limited to bad neighborhoods because we can't afford the housing of better neighborhoods
- Better bigger homes like in the suburbs
- More reasonably priced apartments for rent in our community
- Less for closures in our communities
- More affordable homes so that we could afford the rising costs of utilities
- More affordable housing for lower income minority families
- Less condominiums and more affordable homes
- I'm afraid that every neighborhood will become condo
- Better more affordable property
- More opportunities for low income families to own houses

- I would like to stay in this community when im older and afford to buy a house for my family

#### Public Health and safety

- More sanitation checks on all public facilities
- More hospitals in our communities
- More police presence
- More neighborhood watch
- People without medical insurance should have equal treatment
- Public health needs a better system for people without insurance
- Safer environment in our communities for disabled residents
- More free clinics
- Less gang violence and more prevention programs
- More public health resources
- Cleaner Humboldt Park lake
- Tear down Norwegian hospital
- More and better police officers

#### **Parent Focus Groups**

Total participants: 45

At the beginning of the focus group each participant was asked to mark their place of residency on a map provided by facilitator:

18 Humboldt Park  
 1 West Humboldt Park  
 1 North Austin  
 2 South Austin  
 2 Hermosa  
 2 Irving Park  
 7 Logan Square  
 1 Kelvin Park  
 1 Oakland

Survey questions:

**For each topic please specify what Changes you like to see in your community**

Education/ Work force

- More education programs for youth to prepare them for the work force
- Would like to see more libraries in my community

- More job training facilities
- More after school programs
- Better school facilities
- Better career opportunity for Latinos
- More accessible and affordable college opportunities
- More jobs (factory jobs) for non English speaking people
- Exercise and health facilities
- More jobs and job opportunities for Latinos
- More jobs in our communities near our homes
- More special needs schools and facilities
- Better school facilities
- More job training programs for teens out of high school
- College funding programs for youth
- More basic job opportunities for people with minimum skills. Job training facilities
- Better and more accessible Educational after school programs in our communities
- Better paying jobs
- More early childhood development programs for youth in the south side of Chicago
- Low cost education opportunities for undocumented parents
- More teen parent programs in my community
- I would like to have more awareness of programs accessible in my community
- More job opportunities for lower and middle class families in my community
- I would like to attend school but im undocumented

#### Public transportation

- There are massive problems with our transportation system. We need a solution for all the transit shortages
- I currently do not take public transportation
- Cleaner busses
- Affordable bus fares
- Safer transportation, more police officers on busses, lit bus stops.
- More accessible transportation for people with disabilities
- Would like to see more transportation for youth to attend school
- A system that doesn't raise public transportation rates so often
- Stop minimizing number of busses on routes
- No transportation fees for children under 12yrs old
- It's not safe to wait so long for the bus were we live. More busses more often
- Expand CTA train lines to the suburbs. Many of us work in the city and live in the suburbs
- I have everything nearby, walking distance and hardly use public transportation
- Public transportation on Kedzie Ave

- Bus passes for low income families
- 24hr bus service
- Public transportation schedule and list in Spanish
- Public transportation on Augusta ave.

## Housing

- Affordable housing made available to those that need it
- Affordable housing in the communities where we currently live. Don't push us out
- Housing is good where I live
- Affordable safe housing for lower income families
- Affordable rental opportunities
- Workshops for first time home buyers
- Help for people in risk of losing their homes
- More affordable housing
- Affordable questions with the 100 questions
- I have been living in Chicago for twelve years and still rent because home prices are too high
- More public housing opportunities
- Low income housing programs in the city
- I would like to live in a nice neighborhood even though I don't make so much money
- Affordable family homes, less taxes
- Would like to see a better and recycling systems in our communities
- Educate home owners on maintaining their homes clean and kept in order to have a clean environment
- Raising home taxes makes it more difficult for lower and middle class families to buy homes
- Stop building condos
- More available rental apartments and less condos

## Public health and safety

- More public safety awareness is needed to help younger people with serious sex/health issues
- Streets are dirty and the neighborhoods in near my community are very unclean
- More public health clinics
- More accessible clinics and hospitals for low income families
- Safer recreation areas for children where families don't have to worry about gun violence.
- More recreation areas for our children

- Cleaner parks, sidewalks and alleys
- More rules for dog owners.
- Better clinics
- Everyone should have health insurance
- More public health clinics for people with out health insurance
- More public health awareness in our schools
- Better hospitals in our communities, cleaner and friendlier
- There needs to be more public safety precautions for children and families
- More police presence and a lot more gang prevention programs
- Education for children regarding health and safety also offer courses for teens
- More gang prevention and police presence
- More secure parking for community residents
- More affordable health gyms
- Health clinics for all teen moms

What aspects of your community would other people like to incorporate in to theirs?

- Our accessibility to senior services
- I don't think there is anything in my community that other people would want
- Our work ethic and education programs
- Open minds about different cultures
- A lot of people that live further out like midway would like to have a place like Casa Central
- I don't think people would like our gang problems and murders
- Our geographic location
- Our parks, housing and transportation
- The quietness
- The way we take care of our community, more recycling
- I think my community needs a lot of work and cant imagine what people would like
- I don't think people would want all the gang violence in my community

What aspects would you like to incorporate from other communities?

- Youth activities that others have that we don't
- Unity and cleaner neighborhoods
- Music programs for our youth
- Neighbors looking out for each other
- More crime vigilance, more police presence
- Computer and internet access in public facilities
- Green space

- Safe places where children can play (playgrounds)
- Public security/safety
- Recycling programs
- Cleanliness
- Maybe a boys and girls club. Something to keep youth engaged
- The secure high schools that nicer neighborhoods have
- More activities for families in park districts
- Affordable gyms for families
- Parks, Recreation centers and libraries
- Unity and cleaner alleys
- Safe warm and constructive environment for children and families
- A place like Casa Central for children and families.

**Project Expenses**

<b>Item</b>	<b>CMAP Project Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
Personnel (6hoursx\$50[average]x8staff)	\$2400	\$2400
Contract Services (project coordinator)	\$1000	\$1000
Space (for feedback sessions)	\$500	\$500
Equipment (computers, projectors, laptop)	\$200	\$200
Supplies (copies,flyers,flip charts,markers)	\$450	\$325
Other (incentives-pre-paid gas cards)	\$450	\$575
Other		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	<b>\$5000</b>

## **CMAP 2040 Regional Visioning Sessions**

Northside Chicago and the North Shore  
DevCorp North

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This report summarizes the process and outcomes of regional visioning sessions hosted by DevCorp North in preparation for CMAP's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. DevCorp North took this as an opportunity to engage the community in a very different way from its usual activities. First, DevCorp North broadened their definition of "community" to include neighborhoods adjacent to Rogers Park including north shore suburban communities. Second, this opportunity provided a chance to consider local issues in a regional context.

Two public meetings were held to provide two chances for the public to share their vision for the region. DevCorp North enlisted the assistance of leaders of the surrounding community to spread the word to their membership. A press release was drafted and distributed and our own announcements were distributed widely in electronic and hard copy format (in English and Spanish).

Respectful of the constraints of a public meeting, we created an on-line survey so interested participants could vote on which topics to address at the community meetings. A link on the DevCorp North homepage took visitors to the dedicated website where they could choose their top three choices for themes from the list of fourteen themes that CMAP plans to address in their regional plan. The results of the voting process determined that three topics would be discussed:

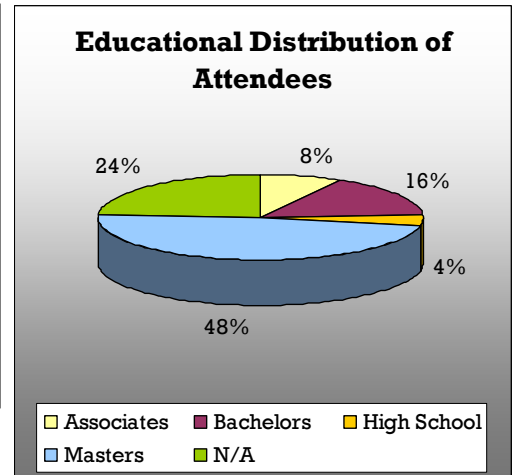
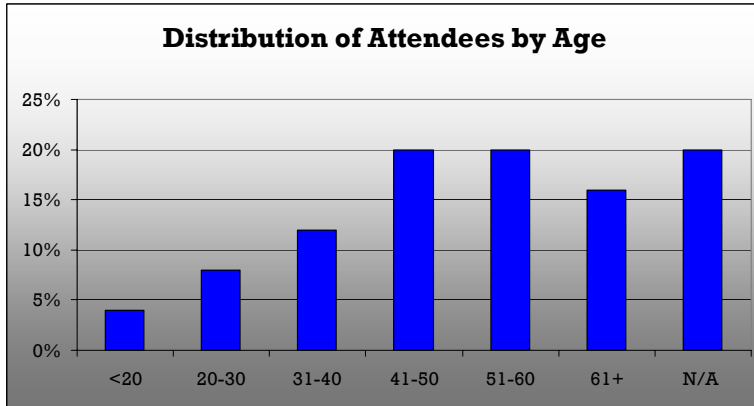
1. Education
2. Transportation
3. Housing

Two community meetings were held on March 4<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup> in the evening at Loyola University. The format of the meetings was determined with the assistance of a professional facilitator (Mark Marquardt) in order to get maximum participation from those in attendance. The goal was to make the meetings interactive and engaging. Participants were asked to designate on a large map the location of their home, their work and their favorite place to share with others. After a welcome and introduction and after describing the context and purpose of the meeting, participants were led through a keypad polling exercise as an ice-breaker. The facilitator then led the group through a large-group exercise on each of the predetermined topics. This was a brainstorming session with no editing of suggestions to "My vision for 2040 is..." Participants self-selected into small groups (one per topic) to refine the ideas generated in the large group exercise led by volunteer facilitators.

It is very interesting to note that the outcomes of each meeting turned up some different results. For instance for the housing theme during the first community meeting, green construction and other environmental considerations were a popular topic, but during the second community meeting affordability was the priority and environmental considerations were only made at the very end.



16 people attended the first community meeting and 18 attended the second on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Twenty five attendees completed post evaluations. According to these evaluations, the



majority were highly educated with only 4% having completed a high school degree or less, although it should be noted that 24% of the respondents did not answer this question. The distribution of attendees by age was a little more balanced, with some under representation from those 40 years old and younger. The attendees also tended to be Caucasian, representing over 64% of those who completed the evaluation. Latinos, who represent approximately 23% of population in the zip codes surrounding Rogers Park, were the most underrepresented group, despite having outreach materials in Spanish and contact with some Latino businesses, organizations, and churches. African Americans were also underrepresented, with 8% representation at the community meetings and an estimated 21% in the surrounding zip codes<sup>1</sup>. The under-representation should be accounted for in the final outcomes.

Meeting agenda and evaluations were translated into Spanish and a Spanish speaker was available for translation if needed. As residents entered, they were asked to mark on one of two large maps three different things: 1. where they live, 2. where they work and 3. their favorite place. Connecting the markers began to reveal some of what locals consider their region and illuminated the invisible web that connects people to their communities.

Both community meetings began with a short discussion about the role of CMAP in developing a long range plan for the region, how it might be used and why it was important. The presentation was followed by a light-hearted exercise intended to serve both as an ice-breaker and as a way to encourage the attendees to consider the seven county region and what it might be like in the year 2040. CMAP provided the use of their wireless voting machines, which had been used during the Common Ground process, so that the results could be seen instantly. Questions ranged from how old they would be or guessing how many times they will have waited for the bus, to more complex ideas of how they expect to get to work and where the two million people expected to move into the region will live.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Claritas 2007 for zip codes: 60626, 60645, 60660, 60202

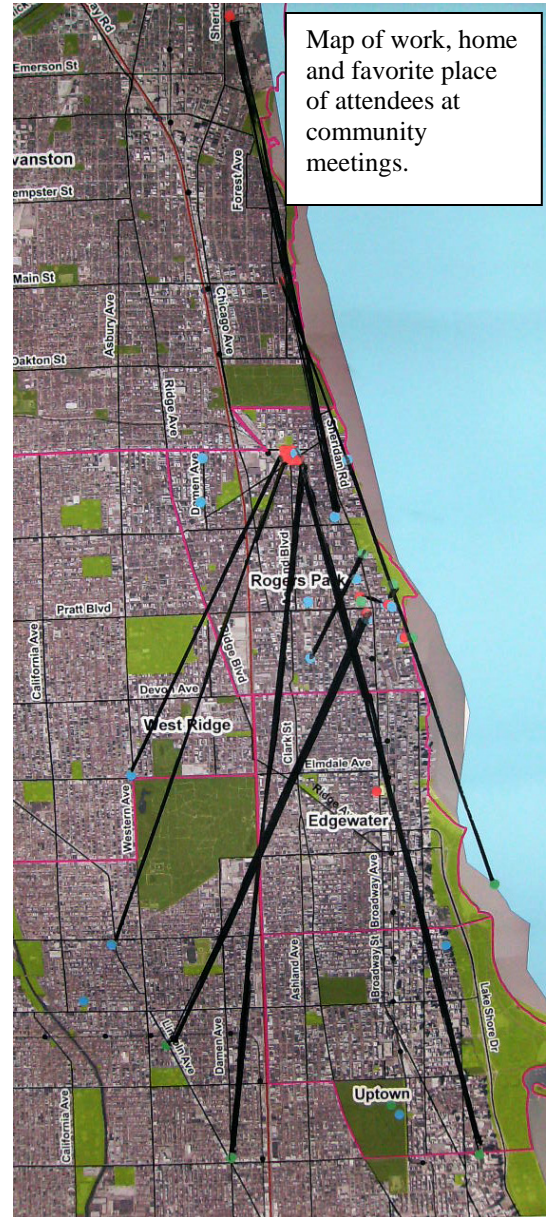
Although this exercise was meant to be an ice-breaker and not a serious forum to collect information, a few observations can be made about the results. The responses to the series of questions revealed different levels of optimism or pessimism about the future (27% expected public transportation to continue to be bad, 51% predicted it would become more efficient), strong attachment to the region (63% hope to continue living in the region by 2040) and very different ideas about what type of growth we will see in the region (44% expect suburban sprawl, 56% expect denser cities).

As a large group, the main facilitator led participants through 15 minute brainstorming sessions for each theme. Each person was encouraged to share one vision in the form of “My vision for...”, before someone was given the opportunity to provide another idea. A scribe wrote down the responses with minimal rewording or edits. Discussing as a group allowed everyone to have some input about each theme before breaking up into smaller groups for more detailed discussion.

Leaders of other community organization on the north side of Chicago assisted with facilitating smaller group discussions of 2-10 participants. Each group began with the material generated from the large group discussions. The groups clarified, combined and added new visions during 40 minute sessions. Once every vision had been clarified, participants were given five dot stickers and asked to vote on the visions they considered the highest priority. Participants were allowed to vote more than once for any vision.

A list of all the original visions is included in the appendix.

A ranking of a summary of the results are as follows:



## HOUSING

### Meeting #1

- Transit- oriented development and free low –income affordable housing in every community~ **4 votes**
- Establish “green” housing development policy that results in self-sustaining efficient and environmentally low impact housing~ **4 votes**
- Less reliance on real estate taxes~ **3 votes**
- Coordinated approach to regional housing policy and statewide building code~ **3 votes**
- Preservation of significant historic and architecturally buildings~ **2 votes**

### Meeting #2

- Affordable publicly funded Housing exists- **8 votes**
- There is sufficient employee assisted housing near transportation- **5 votes**
- Housing communities include a diversity of ethnic, cultural, economic backgrounds- **5 votes**
- Housing is built to high safety and environmental standards w/ community space and facilities- **5 votes**
- Tax structure is transparent, equitable and proceeds are fairly distributed- **5 votes**
- Renters organize, educate themselves on relevant issues and have meaningful input@ all levels- **3 votes**
- Rental housing stock is preserved- **3 votes**
- Quality Housing Exists- **1 vote**
- Architecture is preserved; new construction reflects/respects tradition while increasing density

The highest priority from both meetings was affordable or free housing that is publicly funded. Housing close to public transportation and jobs were also major concerns for where housing should be built and visions of eco-friendly housing that encourages diversity stressed how housing should be built. Policy decisions such as the relationship of housing to property taxes and its impact on affordability, the complexity of different building codes were cited as concerns of participants that needed to be addressed.

An overall vision could be stated as: Affordable and free public housing, close to public transportation and jobs that supports ethnic and income diversity, which is safe and green and integrates community space.



## EDUCATION

### Meeting #1

- Public Education funding is less reliant on property taxes~ **1 vote**
- Neighborhoods have local “Walkable” accessible schools of high consistent quality ~ **1 vote**
- Improve quality of teachers to achieve ~ **1 vote**
  - More creative teaching less quantified testing
  - Students read/complete at grade level
  - People stay in the city
  - More parental involvement
- Known for top quality Post-Secondary Education that is accessible regardless of income~ **1 vote**
- Educational Content emphasizes fundamentals on which richer concepts can be built and students learn to discern and make informed choices~ **1 vote**
- Physical Facilities and Infrastructure are improved, made green and fully accessible
- Public schools are open to the community for after and out school use
- Eliminate standardize testing as sole measure of academic success

### Meeting #2

- Affordable education (anyone that wants education can get it, know how to access education)- **7 votes**
- Quality neighborhood schools- **6 votes**
- Military kept out of public education- **5 votes**
- Education based on a philosophy of personal development- **5 votes**
- Curriculum that encourages awareness in a global society- **4 votes**
- Equitable funding system that is robust and sustainable- **4 votes**
- Free kindergarten to Post-doc education that is fully publicly funded- **4 votes**
- Create opportunities for those who have world experience to share with students as teachers- **3 votes**
- Arts compulsory in every school- **3 votes**
- Education that includes an understanding of economic literacy – **2 votes**
- Immigrant education to be able to fully participate- **1 vote**
- Teach younger people trades in addition to academics. Provide more access. – **1 vote**
- Smaller class sizes so that students get appropriate attention
  - 1:1 teacher to student ratio
  - 22:1
  - 11:1
- More mentoring opportunities
- Education is available to anyone in the criminal justice system

The primary concern of participants was quality education that is affordable and available for all who want it, whether at elementary school level or university. Residents want to be able to send their kids to quality neighborhood schools that employ well trained teachers with small class sizes. The desire for education to be broader was discussed, more focused on human development than standardized testing, which covers issues of global awareness, the trades, economic literacy, and a better foundation upon which to make decisions.

Participants also had a vision of education not being dependent on property taxes or a target for military recruitment.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Meeting #1

- Better interconnectivity:
  - Easier point to point access (less wheel, more a web) ~ **6 votes**
  - Connect Metra lines to each other~ **4 votes**
  - Unified Public Transportation System (RTA/CTA/PACE) ~ **3 votes**
  - Connect CTA to Metra
- Comfort level of trains, buses, and stations (seats, cleanliness, etc.) ~ **4 votes**
- Fees based on distance for intraregional travel~**4 votes**
- All transportation is public infrastructure~ **4 votes**
- No environmental impact from transportation (No emissions) ~ **3 votes**
- Reliability ~ **2 votes**
- Transit- Oriented Development, including:
  - Such as Gateway Mall
  - Development linked with transit~ **3 votes**
  - Reduce reliance on cars
  - Different / More affordable mortgages
  - Incentives/ Disincentives
  - Money to transit
- Alleviate Auto Congestion
  - Strategic Road Construction Planning
  - Designated bike streets
  - Designated transit streets
  - Designated times for peak/off peak
  - Congestion tax~ **1 vote**
- Complete Accessibility to Public Transportation System~ **1 vote**
- Employ people with disabilities in public transportation planning to incorporate their perspectives
- Improve Public Transportation
- High speed Rail
- Better bike infrastructure and incentives to use
- Kids do not have to be driven to school

### Meeting #2

#### Transportation

- High speed transit expanded to provide alternative to cars, network vs. loop focused- **5 votes**
- Neighborhood shopping opportunities to reduce travel- **4 votes**
- People-centered public ways (less surface area devoted to cars)- **4 votes**
- Transit Access within 2 miles- **3 votes**
- 81% by bicycle by providing all weather facilities/ routes- **2 votes**
- Safer routes for bikes through dedicated “bike streets”- **2 votes**
- Road materials that are environmentally sustainable – **1 vote**
- Accessible transportation to all physical disabilities- **1 vote**
- Development clustered @ transit (T.O.D.) – **1 vote**
- Inter-city trains through a highly developed rail network that connects the region to the nation- **1 vote**
- Pothole/problem free roads
- 100% public-funded transportation and free fares
- Bus/ train tracker through cell phone
- No roads/construction of any type along lakefront

Participants from both groups felt that interconnectivity of transit was especially important, by developing connections between existing transportation systems.

Comfortability, lowered/no environmental impact, transit-oriented development and people centered transit was considered important about the types of options that are available.

Alternative options to cars were also considered important, including connected high-speed rail and dedicated safe routes for bicycles. Visions about reducing the need to travel, such as stronger local businesses, were also considered important.

In all, CMAP will receive some valuable information about the visions from the residents of the north east side of Chicago. The level of outreach was significant and appropriate and despite lower than expected turnout at the meetings, has greatly expanded the awareness of CMAP and its mission to create a regional plan for 2040. Many more residents are now familiar with the process and are much more likely to actively participate in future regional planning initiatives.

DevCorp North also has gained a lot from this process. The meeting evaluations gave us important feedback for future community meetings and we experimented with new meeting exercises. The involvement of a professional facilitator provided structure and objectivity. Partnering with neighboring communities strengthened existing relationships.



## **Executive Summary**

Family Focus Aurora – Final Report

Family Focus Aurora used \$5,000.00 provided by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to conduct and facilitate five community conversations. The goal of each session revolved around the planification of land use and availability of transportation in a projected term to be reached by the year 2040. Funding from CMAP was distributed in the following manner: general supplies, promotion materials, travel costs, and staffing costs.

The sessions held in the Aurora area met both the demographic make up of the region as well as the language differences and demands. Four out of five sessions were held in both Spanish and English. Participants were given the option to elect the language they felt most comfortable when expressing their opinion. This was done to ensure participation from all attendees as well as to meet the demands of the community that Family Focus serves. The following is a brief description of our research and decision making to serve such demands.

Aurora is the second largest city in Illinois with a population of approximately 175,000 according to 'City of Aurora' website. 'Over the past 10 years, Aurora has seen an increasing growth in its population consisting of 64.3% White, 37% Hispanic, 20.4% Other Races, 10.9% African American, and 4.4% Asian ([www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org)).

According to the Mayor's Office the City of Aurora has expanded over the past 25 years considerably in the following areas ([www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org)):

- Population increase from 87,540 to an estimated 175,000.
- Land Use 15.68 square miles in 1972 to an estimated 45 square miles, according to recent reports in 2005.
- Economic and Income fluctuations have also increased by 155%.

The previous information prompted our organization to target specific demographics in unique ways. As an organization who offers service to all Aurora residents, the Hispanic/Latino population has responded overwhelmingly to our family support approach and represents the majority of the families we serve. The following was executed to recruit: promotional fliers and postcards were distributed to all local churches of varying denominations, local markets/grocery stores, and local school districts. The following was executed for outreach: Press release to various media outlets including but not limited to Beacon news, church bulletins, posting fliers in local community organizations that our organization partner together (Aunt Martha's, City of Aurora, Aurora Township Youth Center, and Quad County Urban League).

Two sessions were held in centralized locations in Aurora. Two Saturday sessions were held at East Aurora High School and one Wednesday evening session was held at Our Lady Of Good Counsel Church. One session was held at Quad County Urban League. Lastly one session was held with a small focus group of Family Focus Aurora Staff members. A notable mention: On Saturday, March 29, 2008 the Mayor of Aurora – Tom Weissner was present and listened to the participants' point of view and even gave supportive comments about the community conversations.

All public sessions were matched in the following method:

A general introduction was initially conducted of facilitator, CMAP representative, and all participants. A brief description of the role of both Family Focus Aurora and CMAP partnership goals were delivered prior to starting each and any conversation. The general introductory presentation was followed by an 'icebreaker'; this specific piece was conducted to allow each person to participate right at the beginning as to build momentum and encourage participation. The ice breaker, goal and purpose revolved around the categories of place of residency, work, and recreation. Each participant was given a color coordinating dot for each of the categories. A large scale map of Aurora and surrounding counties representing Northeastern Illinois was drawn to help conceptualize our focus for discussion. Participants appeared excited to recognize the similarities that they shared with each other, be it work place, recreation or residency. The ice breaker was followed by a vote for 3 topics of most interest.

- \* Education
- \* Health & Public Safety
- \* Immigration & Civic Engagement
- \* Housing
- \* Transportation

Participants had the opportunity to directly state their opinion on each specific topic as well as discuss the different ideas that were brought up as the conversations progressed.

Responses and feedback have been synthesized as follows:



## **Family Focus - Aurora Narrative Report**

Family Focus – Aurora conducted a total of five community conversations, three of the five were open to all members of the community in Aurora, the fourth was conducted with the Family Focus – Aurora staff members, and the fifth meeting was conducted with students of the Quad County Urban League.

### **Meeting #1: Family Focus Staff members**

Staff members indicated two reasons they moved to the Aurora and stayed in the area was for the job opportunities and family.

Topics for discussion:

1. Civic Involvement and Immigration
2. Education
3. Housing.

### **Topic 1: Civic Involvement and Immigration**

All staff members agreed that there is an urgent need for comprehensive immigration reform to be passed at the federal level in order for the 12 million undocumented workers to come out of the shadows. There are millions of undocumented students who need to be able to go to college and obtain employment after graduation. In addition, more accurate information should be available to educate members of the community as to when and how to communicate with their elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels of government for any inquiry, suggestion, or complain. Also, for children to learn from an early age the importance of voting.

### **Topic 2: Education**

Aurora School District 131 has a large need for school transportation. Aurora's School District 131 is one of the few districts in the country that does not provide transportation its students. The lack of transportation is a major concern for the majority of the parents in this district. Another major concern is the lack of free/affordable after school care and lack of extra curricular activities for the students. Several of the staff members that work in one of the after school programs mentioned that many students get involved in gang related activities, because they have nothing to do after school. Another added that extra curricular actives help students develop better self-esteem; learn responsibility, and the importance of team work.

### **Topic 3: Housing**

Several staff members commented that many people have to live with extended family members. The major reason for this type of living arrangement is that it's a part of the culture of that family. Another reason for this living arrangement is that there is a lack of affordable housing. Many feel that they need to have additional family members living in their home in order to pay their monthly rent payment or mortgage. One person mentioned that many community members are losing their homes due to their interest rate converting from fixed to variable. The changing interest rate causes their monthly mortgage payment to increase an additional \$500 up to \$1000. The value of their home has decreased which prevents them from refinancing or selling their home. This situation also causes people to ruin their credit records. One staff member mentioned that the state or federal government should implement a law that states: in order for

people to receive a mortgage loan; they first must attend a required class which would educate the consumer on the differences in interest rates, loan types, and budgeting. Also, the financing and mortgage companies should be regulated to prevent fraud. One person mentioned that she was convinced by the loan officer that she had nothing to risk, she will be getting one hundred percent financing, and in a year or two she would refinance to lower the monthly payment. During that time, she could improve her credit score. However, that time to refinance came when her monthly mortgage payment had almost doubled due to her interest rate converting into variable. She could not refinance because the value of her home had decreased almost 25% of the original price.

## **Meeting #2: Saturday, 3-22-08 10am-12:00 pm East Aurora High School**

Community members arrived in Aurora because of family members, employment, and educational opportunities. Most attendees mentioned that what keeps them in the Aurora area is mostly because of family and more affordable housing. The group was divided in to language preference English or Spanish. Both groups without planning it randomly selected the same topics.

Topics for discussion:

1. Education
2. Civic Involvement & Immigration
3. Public Health & Safety

### **Topic #1: Education**

The discussion in the English group was opened with the statement that the quality of the education offered by the Aurora school district 131 is decreasing as the years go by. More after school programs are being cancelled, and not enough money is invested in to the schools. Another person stated that “in education is the key to success, but teacher need to feel responsible for providing that key.” At the same time another added, that the first teachers are the parents, and parents are not participating enough in their children’s education, due to fact that many have multiple jobs in order to support their family. One of the attending was a former student of school district 131, who mentioned that many students do not success in school, because the classrooms are over populated and the students do not receive the attention they need. Another attendee, who is a current Spanish teacher in another school district, added, that parents do not invest the necessary time with their children, in order to help succeed in school. This encourages students to get involved with gags or do not perform well in school. He also mentioned that the lack of financial resources in the schools is also a major component for the poor performance of the students.

### **Topic 2: Civic Involvement & Immigration**

The second topic selected was civic involvement and immigration; the discussion began by a statement made by one of the attendees, on the lack of civic involvement from the Latino community, he stated that “they only vote one every four years, but never participated in electing local or state officials.” For which another responded that it was because of lack of knowledge, he stated that when he does not vote it is only when he does not have enough information to make a decision. At the same time, a member of the county board who was also present mentioned that more people from different ethnic backgrounds are needed in elected officials’ seats in order to represent the different ethnic group in the community. Also, it was mentioned that the material the candidate prints is not translated into Spanish correctly and people

sometimes do not understand the message they are trying to portray. In addition, voters get discouraged because of false promises from candidates.

### **Topic 3: Public Health & Safety**

In the third topic it was discussed the issues of public health and safety in the Aurora community. Which include the fact that there is immigration and racial profiling been made by police officers. A person commented that he was stopped by police just for driving a low-rider truck. Also, that the local police do not make the community feel safe, because when the police was called to report a broken car window, the police did not respond. Also, sometimes community members feel that the police do not care about the safety of the community, they only focus on meeting their monthly quota of citations. For the topic of public health many mentioned that there are not enough educational resources, to inform the community of prevention of chronic diseases, such as cancer, HIV, and diabetes. Also, others mentioned that accessible health insurance is not available for the majority of community members. In addition, it was mentioned that recipients of the medical card or any other state funded health insurance, only have two options of medical providers, Aunt Martha's Clinic and VNA clinic. This influences on the quality of the services provided, since there are a large number of people needed medical services.

(Spanish), the concerns and opinions were almost the same, people added that more programs that prepared parents to help their children success in school, is needed. Also, they stated that more health preventative programs were needed in the community, good quality health services, in addition to affordable health benefits. Further more, many Spanish speaking community members feel that they do not receive accurate information in their own language when they visit a health provider in order to understand correctly. In the topic of civic involvement and immigration the group focused their discussion in immigration. They feel that a comprehensive immigration reform is needed in order to fully engage all members of the community in civic activities.

### **Meeting #3: Wednesday, 3-26-08, 6-8pm, Our Lady of Good Counsel**

During the third community conversation meeting, we had a range of different community members, from a high school student to an African American minister. Again at this meeting we also had two groups, a Spanish and English group. Again, at this meeting the attendees commented that they moved to this area because of family and employment opportunities.

(English) Topics for discussion:

1. Education
2. Civic Involvement & Immigration
3. Economic Competitiveness

### **Topic#1: Education**

Some members mentioned that the Aurora School District 131 was a "failed school district" since some of the best schools in the state are only a few miles away, such as Naperville High School. One of the reasons being funding issues, not enough financial support is going to the school in this district. The high school dropout rate among African Americans and Hispanic is very high, but exact number could not be given. This number is incrementing at the same rate of the teen pregnancies, and gang involvement. Many suggested that this is due to lack of

supervision from the parents that spend too much time working in order to support the family. Since parents are not getting involved in their children's lives, kids are losing interest in school and obtaining a post-secondary education. This problem could be solved, according to the attendees, by investing in the schools, more student mentor programs, less students per classroom, and more parent involvement in the schools and with their children. Others commented that some students feel that teachers focus their attention to those students that are very successful and those that are not are left behind. Also, it was added that many teachers need to use different methods of teaching in order to reach those student that learn in different ways. Further more, an attendee who is an after school program coordinator added that in order for student to be successful the family needs to support that student, as well as more supportive programs at the schools, such as mentoring and tutoring programs.

### **Topic #2: Civic Involvement and Immigration**

It is very important for a comprehensive immigration reform to take place. People don't see a future for immigrant families. No civic involvements from Hispanic community due to language barriers. Companies that are hiring undocumented workers, which are making US citizens unhappy. Critical for Aurora for an immigration reform. The community should work with the immigrant community to meet their needs without taking in consideration their immigration status. Hispanics need to get more involve in civic activities.

### **Topic #3: Economic Competitiveness**

If people aren't economically not involved, then usually they are not socially involved. We would like to see more business to downtown Aurora. More jobs are needed. More vocational schools to train people into trades they are not as popular are before. Community members need more education because many companies would not hire without GED or high school diploma. A nice river walk is needed with restaurants and stores to attract tourists. More attractive city with more activities to give pride to residents and attract visitors.

### **Meeting #4 (Spanish): Saturday, 3-29-08, 10am-12pm, East Aurora High School**

Topics of Discussion: 1. Public Health & Safety

2. Education

3. Civic Involvement & Immigration

### **Topic #1: Public Health & Safety**

Points of discussion:

- Would like to see Aurora offer more health initiative programs focused on prevention.
- Currently only two clinics to serve uninsured patients.
- A program similar to Access Dupage is needed.
- A health insurance for Dupage residents that are low income without taking in consideration immigration status.
- Also many senior citizens do not have insurance to cover all their medications.
- Police don't make the community feel safe. They don't respond fast enough when they are called.
- Gangs mark their territory by braking car windows on the street; police don't do anything to stop it. Too much gang and drug related activities in East Aurora.

- Schools are not safe, due to the lack of transportation in EASD 131 for students. Students are a target for gangs to recruit new members or for the distribution of drugs.
- Parks and streets are not safe to people to walk lake in the evening.
- Police needs to be friendlier to community members.

### **Topic #2: Education**

- Accessible high quality education is needed in EASD 131
- Schools need to be more secure
- More programs to help children with disabilities or speech delays.
- Hispanic students are not successful in school because of poor parent involvement; they don't get involve because of working long hours.
- More information on how to apply for college and how to obtain scholarships and financial aid to go to college is needed.
- Parents need to support their children
- Teachers need to be better qualified.

### **Topic #3: Civic Involvement & Immigration**

- A comprehensive immigration report is urgently needed to solve all immigration problems.
- Hispanics need to vote more often. More information from candidates needs to be give to the community, so they can be encouraged to vote. Schools and churches need to get more involve in encouraging people to vote.
- Candidates are using the topic of immigration to create anti-immigrant sentiment among the non immigrant community which creates hate.
- The local official need to do more for the community, bring more money into the schools.

### **Meeting #4: Saturday, 3-29-08, 10am-12pm, East Aurora High School**

(English) Topics for discussion:

1. Education
2. Civic Involvement & Immigration
3. Economic Competitiveness

### **Topic #1: Education**

- Three districts in Aurora and 131 is the worst offering poor education, teachers are not as qualified as in the other two districts.
- Overpopulated classrooms, not enough extracurricular activities, not enough support from the teacher to help students success,
- Not many involved in working for change.
- The 131 school district don't pay well in order to attract quality teachers.
- More funding is needed in the School District.
- No transportation for the students.
- No parent involvement.
- No assistance available for special education students or gifted.
- School district has low test scores and bad reputation.

## **Topic #2: Economic Competitiveness**

- Bringing more development to downtown Aurora
- Need to create a downtown where investments would see the benefits
- Not a lot of diversity of business, does not draw diverse crowd
- Need to embrace immigrant culture
- Need more cultural opportunity outside of churches
- City is not reaching out to the Hispanic community for social events.

## **Topic #3: Civic Involvement & Immigration**

- Community not involve in voting
- The Hispanic community is afraid of getting involve
- Churches need to get more families involved in voting and developing leaders

(Spanish) Topics of discussion:

1. Education
2. Environmental health
3. Transportation accessibility and efficiency

## **Topic#1: Education**

- Poor quality education in East Aurora school district
- Acquire more financial resources for school funding
- Teachers do not pay enough attention to the students
- Under-qualified teachers.
- Creative ways to get parent involvement, because they work so many hours
- Variety in extracurricular activities for students.
- Create more scholarship opportunity & make application information accessible for students & families.
- Teachers do not encourage students to get a college education

## **Topic #2: Environmental Health**

- Community members do not recycle
- City needs to pay a law that forces people to recycle.
- More electric cars need to be built.
- Other sources of energy are needed.
- Employers should encourage employees to recycle.
- More financial assistance is needed to help people convert their home into green homes.
- People need more education on Environmental Health

## **Topic#3: Transportation & Accessibility**

- Lack of good public transportation in Aurora
- Many people rely on public transportation to go to work.
- Buses take long time to pass, are sometimes late.
- More public transportation such as trains to transport people from one suburb to another.
- Public transportation is needed to go to DeKalb for those students that attend NIU and need to commute.

- Better public transportation more people would use it and that would help the environment.
- People should carpool to use less energy resources.

The Mayor of Aurora – Tom Weisner joined us near the close of our discussion and spoke about the challenges that Aurora faces in the area of education. He mentioned how challenging it is to have a city with 3 school districts operating with different tax bases. There is a big challenge in helping the community understand the need to pass the referendum. Furthermore, he supports all the efforts in place to educate more people about the need for the referendum to pass to ensure a more successful future for education in Aurora. He also mentioned the plans to make Aurora more attractive for current/future businesses as well as residents. He was really impressed and commended the people who would come out on a Saturday morning to express their concern about the future of Aurora and voice their opinions about their future and quality of life in Aurora.

### **Meeting #5: High School Students from Quad County Urban League**

Most of the students were in the area because they were born there and some moved because their parents had government subsidized housing vouchers and were ‘placed’ in Aurora. Topics of discussion:

1. Housing
2. Public Health & Safety
3. Economic Competitiveness

#### **Topic#1: Housing**

Here are some of the comments about housing: More affordable houses need to be available to people with a lower income. Why make condos priced at \$300-400,000 in a community where the average income is less than \$30-40,000 a year. What are those people supposed to do when ‘they’ (the developers) want to buy up all the land and push poor people out. It’s not fair to spend money on the high-rise expensive condos when money can be spent to help maintain public housing developments. Where should all of the poor people live?

#### **Topic #2: Public Health & Safety**

- Kids get involve in gangs because of lack of activities.
- In my neighborhood, there is no public safety, police do not protect the community. People are afraid & can’t work in the late evening, because too much gang activity.
- Police do racial profiling and people are questioned or stopped because of ethnic background.

#### **Topic #3: Education**

- Classrooms are not interactive, classes are not interested.
- More activities in the community so kids can have something to do.
- Teachers seem prejudice need more diversity training.
- Curriculum is not engaging & never feels relevant to life.

### Community Overview

The Englewood and West Englewood community spans from the Dan Ryan on the East, to Hamilton on the West, to Garfield Boulevard (55<sup>th</sup> Street) on the North to 75<sup>th</sup> Street on the South. With regards to challenges it ranks among the top 7 in negative health indicators and in the area of safety according the latest reports at the time the community planning dialogues were held was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest community with regard to increase in crime.

The population is young with over 40% under the age of 35, and of those who work according to prior transportation studies their commute time is 30% greater than other Chicago communities. Additionally, the majority of schools in the community are below state standards with many in some form of transition and most of are in need of repair and certified teachers.

### What Was Done

Imagine Englewood If, designed a "community dialogues" process that would focus on three populations, youth, business and faith institutions. Initial meetings in February with potential key partners helped to refine the target populations given the challenges facing the community and the focus areas of the regional planning process. Recognizing that many in the community have been involved in a local community planning effort, the challenge for the partners was to design a Regional Community Planning process that took advantage of existing forums while at the same time creating a new forum that engaged our target populations. With that in mind the partners agreed that the following would occur:

1. Youth Dialogues Taking Place At Youth Center or Program Sites
2. Teen and Parents Dialogue Taking Place at Healthy Lifestyles and Parent Assistance Site
3. Cross-Community Forum Targeting A Geographic Mix of Residents
4. Geographically Random Surveys (IEI Project Coordinator)

Each partner representative was trained to conduct a dialogue in a manner that sought to capture the opinions of residents by looking through a lens towards the future. Participants were provided with an overview and brochures with maps so they could fully understand where the neighborhood fit in the regional plan and understand the importance of actually having a voice in something that not only affected them but the region.

At the youth dialogues (65 youth-03-03-08 & 9 youth-4-30-2008) and the Parent Dialogue (9 Teen Parents-4-18-2008) conversations and issue priority ratings were done as a collective.

At the "Cross-Community Forum" (April 12, 2008-43) participants were given an overview the CMAP structure and developed an understanding of how the plan



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will be used as well as ongoing options for engagement with Imagine Englewood If serving as a "Community Linkage Partner". Additionally, Imagine Englewood If conducted random surveys (45) in the community in an attempt to further increase the diversity of opinion, focusing the surveys in areas where more established families and seniors lived. Mini video clips and photos were taken at "Cross-Community Dialogue which has been provided on a CD. (See Attachment for Power Point, Agenda, Sign-In Sheets, Surveys and Photos)

#### Marketing & Participant Outreach

Printed outreach cards were provided by IEI to partners who conducted in-house mailings and IEI used a targeted mailing list but primarily used door-to-door distribution of "Event Cards" which have proven to be a more effective means of gaining resident participation. (See Attachment for IEI Mailing and Outreach Listing, Marketing Card)

The Planning Partners selected four areas of focus from the issue areas based on their knowledge of the community impact these areas have presently. These areas were:

- Transportation
- Environment
- Health
- Safety

Additional issue areas were identified through a rating system or survey.

#### The Results

171 participants were engaged in one of the three forums and through door-to-door outreach visits to community residents where they live.

Each session used the "wish vision" allowing participants to their hopes for what the future would look like. Additionally, we asked participants to express why they live in the community and despite what they believed where challenges the overwhelming responses where:

- It is a community the community in which I grew up and returned or never left.
- It is a community that is accessible to the loop, airports and the lakefront.
- It is a community that is rebuilding and you can begin to see the change.

Participants were also asked what they wanted for themselves and their families by the year 2040. Primary responses included the following:

- Safer Community with More Involved Residents

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- Schools of Excellence
- Local Businesses Employing Local People, Especially Youth
- A Greener Community with More Community Gardens and Recreational Spaces
- An Accessible Youth Center
- A Healthier Community

*Youth Dialogues*

Youth were asked to select from the list issues that they felt were a priority for 2040 and to complete the statement: By the year 2040 my community will...

The primary responses from these dialogues were as follows:

- There will be no more crime and children getting killed. (Safety, Quality of Life)
- Youth will have more things to do because there will be new youth centers and park district programs will be free. (Reinvestment)
- Schools will have computers and teachers that care about you. (Education)

*Resident Outreach Surveys*

This process provided IEI the opportunity to talk one on one with residents who agreed to complete the survey. In some cases they expressed frustration with planning rather than doing but agreed that looking toward the future was important. It is important to note that very few people expressed a lack of concern about the future of those around them. Residents were asked to rank the issues of greatest important using a scale of 1-11 with 1 being the highest. As with most ranking activities some expressed a desire to rank more than one item as a 1 and were allowed to do so. To accommodate this rankings for each category from all of the surveys were added together in order to compute the priorities from this group and they are as listed below in order of resident priority.

Education	1	Quality of Life	2
Housing	3	Reinvestment	4
Equity	5	Sustainability	6
Civic Involvement	7	Energy Conservation	8
Coordinated Planning	9	Economic Competitiveness	10
Water Supply	11		

The Cross Community Forum was held on a Saturday morning and was designed to engage participants in small groups as well as collectively. As stated earlier participants were provided with selected issue area topics and then based on their "front of the room" ranking activity were given two additional topics to

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address. Facilitators for the session included not only the consultant but the four partners three of whom are also residents.

A summary of the recommendations for each topic is presented below and in the attachments we have provided the detailed bullet notes.

### 1. Quality of Life (Safety)

The Quality of Life discussion centered on safety which is not surprising given the issues of crime within the Englewood/West Englewood community. Participants believe that this requires both a legislative and a "civic engagement" response that has government and community working together. Specific recommendations range from State gun control legislation to the elimination of negative billboards that advertise violent movies. They also link the issue of non-violent crime to:

- Lack of Accessible Jobs and Economic Disinvestment
- Insufficient education institutions that do not focus on trades, vocational careers and entrepreneurship.
- Greater investment in community policing programs that utilize resident and parent patrols.

### 2. Transportation

The discussion on transportation is best summarized as a desire to see greater accessibility to public transportation during week-ends and what is now termed as off-peak hours. Additionally, investment in the "Pedestrian Friendly" infrastructure at transportation locations was expressed as an overwhelming need as this is a community that has few bus shelters or seating areas and residents must stand in the elements as the use buses to travel in between train locations or for trips that do not require train travel. Participants also felt strongly that there should be programs and services that promoted car pooling and biking.

### 3. Environment

There was a great deal of passion around this issue with regard to the negative impact of railroads and semi-truck traffic that goes through the community. Participants believe that diesel traffic should be eliminated from areas adjacent to schools and that noise reduction laws should be enforced or revised for greater adherence to community informed mandates. Lastly, but no less important participants stated that advance notifications should be given when any type of pesticide, weed reduction or similar related chemical is going to be used in a neighborhood areas. It was stressed that this is a community with one of the highest levels of asthma among children and adults and that the lack of notification causes a significant impact on some of the most vulnerable residents.

#### 4. Health

Overall this category was about "healthcare accessibility". Recommendations centered upon re-organizing public funded or managed healthcare facilities so that they operate where people are, specifically schools and faith-based institutions. There is also an overall concern about the lack of enforcement with respect to schools and immunization and lead testing. Participants expressed dismay and frustration that there appears to be very little enforcement of "mandatory health survey" and indicated that such requirements not only need to have greater enforcement mechanisms but should be expanded to include sexually transmitted infections.

#### *Additional Priority Issue Areas Selected*

##### Housing Recommendations and Vision

- Create Energy Efficient and Green Building Incentives and Funding for the Rehabilitation of Abandoned or High Building Code Violation Structures.

##### Housing Recommendations and Vision (Continued)

- Establish Affordable Housing Program Definitions at the Median Income % Threshold for the Recognized Community Area Boundary Rather than the Entire City, or Regional Market Area.
- Create Cost Centered Private and Community Sector Affordable Housing Resource and Development Plans for Challenged Communities.
- More homeownership through lease to own and vacant and abandoned sweat equity rehab.
- Support for Community Sponsored Transitional housing family training programs for families moving from public assistance housing.
- Homeownership Associations will be a common community entity that is part of integrated block clubs.

##### Economic Competitiveness

- Create more Work and Live Employment and Business Development Programs that position local neighborhoods and small communities to compete competitively through investment in technology infrastructure.
- Reward companies for supporting community service and local school support by employees.
- Invest in Business Retention Initiatives Rather than Attraction Incentives.
- Tax Credits for Employers that Provide Scholarships to Employees.
- Establish More Consumer Friendly Data Base Access to Land Ownership by Local Area(s).
- Improve Statewide Curriculum For Graduation that Mandate Business Education, Entrepreneurship, Life skills and Civics for Non-College Prep Students

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- More Jobs Created by Black Businesses that have access to public contracting.

#### Summary

Participants in the Englewood/West Englewood CMAP Planning Process were very engaged and enthusiastic and want to continue to stay involved. To that end 5 resident and 2 organization representatives have signed on to participate in follow-up and CMAP committee activities. CMAP staff Lynn Toi Lawson was very helpful and both the planning and community sessions in explaining how this can occur and has promised to continue to work with Imagine Englewood If in there effort to deepen the engagement of this community in building our region to be the best.



# **Community Engagement Project**

## **Final Report**

**Respectfully submitted by  
RaeAnn VanGundy,  
Director of Admissions**

The Kendall County Health Department was honored with the opportunity to reach out to local constituents and invite them into dialogue about their future vision of Kendall County. Our outreach efforts included two different modalities; Ethnographic Interviewing and a Dialogic Forum.

In Ethnographic Interviewing, the constituents were seen as having expertise with regard to experience about their own community needs and strengths. During this process the interviewer assumed the role of a learner/data gatherer. The program coordinators contacted local companies asking for the opportunity to meet with their employees and be interviewed about their vision of the future for Kendall County. The employers were provided an understanding of the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Several companies were excited about the possibility of participation and allowed their employees the opportunity for their voice to be heard.

The results of our Community Engagement Project are summarized in the following sections. The first section details the thematic trends that resulted from the Ethnographic Interviewing, the second section details the input from the Dialogic Forum and the third section summarizes our Community Engagement Project.

## I. Ethnographic Interviews

The Kendall County Health Department interviewed 38 residents during March, 2008. The ethnographic interviews were conducted either in our offices or offsite.

During offsite visits, the Health Department traveled to local businesses (in the hospitality services industry, small manufacturing, and retail) as well as the Kendall County Senior Center. The interviewers documented answers, listened attentively, and asked probing questions. Samples of the interview questions are attached. (See Exhibit A.)

Each interview led to a meaningful dialogue and rich outcomes. Upon analyzing the data the thematic community development needs that emerged were; public transportation, health and human services, public safety, employment/business, education/schools, housing development, community center/recreational center, land use, water supply and energy availability. Public transportation and road infrastructure represented the most potent theme among those interviewed. The results from the interviews are attached. (See Exhibit B)

### Demographics of Ethnographic Interviews:

**Total participants 38**

#### Age

**18-25: 9**

**25-40: 10**

**40-60: 12**

**60+: 7**

#### Ethnicity

**Caucasian: 82%**

**Hispanic: 16%**

**Other: 2%**

## II. Dialogic Forum

The Dialogic Forum was conducted on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 10am to 2pm. The meeting was held in the conference center at the Kendall County Health Department. The forum targeted community residents from diverse backgrounds. Twenty-four of the thirty-two confirmed individuals participated in the forum.

As the participants entered the conference center, they were asked to find their name on a list at the table where they would be sitting. The names were strategically placed to encourage diversity in order to enrich the dialogue. Each participant did sign in at their respective table.

The forum began with a brief overview of how this community engagement project came to fruition. A thorough audio/visual presentation was provided to the participants which explained the project as well as the analyzed data from the ethnographic interviews. The forum room was equipped with wireless laptop for participant web-based searches if needed. The forum room was also equipped with electronic white board used for visual summation of assets mapping, conceptual frameworks, or community planning lists. Refreshment and lunch were provided.

Erin Aleman, Assistant Community Planner, from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning opened briefly with the role and importance of this forum for the Regional Comprehensive Plan. As the forum began, the facilitator reviewed the 10 themes that emerged from the individual interviews. These salient themes were the starting point for a meaningful dialogue. During the power point presentation, each theme was broken down in detail about what the interviewed constituents saw as their vision or priorities for the future of Kendall County.

Each table then deliberated over the 10 emerging themes and exchanged ideas about what they saw as their vision for the future of Kendall County. These tables worked diligently with much deliberation around focusing on the three most significant community planning needs. The following diagrams reflect the results of this initial dialogue and deliberation from the three dialogue groups. Four themes actually emerged.



## Top Priorities

**Table #1:**

<b>Health and Human Services</b>	<b>Public Transportation</b>	<b>Education</b>
Central System for resources	To dependent on vehicles	Schools need to be "community centers"
Availability/Accessibility to services	Strategic Infrastructure	Seniors mentoring youth
24 hours Case Management Services	Fluid Transportation	Mentoring program for new teachers.

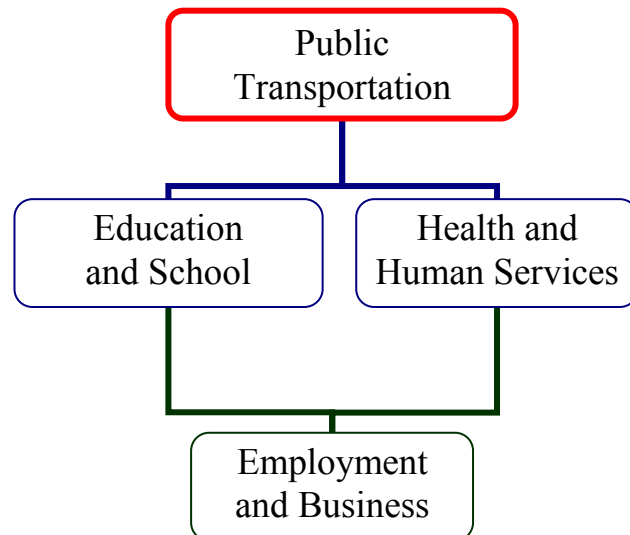
**Table #2:**

<b>Public Transportation</b>	<b>Health and Human Services</b>	<b>Employment/Business</b>
Route 34 needs to tie businesses together	Housing issues for disabled and seniors	Need more industry Kendall County.
Infrastructure: sidewalks needed	Assistance for parents, teen substance abuse medical assistance and recreational activities.	Hospital in Kendall County to increase jobs.
Pay-n- Ride to specific areas	Energy "green" programs.	Increased Corporate base in Kendall County/

**Table #3:**

<b>Employment/Business</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Public Transportation</b>
Need Tax Based industry	Educated community	Need transportation for all.
Need local jobs	Increase in school reports	School districts are the only reliable source of transportation.
Increase in socio-economic status for residents.	For continual growth and to maintain employment	

After each group presented their identified priorities, the real work began. "Out of the four emergent themes, what are the three salient ones that you would like to have presented to CMAP?" was the question presented to the participants. After much rigorous deliberation, the participants decided that they should submit four themes to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. The group eagerly agreed that public transportation is the top priority for Kendall County. Following public transportation is education/schools and health/human services, and then employment/business.



**Demographics of the Dialogic Forum:**

**Total participants 24**

**Age**

**18-25: 1**  
**25-40: 5**  
**40-60: 13**  
**60+: 5**

**Ethnicity**

**Caucasian: 92%**  
**Hispanic: 4%**  
**African American: 4%**

### III. Summary and Conclusion

In summary, the Community Engagement Project conducted by the Kendall County Health Department revealed data that reflects the following priorities around community planning:

- Public Transportation
- Education and Schools
- Health and Human Services
- Employment and Business

The Dialogic Forum participants agreed that the themes are interrelated. Without public transportation, residents are unable to get to school, work, or appointments. Without health and human services or quality education/schools, residents may not have profitable employment. The outcomes from the Dialogic Forum in conjunction with the themes from the Ethnographic Interviews will certainly assist in the Regional Comprehensive Plan for Metropolitan Chicago in the year 2040.

## **Exhibit A**

**Community Engagement is a process in which participants have an opportunity to provide valuable feedback on their vision for the future of Kendall County. You will be asked to describe what you would like Kendall County to look like in the next few years. (These questions were asked thematically rather than in verbatim format.)**

1. Can you tell me about yourself and your background?
2. What does community planning mean to you?
3. I am interested in hearing about what is important to you and your family with regard to community planning?
4. Which of these or other critical aspects of infrastructure do you think need particular attention in Kendall County; housing, education, transportation, health, safety, water, and land use?
5. Tell me what you envision for human services or other “quality of life” aspects of infrastructure?

## **Exhibit B**

### **Kendall County Community Engagement Themes**

#### **Public Transportation**

Public transportation, road improvements, road improvements, traffic patterns, widening of Route 34, widening of Route 47, another bridge over Fox River, better roads, sidewalks, transportation, structure roads properly, snow removal, road repair, reducing congestion, better traffic patterns, limited sidewalks, flow of traffic, second access over Fox River, need a Metra stop in Plano, transportation would be a plus, trying to get down Route 47 is brutal, free transportation for elderly or developmentally delayed, People need to be able to move about the community readily, Kendall county is developing from a corner rather than the center which creates a bottleneck

#### **Health and Human Services**

Assistance with lawn care and snow removal, healthcare, specialty healthcare, convenience to healthcare, increased healthcare, kids are the number one priority in the community, bring seniors and children together, affordable health insurance for all families, food pantry, need a hospital in Kendall County, 24hr day care for those that work second shift, substance abuse, domestic issues, youth development, advanced health care, lack of awareness of community services, very satisfied with services that are now available, parental involvement, companionship, reduce stigma of mental illness, services for all in the county, need more funding for those that serve the human condition, health, taking care of children, be healthy, senior healthcare, food, childcare that is affordable, hospitals will be needed, substance abuse treatment is needed

#### **Public Safety**

Safety, security, increased police, growth increases crime, crime, public safety, not enough police presence, lack of police presence, the crime is way up, crime will arrive with growth, law enforcement, feel safe while in Kendall County, safety concerns, increased protection, we don't want crime, being safe, each community should have a community watch to help out with safety, fire departments will be needed

#### **Employment/Business**

Employment issues, upgrading downtowns, Kendal county needs more of a corporate base, chain stores, restaurants, finding employment in Kendall County, more retailers, socioeconomic status, upgrade historic areas, convenience of retail, employment opportunities, businesses, manufacturing, community power planning for manufacturing is very important, scope of businesses to support families, employment availability, resale shops to recycle clothes, chain restaurants, gainful employment, more chain stores, fast food places in Yorkville are disgusting, need to make things more attractive for manufacturing, protect small stores if possible, buy local, history of community, earn money, nice dining, entertainment, clean places to eat that have healthy food, people need to have a good job to reduce stress

## **Education/Schools**

Education, plan school boundaries to avoid overcrowding, adult education, good teachers, structured classrooms, accessible learning, upgrade educational standards, adult education opportunities, adult education, smaller classes, more teachers, education is needed even more, poor quality education, schools may be built quickly with growth yet not used sufficiently years from now, tutoring after school

## **Housing Development**

Obtaining a permanent building for senior citizens, senior subsidized housing, building too fast, senior housing complex, reduce growth, controlled growth, keep community small, senior housing, growth, feel threatened due to current growth, keep the small town feel, not enough affordable housing to match the growth, foreclosures occurring due to limited subsidized housing units, affordable senior housing, too many houses with prices going up so that people can no longer afford them, so many houses for sale, one side of Lakewood has already become less pleasant than the other, not letting housing pop up everywhere without careful planning, educating community on positive factors of diverse growth, less cheap housing in Lakewood, Lot sizes should be kept of sufficient size

## **Community Center/Recreation**

Youth recreation areas, things for kids to do, activities for children, public pool, recreational activities, safe recreational areas, community center for seniors, teen recreational center needed to keep kids busy, provide structured activities for children, community center, recreational center for kids, recreational center, recreational center for teens, park district programs are so important

## **Land Use**

Removal of trees for retail, maintain parks, preserve parks, wildlife refuge areas, land preservation, parks, want the town to stay clean, more parks for families, open space, lack of nature, preserve Silver Springs, land use is the foundation that many other development issues are based upon, keep Kendall County green, water pollution, preserve forest for outdoor family activities, all builders should be required to set aside land for parks

## **Water Supply**

Water quality, waterways, water supply, conservation of water, safe water, water supply is so important with the lack of snow and ice cover, we have good water

## **Energy Availability**

Energy services, gas prices, wind farms for solar energy

# VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Community-based Mapping and Visioning Efforts for  
the Chicago Regional Comprehensive Plan

Summary Report to CMAP  
April 30, 2008



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Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) has been pleased to take part in conducting community outreach and input to Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Regional Comprehensive Plan. The report below summarizes our efforts to host 3 community-based outreach events, the feedback received from participants in the events, and proposed followup to efforts to date.

## ***PROGRAM OVERVIEW***

Our staff designed an interactive program to be used at the community-based outreach meetings. After a brief introduction of both CMAP and LVEJO, a mapping exercise was used to help orient participants to the regional and neighborhood maps. Participants were asked to introduce each other in small groups using the map to show where they live, work, and play in the region.

After this exercise, a timeline exercise was used to get participants thinking about the next 30 years of their lives in the Chicago region. We wanted people to be able to relate their future plans, hopes, and vision for the community with a look at the local and regional needs of the area. We asked the following questions regarding the next 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 years:

- How old will you be?
- Where will you work? What kind of career do you want?
- Will you have children? If you already have children, how old will they be?
- What kind of education will you have? When will your children graduate? What kind of education will they have?
- Where do you want to live? Will you rent? Will you own a home?
- When will you retire?
- What plan do you have to realize this? What resources do we need in the community to realize our plans?

In the first meeting, each individual created their timeline on paper and shared their responses with the group.

In the second meeting, a collective timeline was created and participants posted their answers to it for all to see.

In the third meeting, the timeline was omitted and these issues will included in general discussion.

Following the timeline activity, we returned to the maps to conduct a mapping charette activity. Smaller groups worked around used aerial photography maps, Chicago metropolitan area maps, both graciously provided by CMAP, and flip chart paper. Maps were overlaid with an acetate liner so that they could be drawn over with erasable markers. Based on responses from the timeline and other ideas, participants were asked to draw or use model pieces to map out their 'Vision for the Future' of their neighborhood and the region. We announced to each group that we wanted to focus specifically on transportation, housing,



and jobs (economic development). However responses included other areas of focus as well (See below).

Provisions for childcare were made at each of the three meetings, and our outreach material encouraged interested parties to contact us with any special needs.

Snacks and/or coffee were provided at each of the meetings.

### ***PREPARATION***

In preparation for each meeting, we secured ADA accessible meeting locations in three Community Areas/Neighborhoods. We then conducted street-level, phone, and email outreach utilizing existing contact information from 2 previous campaigns in two (2) predominately Latino Community Areas and (1) predominately African-American Community Area. We used established contacts in community media, Latino radio, TV, press, African-American press and radio to publicize meetings and invite participation to the meetings. We also networked with other community-based organizations to invite them to mobilize to attend Community Meetings.

### ***MEETINGS***

We held three community meetings as follows:

- Little Village/South Lawndale Community Meeting – Saturday, March 1, 2008, 10am-12:30pm.
- Pilsen/Heart of Chicago Community Meeting – Saturday, April 12, 2008, 2-4:30pm.
- North Lawndale Community Meeting – Monday, April 14th, 2008, 6-8pm.

Supplemental Activities:

- LVEJO – CTA West Side Service Plan Changes Briefing – Friday, April 25, 2008

### **LITTLE VILLAGE/SOUTH LAWNSDALE MEETING March 1, 2008, St. Agnes of Bohemia Catholic Church**

LVEJO and 23 Little Village/Pilsen residents met to discuss a Vision for the Future of the community. This was a diverse group in terms of race, age, and gender. Participants included were Latino, African-American, Asian, and Caucasian. Participants were primarily low income or working class. LVEJO facilitated a discussion about the community's needs over the next 30 years. The focus was on jobs, transportation, and housing. However, many other needs were identified. Participants created timelines to help envision the next 30 years of life in Little Village and Chicago. Then small groups worked on mapping out what they would like to see happen in Little Village in the future. Groups of 4-5 people used 35"x45" colorized aerial photography maps to create this vision.

*Photos of this event are available at our website: <http://lvejo.org/campaigns/cta06.htm>*

Some of the needs that we talked about were:

### **TRANSPORTATION**

- Fix the streets.
- Outside visitors to 26th St. Generate a lot of traffic.
- There is not enough parking for people who drive from far away to shop in 26th St. Not enough public transit to reduce driving.
- Active living...More walking on 26<sup>th</sup> street. Less driving.
- Bus that goes all the way down 31<sup>st</sup> to Cicero or at least California.
- No fare increases on public transit.

### **EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

- Fix/Rebuild Gary School
- Better Teachers
- Arts building/school
- Library
- More jobs and training
- Better and More Schools/More alternative high schools
- Local industry and business should be encouraged to hire local workers.

### **HOUSING**

- No condos. Keep housing affordable and accessible to the existing residents.
- Resouces to fix homes instead of tearing them down.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

- Shut down Crawford Power Plant and eliminate the polluting industries; replace with solar power and efficient renewables.
- Close MRC plastics factory.
- Solar/Energy efficient power sources (esp. at electric plant)
- Gardens (like LVEJO ya esta hacienda) & connection with schools include organic and Mexican plants.
- Public bathrooms.
- Health care center.

### **RECREATION**

- Parks with sports and programs for kids
- Centro Recreativo/ Park for families...Gym
- Cultural Center
- Arts building/school
- Youth Center, Movie Theatre & Resources for Seniors and Families at MRC factory (MRC doesn't employ neighborhood residents).

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

- Less gang violence
- More security/vigilancia in the parks (cameras)

## **RELIGION/SPIRITUAL**

- Church

LVEJO will be holding Vision for the Future meetings this April for Lawndale and Pilsen. Please visit our website soon to find out about our upcoming dates.

## **PILSEN/HEART OF CHICAGO MEETING**

**April 12, 2008, Benito Juarez Community Academy**

LVEJO and 8 residents met to discuss a Vision for the Future of the community. 5 residents were from the Pilsen/Little Village area. Three residents were from other neighborhoods (South Shore, Lincoln Village, Logan Square), but travel frequently to and from the area. Five participants were people with disabilities. The group small but diverse in terms of race, gender, and age. It included African-American, Latino, Asian-American, Jewish, and caucasian participants. Participants were primarily low income or working class. LVEJO facilitated a discussion about the community's needs over the next 30 years. The focus was on jobs, transportation, and housing. However, many other needs were identified. Participants created timelines to help envision the next 30 years of life in Pilsen and Chicago. Then small groups worked on mapping out what they would like to see happen in Pilsen in the future. Groups of 4-5 people used 35"x45" colorized aerial photography maps to create this vision.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- There were multiple complaints about deteriorating roads and sidewalks. This creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and people attempting to access public transit.
- Better access to public transit is needed. Train and bus service that has been cut or reduced on the Cermak and 18<sup>th</sup> Street corridors needs to be restored.

## **CULTURE/AFFORDABILITY**

- Youth-led community organizations needed.
- Mexican-American community should have access to affordable housing, spaces so that local culture can be maintained.
- A balance should be maintained between existing culture and changes.
- Housing stock needs to be improved without excessive demolition of historic housing stock. Upgrades to the housing stock should incorporate low-cost sustainability features, natural and salvage building materials, and renewable energy.

## **FOOD SECURITY/URBAN AGRICULTURE**

- Community needs access to and ability to grow local and organic foods.
- Every school should have a garden lot.
- Every school should have the resources to grow food:
  - Access to water
  - Community involvement.
- Away from traffic and pollution sources; shut down the coal fired power plants.
- Greater partnership between schools and nonprofits

## **EDUCATION**

- Strengthen Local School Councils (LSCs)
- Educational outreach needed to encourage other adults to respect and not criminalize or undervalue youth.

## **ENERGY**

- Local coal fired power plants should be shut down to prevent contamination of local gardens.
- Capital and other resources needed for the formation of renewable and sustainable energy cooperatives.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY/SECURITY**

- Despite improvements, violence continues to be a problem that threatens local residents. Some people feel that they must move out of the area of violence persists. There is a need for violence prevention programs and educational alternatives for youth. They should be located at existing schools, parks, and cultural centers (Casa Aztlan, Asociación Pro Obreros).
- Simpson Academy, north of Pilsen is underresourced.
- Police cameras do not work.
- Police brutality and gang violence/crime are equally important threats to public safety. Training to form Community-based programs like Copwatch and Neighborhood Watch are needed. This is a problem in Pilsen, Lincoln Village and in many other areas of the city.
- Outside visitors to 26th St. Generate a lot of traffic.
- There is not enough parking for people who drive from far away to shop in 26th St. Not enough public transit to reduce driving.
- Active living...More walking on 26<sup>th</sup> street. Less driving.
- Bus that goes all the way down 31<sup>st</sup> to Cicero or at least California.
- No fare increases on public transit.

## **EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

- Fix/Rebuild Gary School
- Better Teachers
- Arts building/school
- Library
- More jobs and training

- Better and More Schools/More alternative high schools

## **NORTH LAWNSDALE MEETING**

### **April 14, 2008, Lawnsdale Community Church**

Despite advertisement in the local church bulletin and local outreach in the lead-up to the meeting, this meeting had very low turnout, with only 5 participants, and only 2 from the North Lawnsdale area. Several people called for more information but then did not attend. The local community development corporation was represented and we had a productive conversation about transportation needs.

Since the group was very small, with few people from the North Lawnsdale area, we spoke more generally about the purpose and goal of CMAP's comprehensive regional plan as well as LVEJO's plans around public transit and education/workforce development. There was a brief reportback of the outcome from the previous 2 meetings.

## **PUBLIC TRANSIT**

- There is inadequate transit in Lawnsdale, Little Village, and Pilsen.
- Long travel times are a problem on CTA and Pace.
- Students use the CTA and are disproportionately affected.
- We discussed the ideas regarding restoring or enhancing bus routes that have been cut or scaled back over the years (31<sup>st</sup> St., 16<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> St., etc.)
- Student are now another group being targeted by surveillance. One parent expressed surprise and uncertainty about the Chicago Card's ability to track a child's movements. "Not sure what that was about".
- Satellite tracking has been used to blame innocent drivers (they were following the wrong bus). Police are setting up checkpoints more regularly along bus routes. It is not clear if there is potential for abuse of civil liberties with these new technologies.
- The new tracking system does not work for older buses the same as for new buses.
- The GPS tracking system does not work on all routes and there has been a case of it failing during a bus breakdown emergency.

We presented information about the CTA's West Side Service Plan and the RTA's Cook-DuPage Corridor study. We discussed the Mid City Transitway proposed as Bus Rapid Transit and compared and contrasted with the CTA's Circle Line Alternatives Analysis. Circle Line is outside the North Lawnsdale area. MidCity Transitway would pass along the Western boundary of the neighborhood.

## **EDUCATION**

- Area schools are dysfunctional and need attention.
- Gangs fill a void. These could be substituted with internship opportunities.
- Credit could help generate local family-owned businesses and provide youth with work opportunities that could be integrated into the educational experience.

## **LVEJO – CTA WEST SIDE SERVICE PLAN CHANGES BRIEFING**

**Friday, April 25, 2008 – LVEJO, 2856 S Millard**

LVEJO was able to host a CTA presentation about service changes the CTA is making as part of the West Side/West Suburban Service Plan. We outreached to 250 low income families for this event. Eleven community members attended. There were also representatives from Little Village/Lawndale High School and the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation. A bilingual presentation was made informing residents of the changes and allowing questions to be made. Based on feedback from our first Vision meeting, LVEJO made a formal proposal at this meeting for restoration of bus service on the 31<sup>st</sup> Street Corridor.

## ***FOLLOWUP***

In order to facilitate a larger turnout and continue surveying community needs, LVEJO plans to conduct two additional followup activities to supplement the three initial meetings. These include:

- Inter-community Meeting – late May 2008
- Supplemental Visioning session at Racine Apartments – May/June 2008

These sessions would resemble the previous three with maps and timelines created. It will allow us to also ask more detailed questions on the subject of public transit.

## ***COLLABORATION***

The Vision for the Future Project would not have been possible without the support of other community-based organizations. LVEJO invited, worked with, or had representation from the following organizations at our meetings:

### North Lawndale

Blessed Sacrament Youth Center

Lawndale Alliance

Lawndale Christian Development Corporation

Lawndale Community Church

Little Village/Lawndale High School

Little Village/South Lawndale

Arte y Realidad  
Epiphany Catholic Church  
Little Village Community Council  
Little Village Community Development Corporation.  
Little Village/Lawndale High School  
Mexican Students of Aztlan (MeSA)  
St. Agnes Catholic Church  
Universidad Popular  
Young Activists Organizing Tomorrow's Leaders (YAOTL)

Pilsen/Heart of Chicago

Benito Juarez Academy  
Comerciantes Unidos de 18<sup>th</sup> St. (business association)  
Harrison Park Seniors Club  
Metro Seniors In Action  
Mujeres Latinas en Acción  
Pilsen Alliance  
Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization  
Pilsen Neighbors Community Council  
St. Pius Catholic Church  
Rudy Lozano Public Library

*Emails and/or faxed press releases were sent to the following Media Contacts.*

AREA Chicago Magazine  
Chicago Public Radio  
Chicago Tribune  
Chicago Sun Times  
Extra News  
Hoy  
La Raza  
Lawndale Community Bilingual News  
North Lawndale Community News  
RadioArte 90.5 FM  
Telemundo  
Univision  
WBBM Newsradio 780 AM

Attendance sheets  
Photos examples  
Flyers

**CMAP Public Outreach**  
**Community Conversations about Priorities in Housing**  
**Final Summary of Results**  
Submitted by  
**K. Cheney-Egan, Metropolitan Tenants Organization**

**General Summary**

The Metropolitan Tenants Organization conducted three meetings to discuss constituents' priorities around issues of housing for the year 2040. Members of Metropolitan Tenants Organization are most often tenants, mostly low income, and primarily people of color.

Each meeting was held in a different part of the city, one on the north side of the city, one the west side and one on the south side. Our largest meeting was on the north side with a total of 39 attending, 13 attended the West side meeting, and 24 attended the south side meeting. The following sections detail the format of the meetings and the results.

**Format of Meetings**

Each meeting began by sharing background information on CMAP and a description of the purpose of the meeting. To get everyone engaged we went over the quiz that CMAP created. MTO was one change in the original quiz distributed. We deleted the question about Fortune 500's and replaced it with one about the amount of foreclosures in the Chicago region during 2004. This data was obtained by the Woodstock Institute. After reviewing the quiz, we split into discussion groups based on which of the following three issues was most important to each individual:

1. Funding and accountability for subsidized housing programs,
2. Replacing and maintaining affordable rental units, and
3. Affordable and accessible housing options for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Some participants attended more than one meeting, in this event; we asked that they choose their second priority in housing or their third if it was their third meeting. Once split into groups, the group was asked to answer the following questions with regard to their topic area:

1. Identify what the problems are.



2. Identify why these problems are happening.
3. Identify how these problems could be solved.
4. If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?

Before commencing, we asked participants to fill out a survey on their housing priorities for 2040.

## **Results: Funding and accountability for subsidized housing programs**

### **February 7, 2008: 12 Participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- Not enough funding, lack of resources and owners opting out of program
- Not enough units
- Not enough HUD accountability

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- No overseeing of funding,  
no funding for seniors or persons with disabilities,
- Inspection standards are set too low, properties are falling apart
- Landlords can easily intimidate renters

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Creation of an independent study group
- Reporting fund information to renters  
mandatory progress reports to tenants,  
appoint renters to monitor management
- Better communication with renters
- HUD should hire a fundraising staff
- Better inspections and additional funds for repairs
- Unused funds should be used to fund tenant programs (i.e.  
transportation, counseling, substance abuse programs, etc.)
- Management should be held more accountable for repairs
- Hold meetings between tenants, management, and HUD
- Hold elected officials accountable for fair distribution and funding
- Include more information in a tenant's rights pamphlet
- Offer more incentives for landlords to stay in subsidized programs

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- Mental and physical improvements - less stress, increased quality of life
- Stability in housing
- Increased interest in where one lives
- More value

- Lower move-out rate, less turnover
- Better sense of family and unification
- Can become a more valuable part of community
- More secure, increased sense of safety
- Families will stay in communities for multiple generations
- New people brought into the community
- Community diversity in respect to race and income
- More job opportunities
- Better schools
- More resources

**March 6, 2008: 6 participants**

*Identify what the problems are*

- Not enough resources
- Mismanagement of funds
- Lack of funding.
- The staff overseeing programs aren't doing their jobs
- Tenants do not understand the different programs
- Not enough low-income housing
- Not enough caring people
- Hard to get in, easy to get kicked off program (systemic problems) i.e. parents get kicked off for minor violations - children smoking pot
- Systematic distrust in tenants
- Long waiting lists
- Can't get politicians to understand that all people should be treated equal

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Landlords play favorites to keep tenants divided
- Not enough people vote
- Not enough education
- Mentality is to take from the poor and give to the rich
- Lack of accountability, management does not listen to tenants
- Affordable housing is not a priority of legislators
- Too much red tape
- Lack of resources available to help families stay compliant with HUD rules

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Funding needs increased - i.e. Increase funding for subsidized housing
- Funding transparency by building - i.e. Each buildings profits, costs and expenditures should be easily transparent to public and tenants
- Government funding needs to reprioritize as a whole: they need to stop

giving cuts to wealthy businesses, and start funding programs important to families

- people need to register and vote
- Tenants need to be included at the table when decisions that affect them are made
- Organize tenants
- Provide services for families on verge of being kicked off program
- Fair hearing for tenant/landlord and tenant/tenant disputes
- Change rules so that people cannot get kicked off program for minor problems

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- Better quality of life, especially for single parents
- Comfort in knowing that low income families have a roof over their heads
- Less stress
- Keeping up property would improve neighborhood
- More sustainable neighborhoods
- Safe and healthy place to call home
- More hope for children in poverty

### **April 3, 2008: 11 Participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- Not enough education for renters about their obligations and responsibilities, the system builds in difficulties that weed out renters
- Renters are not informed about the differences in subsidized programs
- Renters do not find out program status until their leases are signed
- Renters do not know how to find subsidized housing (lists are unavailable and inaccessible), the need outweighs availability
- Tenants are at the landlord's mercy (tenant's word is not taken seriously against the landlord's)

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Renters don't research for themselves
- Renters are not united, renters are fearful and intimidated, and it is hard to organize tenant meetings
- Managers don't care and problems go unsolved
- Renters are not holding management accountable
- HUD does not encourage tenant councils
- No social component to housing
- Renters are not given enough time to read through lease and are rushed to sign, they are not knowledgeable about their programs; leases are not written in laymen's language

-No lease assistance for illiterate renters

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Renters should stay informed; resources should exist for renters to have leases explained to them
- Renters should unite against unjust rules
- There should be a mandatory 24-hour review period before renters sign lease
- More resources available to renters in general

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- Quality of life would increase
- Improvement of neighborhoods

### **Summary: Funding and accountability for subsidized housing programs**

The most frequent themes that surfaced were lack of funding, accountability, intimidation by landlords, systemic rules that work unfairly against tenants, and lack of education for tenants. The groups often identified lack of unity as a reason for problems and organizing together as part of the solution. Unification among renters was theme that crossed the boundaries of all problems and solutions; a breakdown of more reasons and solutions is listed below.

Issues around funding were the most frequently identified. These issues included the lack of funding and affordable housing, mismanagement of funds, and lack of transparency in regard to funding. There was concern about landlords opting out of programs which also related to funding shortages. Another common issue was HUD accountability. Lack of accountability includes HUD's lack of responsibility for the programs they fund and staff accountability in fulfilling their jobs to serve tax-paying citizens. There were many responses regarding intimidation by landlords. This issue is directly related to HUD accountability, as tenants feel that if HUD took responsibility, they would not have to deal with landlords that intimidate them.

Possible solutions for funding and HUD accountability included incorporating funding transparency for tenants on a building by building basis. Also, HUD needs to make greater effort to bring tenants' voices to the table when making decisions, and they need to encourage tenant councils. For example, an inspection could include extra credit points for buildings with a well-organized tenant council. Another solution would be to increase funding. Specifically, to reprioritize current government funding away from corporate profiteers and toward struggling families. One other solution was to get voters out to the polls.

Another prevailing concern expressed was around structural problems that make it far too difficult for tenants to get into subsidized housing, and much too easy for them to be kicked out. Part of the difficulty is a lack of resources to work with families on maintaining compliance with HUD/CHA/CHAC rules.

Another issue was that rules that are unrealistic to expect tenant compliance. Suggested remedies to these issues included changing rules, providing fair hearings for disputes, and providing services for families on the brink of being eliminated from the program i.e. tenant who's kid gets caught smoking weed gets kicked off program, or a tenant that is too far behind on their utility bills will get kicked off voucher program.

The final problem identified was a lack of tenant education on the diversity of programs and how to access affordable housing. Suggested remedies to this included providing more resources to renters, including assistance for illiterate renters and requiring a 24-hour review period before tenants sign their leases.

The groups said that if these problems were solved their quality of life would be greatly improved. Their lives would be relieved of stress; there would be comfort in knowing that low-income families have a safe and healthy place to live. In addition neighborhoods would be improved and there would be a brighter future for children living in poverty.

## **Results: Replacing and maintaining affordable rental units**

**February 7, 2008: 18 Participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- Lack of political oversight, lack of good laws
- Over development of condos that are not converting back to rental properties
- Rent not comparable to wages
- The term "affordable housing" does not have a defined standard

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Greed
- No government oversight and accountability
- Lending standards made buying easy
- Lack of consumer education
- Lack of unity
- Money influencing elected officials

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Inclusion of renters in decision-making, power should be shared equally
- Educate our people
- Research, organize, and protest

- Write letters to elected officials
- Get the youth involved
- End housing discrimination
- Create more employment opportunities
- Rent control
- Different types of rent subsidies
- Require landlords to have license prior to renting units out
- Disclose available funds from housing budget to the public
- Change zoning to promote affordable housing
- Hold elected officials accountable to provide housing

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- Stability
- Empowerment
- Peace of mind
- Ability to provide children with a good future
- Secure housing
- Improvement in standard of living
- Improvement in public health
- Unification of communities

**March 6, 2008: 7 participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- Condo conversions are causing rent increases
- Gentrification
- Increased property taxes
- Higher utility costs being passed on to renters, there is a higher cost of maintaining buildings
- Miscellaneous violations and shifty practices forcing owners to sell
- Lack of unity
- Slumlords are overcharging renters
- Tax codes make it cheaper to tear down affordable housing instead of repairing
- People are moving back to the city and affordable housing is disappearing

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Lack of landlord accountability
- Renters don't know their rights
- People are not living within their means
- Too many realtors in different communities
- Communities are allowing outside influences to take over
- Slumlords manipulate the law

- Elected officials sell out
- Tax codes
- Economy
- Landlords borrow against their properties and in turn raise rents to cover the increase in mortgage payments

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Educate renters of their rights
- Tenants should question their landlords
- Cut utility costs by using better materials (i.e. insulation)
- Alternative methods of heating
- Better methods to educate tenants
- Educating our elected officials
- Provide economic incentives to produce affordable housing
- Establish laws to create a balance between affordable and expensive housing
- More positive portrayals of our communities

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- Stability and sense of belonging, self respect, pride in your home and a sense of ownership
- More time to think about solutions to other issues
- More time to think about and act on beautifying our communities
- Improve our children's lives by teaching them the same values
- More leisure time, less stress, and better health
- More vibrant communities
- More money for other necessities
- More supporters for other issues
- More programs for improving our communities
- More organizing opportunities

**April 3, 2008: 6 Participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- There aren't any incentives for owners and developers to keep units affordable
- Neglect for repairs and lack of code enforcement, lack of city ordinances to protect units
- Lack of education and information distribution
- Lack of citizen inclusion

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Lack of communication
- City government does not value low-income citizens

- Disinvestments in low-income communities
- Elected officials are not being held accountable
- Elected officials/ developers do not care about the best interests of low income communities
- Lack of community organization
- No easy access to public information
- Disinvestments of major corporations and schools in low income communities
- No improvements being made in transportation
- RTA runs by its own rules
- Greed

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Alderman Ocasio's 35% set aside should be the standard
- Elected officials should be held accountable
- Better community educations/ workshops on tenant rights
- Organization of a community voice on housing and construction
- More money in the budget
- Consumer/ renter education
- Stronger regulations and more inspections

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- More affordable housing
- Quality of life would improve

### **Summary: Replacing and maintaining affordable rental units**

The most common problems identified under replacing and maintaining affordable units were gentrification, condo conversions, the increasing cost of living that makes it difficult to pay the rent, and an overall shortage of affordable rental housing. Issues connected to these will be expanded upon below. Organizing renters over these issues, increasing funding, and government accountability for affordable housing programs were the perceived solutions that crossed all issue areas.

A common solution proposed was to create more incentives for landlords to provide affordable housing, create laws and adjust zoning to require specific set asides for affordable housing, i.e. 35%, increasing property taxes, the need for code enforcement to keep up property, and the lack of laws to maintain affordable housing were also issues identified.



Further solutions and problems identified in this section were much more varied. Some concerns identified revolved around the connection of affordable housing to public transportation, or the lack of any connection. The south side was mentioned as being a perfect example of this problem because the red line stops on the south side have been cut and access to bus routes can be much more difficult to find in certain parts of the south side. There was also a concern around overall disinvestments in low-income communities, and of the disinvestment of major corporations and schools in low-income communities.

Additional solutions to problems included consumer education, more building inspections, stronger regulations, and better laws to encourage investment in low-income communities and families. In addition, greater accountability of landlords is necessary. Investment in better insulation of buildings was suggested as a way to ease utility costs so that tenants have more of their income to put towards their rent.

If these issues were addressed, tenants said that they would be empowered, given stability in their lives, have a better peace of mind, and be able to provide a brighter future for their children. In addition they believed public health would be improved, self-respect would be heightened, lives would be less stressful, and communities would be more vibrant.

## **Results: Affordable and accessible housing options for seniors and persons with disabilities**

### **February 7, 2008: 9 Participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- Not enough accessible housing or housing for seniors
- Services aren't connected to housing for people with disabilities
- Not enough rehabbing of vacant homes
- Condo conversions and gentrification
- Poor representation of disabled people and seniors
- Lack of enforcement of fair housing regulations
- Poor management in senior buildings
- Poor security: doormen don't check ids upon entry
- Unions not training enough workers to build, rehab, and repair
- Response times to repairs are too long
- Not enough funding
- Requests for relocation and getting security deposits back take too much time

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Condo conversions and gentrification

- Poor representation of disabled people and seniors
- Lack of enforcement of fair housing regulations
- poor management in senior buildings
- Unwillingness of elected officials to plan for housing needs (no accountability)

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Allocate more flexible Section 8 vouchers
- Enforce fair housing
- Bring back homesteading programs
- Increase number of units built with decreased tax credits
- Put a cap on property taxes for seniors and disabled people who own homes
- Increase funding to educate tenants on their rights
- Organize people around the different issues
- Pass a visibility ordinance (no step entrances, wider doorways)
- Increase funding for home buyer education
- Stop increasing rents of seniors
- Increase residential housing by selling boarded up and vacant buildings
- Increase funding by increasing "sin" taxes and implementing junk food taxes
- Train community organizations (i.e. meals on wheels) to recognize signs of senior abuse, increase protections for seniors from abuse by way of case management and home well checks
- Increase education for seniors
- Require landlords to make a certain percentage of units accessible to disabled people

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- It would give seniors a place to live, a budget they could live on and a chance
- Property values would rise
- Increased health of community, more businesses would come to the community
- People with disabilities would be involved in the community

**March 6, 2008: 5 participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- Most likely on a fixed income and can't keep up with rising costs of living
- Healthcare costs are taking too much from incomes
- Landlords take advantage of seniors and people with disabilities.
- Lack of knowledge among renters
- Lack of communication options

- Lack of good transportation
- Lack of consideration for seniors among management
- Senior buildings are not handicapped accessible
- Inability to file anonymous complaints
- No management accountability
- Not enough supply of affordable and accessible housing without 1 or 2 year waiting periods

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Lack of income
- Landlords don't have a lot of knowledge about seniors and people with disabilities.
- Management has too much control

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- Have an ombudsman investigate complaints
- Accountability for management resulting in discipline or removal.
- Have yearly meetings to discuss what issues are
- Outreach from organizations to renters to teach rights.
- Mandate all new buildings
- Require recreation and social programs
- Create more affordable housing units that include handicapped access.
- Include case management service

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- We would have transportation to stores, etc. via case management.
- We would feel comfortable going to management with problems
- Social functions within building would improve quality of life
- There would be a general increased quality of life

### **April 3, 2008: 7 Participants**

*Identify what the problems are.*

- Units are not being repaired and maintained, there is a lack of sufficient heat
- Rents are increasing too rapidly especially for those on fixed incomes
- Building managers are insensitive to issues that seniors face
- Age requirements leave people with disabilities out of the picture
- Building managers are not trained in geriatrics and do not understand the issues and capabilities of disabled people
- Management abuses power
- Management is jealous of housing conditions of seniors
- Not enough funding therefore not enough units
- Public housing laws and work requirements are unfair to disabled

- people
- Lack of accessibility
- Locations of housing are displaced from communities
- Locations are not convenient to transportation
- Lack of services

*Identify why these problems are happening.*

- Management not trained and there is high management staff turnover
- Lack of funding and management are underpaid
- Lack of communication between tenants, landlords, and management
- Lack of responsibility on landlord's part
- Landlord's prefer management who do not voice tenant concerns as this results in less work for them
- This population is very vulnerable (hardest to care for and easiest to take advantage of)
- This population loses independence and control of their lives

*Identify how these problems could be solved.*

- More funding
- Push for better legislation
- Fine owners for violation
- Better activities and creation of communities within buildings
- Hold landlords accountable for safety and compliance
- Proper insulation and air conditioning, which will result in savings on utility bills
- Participation of renters in decision-making
- Hold fundraisers to send renters to congress in order to testify in front of committees who make these decisions

*If these changes occurred, how would your life improve?*

- Quality of life increases
- Basic life necessities would be provided

### **Summary: Affordable and accessible housing options for seniors and persons with disabilities**

The results in this section were somewhat two-tiered, subjective to senior housing, as well as to housing for people with disabilities. Overlapping issues are funding, lack of accessible and affordable housing; poor representation for these often isolated communities, poor maintenance of units, and housing that is located away from communities and transportation.

Identified solutions to these problems included expanding the Section 8 Voucher program, putting property tax caps on housing for seniors and persons with disabilities, stronger enforcement of fair housing, bringing back homesteading programs, and increasing funding incentives for landlords to provide affordable housing. It is important that new programs be built into current communities. One solution for obtaining funding is to create “sin” taxes for junk food and facelifts and use this money for affordable housing programs. Fining owners and holding landlords accountable for violations were also listed more than once.

Residents in senior housing had many complaints about uncompassionate landlords, and suggested that landlords in senior housing be required to take a course in sensitivity training. The reasoning behind this is that many seniors feel disrespected by their landlords, and feel as though are being treated like children. One idea is to train organizations like “Meals on Wheels” in identifying abuse due to the very limited contact that some seniors and persons with disabilities have in the community.

An important recurring idea was to connect social services to affordable housing for example recreational activities in senior buildings and supportive living services for persons with disabilities. For example, seniors could be assigned a case manager to do “well-checks”. Better-paid staff in buildings would also increase the quality of the buildings and residents’ lives. A “visibility” ordinance would assist in the solution for accessible housing. This would entail requirements such as no step entrances and wider doorways for newly constructed or rehabbed housing.

The quality of life for participants would be improved if these changes were made. The changes would most importantly provide for basic necessities. They would improve property values and the health of the community. Finally they would allow seniors and persons with disabilities rightful access to their community.

Results of Surveys								
<b>Rankings</b> 1 = Not Important 2 = Somewhat Important 3 = Important 4 = Very Important 5 = Extremely Important	Topic	# of Responses per ranking					Total Responses per Topic	
		1	2	3	4	5		
		<b>Funding &amp; Accountability for Subsidized Housing Programs</b>			2	3	21	26
		<b>Replacing and Maintaining Affordable Rental Units</b>	2			1	24	27
		<b>Affordable &amp; Accessible Housing Options for Seniors &amp; Persons with Disabilities</b>		1	1	1	23	26
<b>Comments:</b>								
	<b>Funding &amp; Accountability for Subsidized Housing Programs</b>	For the growing Youth in Education						
		\$ needed for repairs and tenant programs						
	<b>Replacing and Maintaining Affordable Rental Units</b>	Let's keep the movement going!						
		Continue to work together						
		Maintain the movement, keep it fresh						
	<b>Affordable &amp; Accessible Housing Options for Seniors &amp; Persons with Disabilities</b>	Support the backbone, the fighters in every aspect of organizing of organizing for our fair housing						
		Currently, there are young people living in senior buildings. Vacant homes cold be rehabbed. There is no diversity of programs, and not enough funding.						

**Other**

1. Lack of Political Oversight
2. Over development of condos
3. Lack of Laws
4. Rent is difficult when cost of living increases

## CMAP MEETING SUMMARY

This report summarizes the opinions of over 70 participants who attended community forums coordinated and conducted by Southland Health Care Forum staff. The forums were held at four centrally located venues for the convenience of community residents. They consisted of a professional building, a university, a local bank facility and a park district.

The lead person of this project was Maria Crews, the Medical Programs Coordinator for Southland Health Careers. She was paid to coordinate this project.

At each workshop a brief description of the planning process was outlined prior to the facilitator beginning the discussion. Light refreshments were provided at the first 3 workshops and dinner was served at the last workshop. Attendees expressed many concerns and a great deal of valuable feedback was gained at all four public meetings.

The first forum was conducted on February 26<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm in the St. James Hospital professional building located in Chicago Heights. The forum targeted area Latino residents and the discussion was focused on "Economic Competitiveness". The majority of the participants were local residents, many of whom were experiencing transportation issues due to their economic instability. Many of the participants were women enrolled in Southland Health Careers training programs. Michael Bonslater, Project Coordinator invited program participants to attend the forum. Announcements of this forum and subsequent forums included advertising in a local



paper “La Comunidad”, emails to community organizations, community mailings targeting Latinos, and a press release to the Southtown Star newspaper. Community outreach included distributing and posting flyers at universities, laundromats, restaurants, and other local businesses.

The February 26<sup>th</sup> forum was conducted by Ana Tristan, local Attorney and Editor of “La Comunidad”. Ana took notes on the discussion that followed. Participants shared their vision and provided input into the creation of a 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan. Their input specifically related to key priorities in the area of economic competitiveness. Many priorities were identified. (copy of items discussed and identified is attached)

The second forum was conducted on March 13<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm at Governors State University located in University Park. The forum targeted Hispanic students of the University. The focus of this meeting was “Education and Workforce Development”. This forum was also conducted by Ana Tristan who took notes. The participant’s comments were recorded and then tabulated. The discussion continued around the top three priorities identified. (copy of items discussed is attached).

The third forum targeting the Hispanic community was conducted on April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Southland Hispanic Leadership Council office located at the Bank Financial Building in Olympia Fields. The focus of this meeting was “Public Health and Safety”. The facilitator was Norma Caratachea. She conducted much of this meeting in Spanish. Many issues were discussed (copy of items discussed are attached); however it was

decided at the end of this gathering that another forum be added to get more representation and a larger sample of the issues affecting this population.

The additional forum was held on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Chicago Heights Park District. The meeting took place from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The meeting was very well attended. Participants included a Chicago Heights Alderman, the Park District Superintendent and staff, community leaders, etc. In order to facilitate the meeting, as participants arrived they were given an agenda and a list of items that had been discussed at the previous meeting. Participants expressed many concerns (copy of items discussed is attached) and their comments were recorded and tabulated. Then participants were asked to focus on the top 3 areas of concern. A particular focus was placed on Youth, Health, Employment and Job Training. The discussion continued and at the meeting's conclusion, contact information was exchanged to keep participants informed of any future information.

Thank you for the opportunity to assist in the first phase of development of the 2040 Regional Comprehensive Planning Process.

**MEETING NOTES**  
**2-26-2008 CMAP MEETING**  
**ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS SUMMARY**

By 2040, the South Suburbs needs to have addressed the following to be economically competitive:

**New Business Growth**

There are pockets of highly concentrated new growth and big box stores in some areas. But this leaves surrounding areas without such growth with excessively high real estate and sales taxes and high levels of congestion in the areas of growth.

**Transportation**

Good public and private transportation is lacking in this area. Even reliable cab service does not exist.

**Daycare**

Daycare is limited and non-existent for those with second or third shift hours. Regulations for day care need to be revisited and economic incentives for employer based day care need to be instigated.

**Education**

There are some good community colleges in the area but the cost is growing beyond the reach of many through inflation and increased costs of living.

**Cost of Living**

Health insurance, the decline in the housing market and the increase of the cost of home ownership for those with adjustable interest rates, high gas and utility costs are making economic gains very difficult.

**Decline of Auto and Agriculture Markets**

The lay offs at the Ford plant and the increased costs to the surrounding farming community is also contributed to the difficult economic times of the area.

**Emerging Markets**

This area could be a winner for senior daycare and provide jobs to those in that industry.

Immigration policy may be affecting the economy in this area too. There has been a noticeable continuing need to find laborers in jobs traditionally held by undocumented immigrants. A reduction of these immigrants also reduces the number of consumers contributing to sales numbers of goods and services.

### **Recreational Activities**

There are few sportplexes or free community centers. The costs for participation are high especially for parents of two or more children. Again, public transportation is also non-existent for these activities as well. There are also boundary limitations in the form of higher fees for those out of district.

### **Social Services**

There is a need for more training programs. There are waiting lists for many programs and there is little government funding as well.

### **Jobs**

There are few good paying jobs in the area. The best paying jobs are in Chicago. Retail jobs are mostly filled by teen-agers or the elderly.

Even skilled workers such as nurses are underpaid.

## **MEETING NOTES**

**3-13-2008**

### **EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

#### **Where would you like to be in your career in the Year 2040?**

This was the first question asked for the education component of CMAP.

The answers ranged from doctor to retired. Other careers included pediatrician, neonatal nurse, surgeon, rehabilitation counseling and education/diversity consultant.

Some answers lent themselves to certain observations of today's educated worker. One participant answered "registered nurse" *and* "business owner," specifically owner and landlord of rental property. In other words, a single career may be old hat. There may be a trend that a single job/career is not going to get you where you want to be financially down the road.

In that vein, one suggestion for education in the Year 2040 is "multicareer advising." Multicareer advising would provide assistance to the students to explore the myriad of ways their chosen degree can be used in various fields as well as how to invest their increased salaries in non related fields. An "educated" professional has the skills necessary to learn other areas of finance and investment and should be provided guidance.

#### **What other avenues of education need to be initiated or expanded?**

There was recognition that the current work force requires continuing education either at work or through technical school alternatives. The market is in continuous flux and the worker, through their own initiative or through employer mandate, need to be able to respond with quick, simple and inexpensive learning opportunities.

#### **What road blocks exist today that would make your education goals more difficult?**

##### **Location/Transportation:**

Brick and mortar schools cost in matters of time and transportation. There is a need for better transportation to these locations. Public transportation needs to be instigated and also be responsive to the user's needs such as being comfortable, equipped with televisions and economical.

The South Suburbs lacks not only good public transportation to the local colleges but even lacks private sources of transportation such as cab services.

Quality on-line classes, virtual learning opportunities, webcasts could also alleviate the burden.

### **Cost of Higher Education:**

Higher education is expensive. There is a need for lower interest on loans, more government aid and more financial aid for masters degrees. More dorms at colleges could also alleviate some of the financial burden.

### **Cost of Living:**

The higher cost of living naturally increases the cost of education. The needs are cheaper health insurance, cheaper gas or cheaper alternate fuel cars, lower utility costs.

### **Child Care:**

There is a need for more on-site child care at companies and educational facilities. Better at home technology for education and for work could also help alleviate the need for child care.

## **Elementary Schools**

Many of the comments were directed at the need of elementary schools.

These are concerns that exist now but will only be more evident in the year 2040. There is a need for more schools within the area, more private school options, better teacher to student ratios, fewer students per class room, more funding for after school programs, more free form exercise options.

There are also emerging concerns. Comments addressed the news coverage of school safety and suggested more discipline, more school involvement with counseling, more metal detectors.

There is a view that some of the dangers in school stem from the emphasis of teaching for the majority and ignoring those that fall behind. There is a need for new, individualized teaching techniques that includes counseling and teaching for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to participate. There needs to be more mentoring, more tutoring. New methods of teaching such as more physical/jumping around to supplement purely cerebral learning should be encouraged.

There was an espoused need to change teaching for “testing purposes” to teaching for development of “critical thinking” skills.

Also discussed was the lack of quality, economical park districts in the area as well as the need for more foreign language classes for younger students. Transportation to school and to after school programs also was mentioned as an area that needs to be improved.

## **Miscellaneous**

Education in areas that are growing should address the increase of retired baby boomers.

Also creation of "Certifications" should be initiated to alleviate the cost in time and money of attaining degrees.

There should also be "teaching" certification for instructors at higher education. At the moment, this is not a requirement.

There should be more standardization for attainment of degrees.

There should be more community outreach in decision making.

**Meeting Notes**  
**4-3-08 CMAP MEETING**  
**“Public Health and Safety”**

**Biggest Issues that effect as a residents in the community.**

- I. High School drop-out rate high**
  - a) Domestic violence
  - b) Children drop-out of school to help provide for the family
  - c) High pregnancy rates
  - d) Cultural-helping family
  - e) Lack of parental communication
  - f) Family issues
  - g) Recruitment to local gangs
  - h) Drug addictions
  
- II. Language Barriers**
  - a) Consumer buying
  - b) More bilingual Leadership/Higher positions
  - c) More community owned business(empowerment)
  
- III. Healthcare**
  - a) Misinterpretation between doctors and patients
  - b) Language that patients can understand
  - c) Lack of understanding between doctor and patient
  - d) Medical Terminology
  - e) Lack of good communication in the health care
  - f) More bilingual nursing staff
  - g) The need for Spanish speaking doctors
  - h) ESL classes
  
- IV. Access to Healthcare and affordability**
  - a) Healthcare in the community more affordable
  - b) Many providers and hospitals should except the medical card
  - c) More community based clinics needed in the community
  - d) Better services & wait times
  - e) Educate the Latina women in the community regarding the care for themselves so that they can care for there families
  - f) Cost of self pay insurance so that they can purchase it themselves
  - g) Doctors should spend more time with the patient explaining there Health issues
  - h) Provide more transportation to there health centers
  - i) Offer free health education
  - j) More local companies should offer incentives for employee who maintain there health
  - k) Collaboration between local hospitals and community based clinics
  - l) Closer hospital to do surgery procedures for non-insured patients
  - m) Affordable medications





# Southland Health Care Forum

## Meeting Notes 4.23.08 CMAP MEETING "COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT"

The meeting started at 6 PM with a buffet dinner.

Hubert Morgan from CMAP served as facilitator for the meeting and was supported by Diana Torres from CMAP.

Maria Crews, Project Coordinator and Medical Programs Coordinator for the Southland Health Care Forum, handed out a review sheet indicating the topics that the previous 3 meeting groups deemed most important to the community. Mr. Morgan asked the group gathered to review the list and come up with the two top issues they thought should be included.

The following is a list of suggestions:

- High School Drop Outs
- The need for more bilingual leadership
- Access to health care and affordability
- Language Barriers
- Drug Addictions
- Vocational Training
- Loss of Hispanic culture- Hispanic History not taught in schools (sidebar: teachers ridicule students-they teach African-American History and not ours)
- Gang Recruitment
- Drugs
- Schools throw kids out rather than work with them
- Can't transfer from private to public school (i.e. Bloom?)
- School Districts/Government do not change to meet the needs of the changing population (sidebar: Chicago Board of Ed addresses changing population issues but not county or local towns)
- Programs/Funding to train people for good jobs-not everyone wants to go to college (sidebar: Why can we spend more money to keep people in jail than we do to educate them before they get to that point)\
- Jobs/Economic Development
- Better information available to our children on scholarships available to them. School Counselors do not help our children plan for the future.
- Educators feel they know what is better for the community and are out of touch
- Barriers to available resources (sidebar: it takes more than traditional advertising to get the information to the community. Our people need to network and take the information door to door. Our people are not taking advantage of resources available to them.

The conversation continued at random. Families are working very hard during the week, meetings regarding the community, resources, should be planned for the weekend. Latino adults need to become more involved (i.e. run for school board, run for government positions etc.) Language barrier problems exist especially with Hispanic adults.

The reach-out to our children must start earlier than high school. We must start working with our children in the lower grades in order to get them to where we want them to be when they are in high school and contemplating college or a career. We can no longer wait for "someone" else to tackle the problem, we must get involved.

One of the participants commented that a group held a community event and distributed 2000 flyers only to have 20 people show up. We have to somehow provide the impetus to accomplish our goals for the community.

The community needs to tell leadership what they want. When it comes to schools, we must tell the principal what we expect and that would also be to impart our goals to the counselors and teachers so that something can be done to assist our children on that level.

Years ago, students protested and got what they needed. The drop out rate is important, yet there are no Latino's on school boards.

Mr. Morgan indicated that he has some data that can help the community and asked who he should send it to. The group volunteered Alex Lopez from Chicago Heights government. They indicated he should develop a task force to address these issues.

Another goal is to raise funds for a Community Center to serve the Latino area. Additionally, we must find a way to provide vocational training to those youth who do not wish to pursue a college degree.

It was also mentioned that Economic Development is a key factor. This community has lost a host of manufacturing jobs and the population has declined as people move to where the jobs are. We not only need to work with the youth, but with bringing all types of business to the community.

Mr. Morgan commented that the "CMAP Executive Director sends the local Mayors information on pending projects. This is in the form of an electronic newsletter and while it is geared to the Mayors, he will share it with us if we provide our e-mail addresses". Ms. Crews advised the group to give their e-mail addresses to Karen Biesboer sitting near the exit.

**FINAL CONCLUSION:** The 3 top areas of concern are **Youth, Health, Employment and Job Training.**

The meeting ended at 8:15 PM

Notes by: Karen Biesboer, Southland Health Careers



**Southland Health Care Forum  
&  
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning**

**present**

**Community Involvement Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 23, 2008  
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm**

**Chicago Heights Park District**

**AGENDA**

- |             |   |                      |
|-------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>  | <b>Hubert Morgan</b> |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Overview of Previous Meeting</b>   | <b>Hubert Morgan</b> |
|             | <b>A. Review Information Discussed.</b>   |                      |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Community Involvement Discussion</b>   | <b>Hubert Morgan</b> |
|             | <b>A. How do we get involved in strengthening our communities?</b>                                |                      |
|             | <b>B. What else is needed to strengthen the community?</b>  |                      |
|             | <b>C. What can we do personally to get solutions to the problems that exist in the community?</b> |                      |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Other Business</b>   | <b>Hubert Morgan</b> |

# The YEAR 2040: What SHOULD it look like?



Chicago Metropolitan  
Agency for Planning

## Southland Health Care Forum & The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

presents

### OPEN PUBLIC FORUMS

**Feb. 26, Tuesday**

"Economic Competitiveness"

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Sister Stephanie Center, 30 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago Heights, IL 60411

**March 13, Thursday**

"Education and Workforce Development"

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Governors State University - Annex Cafeteria  
1 University Parkway  
University Park, IL 60466

**April 3, Thursday**

"Public Health & Safety"

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

21110 S. Western Avenue  
Olympia Fields, IL 60461

These workshops serve as an opportunity for community residents to share their vision and provide input in the creation of a 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan.

We are asking for your help in identifying key priorities of the south suburban Latino community in the areas of economic competitiveness, workforce education and public health. The findings at each of these sessions will be summarized in a written report and submitted to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

CMAP will use these reports in their development of the region's first comprehensive plan for land use, transportation, and other critical community concerns.

To reserve your seat at the table or for more information, contact Maria Crews at (708) 708-756-1000, Extension 3443 or check out [www.cmap.illinois.gov/plan](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/plan) to learn more about CMAP and its mission.

 **Southland** Health Care Forum

# The YEAR 2040: What SHOULD it look like?



Chicago Metropolitan  
Agency for Planning

## Southland Health Care Forum & The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

presents

### Open Public Forum

Wednesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>

"Community Involvement"

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Chicago Heights Park District

1400 Chicago Road

Chicago Heights, IL 60411

These workshops serve as an opportunity for community residents to share their vision and provide input in the creation of a 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan.

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To RSVP, Contact Maria Crews at (708) 756-1000, Extension 3443 By Friday April 18th.  
To learn more about CMAP and its mission, visit their website at [www.cmap.illinois.gov/plan](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/plan).

 **Southland** Health Care Forum

[Back to regular view](#) • [Print this page](#)

## Hearing to target needs of Latino community

(<http://www.southtownstar.com/neighborhoodstar/chicagoheights/903170.042008chlatinopreview.article>)

April 20, 2008

By David Schwab, staff writer

South suburban Latinos - a demographic officials say is "traditionally underrepresented" when it comes to planning for economic, transportation and health care development - will get a chance to have their voices heard at a community forum Wednesday in Chicago Heights.

The session is the fourth and final event in a series of discussions run by the Southland Health Care Forum, an agency that received a \$5,000 grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to run the programs.

The Metropolitan agency is in the "visioning stage" of collecting information and gathering input from dozens of community forums like this one taking place across northeastern Illinois, Erin Aleman, assistant community planner for the agency, said.

Using information from these sessions, the agency will develop a "Go to 2040" document in the next few years, a guide for the public and private sectors for long range planning in the region.

Wednesday's session will be from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Chicago Heights Park District, 1400 Chicago Road. A dinner will be served.

The event is open to the public, but is mainly targeted at Latino community members and the politicians who represent them.

"If the weaknesses that exist in this area (for Latinos) aren't identified, the 2040 plan could go forward without them," said Maria Crews, programs coordinator with the Southland Health Care Forum.

Some of the specific needs of the south suburban Latino community that already have been identified are better access to jobs, improved transportation to get to available jobs, access to health care programs, more bilingual doctors and nurses, a reduction in unreported domestic violence incidents and a reduction in school dropout rates for Latino youths.

People interested in attending the session may contact Crews at (708) 756-1000, Ext. 3443, to reserve seating.

David Schwab can be reached at [dschwab@southtownstar.com](mailto:dschwab@southtownstar.com) or at (708) 802-8832.

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## Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Grant Awarded to Health Care Forum

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) awarded a grant to the Health Care Forum to assist in a study to gather information on community needs.

This plan is called the 2040 plan as it is designed to put a plan together that will see the area through the year 2040. The information gathered from



Caption describing picture

the various grantees will allow them to put a plan together to develop the region's first comprehensive plan for land use, transportation and other critical community concerns.

The Health Care Forum has held 4 community meetings and is in the process of preparing their report for CMAP.

The first meeting focused on Economic

Competitiveness, the second on Education and Workforce Development, the third on Public Health and Safety and the fourth on Community Involvement. While the Forum invited all community residents to attend the meetings, their main focus was on the Latino population as they are the fastest growing segment of the Chicago Southland region.

Watch this publication for future news on the project outcomes.

## Health Care Forum Extends Helping Hand

Sherry Marnell, Forum Executive Director, upon learning of the pending closure of St Francis Hospital in Blue Island, extended an invitation to their employees to reserve time in our computer lab to help them brush up on office skills, customer ser-

vice skills or any other educational programs that might help them land a new job in this competitive marketplace.

Mrs. Marnell said, "I've seen how hard it is for displaced

workers to re-enter the job market and the ability to work with the new computer programs we

have may just give them the "edge" they need in landing a new job."

*"working in our  
Computer Lab may  
give unemployed the  
edge the need"*

## Education is for Everyone

Education is important to everyone. Two of our own staff members recently received degrees from Governors State University.

Maria Crews, Medical Programs

Coordinator, received her BA in Government Affairs and Michael Bonslater, Project Coordinator received his degree in Interdisciplinary studies with an emphasis on Business Administration.

Mrs. Crews will immediately start her Masters program where she seeks a degree in

SouthSTAR Services  
MicroGrant Final Report  
Regional Conversations for Go to 2040  
April 23, 2008

**Background**

The mission of SouthStar Services is to provide choices and opportunities for persons with disabilities, which enrich their lives and maximize independence in the pursuit of community living and social integration. SouthSTAR was founded in 1950 by a group of parents who were in need of services for their children. The school they founded was staffed by volunteers throughout the 1950's and 1960's. As the children grew older, the parents realized they needed more vocational training to enhance their children's lives as adults. It was in the 1970's that SouthSTAR began serving adults exclusively.

SouthSTAR provides many different services for the individuals we serve, including developmental training, sheltered workshop, job placement, supported employment, senior services, case management, home-based services, group homes and advocacy.

**Attracting Participants**

SouthSTAR Services conducted two workshops at Prairie State College, located in Chicago Heights, Illinois. Flyers were made to advertise the event and were sent out to several agencies which also serve adults with developmental disabilities. These agencies included New Hope Center, LARC, Southwest Community Services, Trinity Services, Sertoma and The ARC of Illinois. Follow up phone calls were also made and the ARC sent out an email to all of its members about the event. We had a total of 32 adults with developmental disabilities participate in the workshops.

**Workshop Overview**

Both workshops started at 6:30 p.m. Three facilitators were present to assist the participants; each facilitator was given a small group to work with. The curriculum designer was also present to assist when needed. Each workshop was started by welcoming everyone and introducing the facilitators to the group. An overview of CMAP was given by the project director. The facilitators had each table introduce themselves to each other. Each participant was given a map and dot stickers to show where they lived, worked and a favorite place to visit. Once each group had finished the asset mapping, the project director had each group discuss what brought them to northeastern Illinois. They also discussed what was in their community that enriched their lives. At this point in the workshop, the participants were asked to vote on the discussion topics. Each topic was described to them by the facilitators. The topics were housing, quality of life, public health and safety, transportation accessibility and efficiency, sustainability, education, environmental health and reinvestment. Participants were asked to choose three topics. The top two choices would be the discussion topics. The voting process was completed by each participant circling the topic of choice on a paper that was given to them. Each topic had the topic words and a picture next to it to help illustrate the meaning of the words. After the topics were decided on, each group was asked to discuss how these topics have been addressed in the community that they live in.



After the two topics were discussed the participants were asked how important they felt it was for CMAP to plan for the topics discussed. They were also asked if the topics were to be included in the CMAP plan, how it might change their lives. The workshops ended with a short survey and quiz answers. Each participant also received a certificate thanking them for participating in the 2040 Regional plan. The following is a summary of the comments that were made during the discussions.

### **Results of Workshops**

During the first workshop on March 6, 2008 the discussion topics were Education and Housing. Of the participants, 8 of them lived in group homes, where they lived with 5 other individuals with a developmental disability and had staff with them 24 hours a day. One person lived in a home with a mentor. The other 3 participants lived with their families.

The following comments were made during the discussion on education:

The majority of the group said their high school education was good and they did not have to travel far to get there.

“People should go back to college and get a good education”

“I would like to get a good job and earn more money”

“I need more life skills training to help me fill out job applications and learn other job skills”

“I need help with math skills so I can use money better”

“I know I can do more, but have not been given the chance to”

“I like going to college, but need more help with more homework”

“I want to go to college, but do not have the money or transportation to do it”

“I need to learn computer skills, or else I will not be able to get a job”

“I like the computer classes at SouthSTAR”

“Everyone should have a chance to go to school”

“Schools should have more materials, especially books”

“There should be more teachers and smaller classes”

Several individuals stated that they would like help with reading skills.

The following are comments made during the discussion on Housing:

“I want to be able to own a pet”

“Streets need to be quieter”

“I want to live in a bigger home without so many people”

“I want to be able to have my boyfriend come over”

“I want to live closer to work”

“There should be better sewer systems”

“The roads should be fixed regularly” ( this was said by several people)

“There should be more grocery stores in neighborhoods, so you do not have to go so far”

“There are not enough snow trucks”

“There should be more maintenance done on group homes”

“There should be better nursing homes and other services for senior citizens”

“People in group homes should be able to buy appliances that they want to use”

“We need more activities for children in the community”

Many said that they would like to live in their own apartments, but other people do not think they can do it on their own.

“I want to live in a safer neighborhood”

“I want a house with no stairs, and we need more than one bathroom, with a special tub”

“I want to have a house and be able to have children”

There were several things that were discussed that were off topic, but should be noted. Transportation came up several times. Many of the participants felt that Pace transportation was too expensive. They have to pay \$6.00 a day for transportation to work and home. Pace does not go to certain areas that the participants may need to go to. A few of the participants had mobility problems and said that it is difficult to use some public transportation. One stated that the train is hard to use since she is in a wheelchair, she wished it was easier for her, she would use it more often. Some also stated that they can not get public transportation to Indiana.

From the surveys that were completed, it was stated that both topics were extremely important and should be included in the Regional Plan.

The second and final workshop was held on March 26, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. Twenty-one individuals participated in this workshop. The topics of discussion for this group were housing and transportation. Ten of the participants lived either in their own home or with family. The remaining participants lived in group homes with 24 hour staff supervision.

The following comments were made during the discussion on Housing:

“ The paperwork took a long time to complete for me to move and I had to wait almost a year”

“We should find houses that are already wheelchair accessible”

“People should not show discrimination when an agency buys a group home, we should be able to live wherever we want to”

“I would like to live in a house by myself, I would like to be able to pay my own utilities”

“I would like to have more space and privacy, there are too many people in one home”

“I want to live in a safer area, there are a lot of problems where I am”

“ I know to contact my PAS agency if I need help finding a home”

“ I do not feel safe in my neighborhood, I hear gunshots at night”

“There should be more police out to help with the gangs, and drug dealers that are out at night”

The following comments were made during the discussion on Transportation:

“Trains should run further south”

“CTA and Pace are too expensive”

“The vans take me to work and home, but I wish I could get there on my own”

“My parents take where I need to go”  
“Pace does not go to Will County, I have no way of getting there”  
“Metra is good but there are safety concerns at the station”  
“The CTA buses were nice”  
“Van drivers should make everyone wear a seat belt”  
“DD people should be able to ride free”  
“City buses have televisions that give you information and it is very helpful”  
“I walk a lot of places, would prefer to use the bus if it were easier”  
“ I go everywhere with my mom, she drives me. It would be nice to go out with other people”

Although safety was not one of the topics of discussion, it was brought up several times. Many individuals do not feel safe in their community. They did not feel they could go out at night, since that was usually when things would happen.

Based on the surveys it was determined that both housing and transportation were extremely important and should be part of the Regional Plan.

### **Overall Themes That Emerged**

Suggestions:

- Public transportation should be less expensive for individuals with disabilities.
- Housing should be more accessible for individuals with physical disabilities.
- There should be a less of wait period for individuals to receive funding for housing.
- Increase police visibility
- Independent housing should be more accessible for individuals.
- Pace transportation or other public transportation should expand to serve more areas in southern Illinois, as well as into Indiana.
- Increase security at Metra Stations.
- Metra train stations should have better accessibility for those with mobility issues.

### **Work Products**

SouthSTAR Services invested considerable time to adapt the materials received from CMAP to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities. These adaptations included the development of a flyer explaining the workshop, creating pictures and simpler language for the various 2040 vision statements, as well as for the voting process, quiz, and survey.

All of these work products are enclosed with this report and can be used by CMAP for future projects.

Thank you for allowing SouthSTAR Services to be a part of the planning for the proposed regional plan.

**Community Conversation #: 1**

**Date:** January 16<sup>th</sup>

**Host:** Stephenie Todd

**Area:** Oswego, Kendall Co.

**Location:** Little White School Museum, Oswego, IL

**# of participants:** 14

**3 top topics:** Sustainability

Energy and Resource Conservation

Coordinated Planning and Government

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** Openland, Park Space, and maintaining the natural environment

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Sustainability:*

- There is a strategic plan, including plans to address growth, for the Oswego school district compared to other surrounding districts; others lack the resources
- There is longevity of residents, many residents have been around and come back
- There is a lot of open space and there seems to be high interest in keeping it that way
- Recently signed a \$45 million forest preservation referendum in 2007
- Oswego has an ecology committee
- The Park District Foundation is buying more riverfront property for preserving the natural setting and resources from development
- There is a central electronic recycling facility in the area that is available to surrounding communities
- The Police Department will begin to use green vehicles
- There are new building codes (LEED) that are beginning to be used by developers and companies

*In terms of Coordinated Planning and Government::*

- There is a coordinated effort in Kane County to preserve rich farmland. There is a rating system that saves rich soil on farmland by creating zoning and also funding for these areas.
- There is a conservation committee that reviews land and funding comes through the Riverwalk Boat Casino revenue. This has been successful.
- Farmers are paid to preserve land which decreases farmers incentive to sell.

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

Most important change: **Transit** options

**Affordability** of housing

Rising needs of **seniors** have to be covered

Developers need to pay the full cost of development

Development has outpaced infrastructure, more balanced development is needed

*In terms of Coordinated Planning and Government.*

Oswego has many separate subdivisions and this creates too many communities within a community

No coordination creates competitiveness between communities, too many incentives to separate builders

There isn't a foundation for a community and this makes it hard to coordinate after a new subdivision is built. A foundation, meaning a plan for how to integrate it with other communities

Then there is the old vs. new community which doesn't help with coordinated planning

The roads and highways are not thought out. There isn't a plan on how the routes will intersect between communities. The roads are just built. Then there are a lack of sidewalks which cause problems for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Other comments:

- Kendall County needs more of a social service infrastructure
- The state funding for education should be changed, it is not working and does not assist many schools. Too much of the funding is paid by residents
- Wisconsin was discussed as a model for school funding; seniors over 65 do not have to pay taxes for education (property) because they no longer have school aged children
- The # of districts should be decreased in Illinois; there are too many. Some districts only have one school.
- Too much administration for school system; too top heavy driving up expenses

**Community Conversation #: 2**

**Date:** January 30<sup>th</sup>

**Host:** Julie Cowan (not CAC member)

**Area:** Evanston, Cook Co.

**Location:** Evanston Public Library, Evanston, IL

**# of participants:** 8

**3 top topics:** Education  
Sustainability  
Economic Competitiveness

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** Education, because it is essential to make us more competitive

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

Education in schools in our community. Education underpins everything else. A lot of people move to Evanston because of the good schools. If we have better education across the whole region we will attract more people.

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

Education and economic competitiveness closely related.  
Taxes have increased greatly over the years and the education has not improved proportionally

**Community Conversation #: 3**

**Date:** February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Host:** Stephenie Todd

**Area:** Yorkville, Kendall Co.

**Location:** Kendall County Historic Courthouse, Yorkville, IL

**# of participants:** 11

**3 top topics:** Sustainability  
Energy & Resource Conservation  
Transportation

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** Transportation

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Sustainability:*

- Forest Preserve is forming a group of partnerships to help create more awareness and educate the public.
- Mayor of Yorkville was described as a "green" mayor.

*In terms of Transportation:*

No positive comments about it

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Sustainability:*

Public needs to be educated on Sustainability. It is a collective effort, but a lot of people need to first know how they can help in a daily basis.

*In terms of Transportation:*

- Developers should be the one paying for infrastructure improvements, but lack of boundary agreement between municipalities enables developers to pit one municipality against another to get the best deal
- Transportation and development is far to political a process and planning seems to often be trump by politics.
- Region was given an F when it comes to how and why, and where invests money on transportation.
- Joliet express particular concerns about the impacts associated with the development of intermodal freight facilities south of Joliet.
- State has to do a better good job maintaining what was there or planning for future growth.
- Public transportation is needed in this area (really bad that Kendall County is not even part of the RTA)

**Community Conversation #: 4**

**Date:** February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Host:** Dan Strick

**Area:** Beecher, Will Co.

**Location:** Washington Township Center, Beecher, IL

**# of participants:** 9

**3 top topics:** Sustainability  
Energy & Resource Conservation  
Coordinated planning and government

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** Peotone Airport, Intermodal development, Commercial revitalization

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Sustainability:*

Beecher has an open space preservation project,

*In terms of Coordinated planning and government*

*No positive comments in this topic*

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Coordinated planning and government:*

- Lack of inter-municipal coordination requires a regional authority to coordinate planning and government...with legal powers, because otherwise municipalities will only act in their own self interest
- Part of this lack of municipal coordination, they believe, comes from the need for municipal growth to support school quality

*In terms of Sustainability:*

- Economic sustainability, there should be some sort of economic development committee to address the commercial disinvestment in Beecher
- Growth in housing costs is unsustainable, however homeowners seem wary of what the potential solutions might be.
- Desire for economic stability, especially in terms of commercial enterprises along Beecher's commercial corridor



**Community Conversation #: 5**

**Date:** February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Host:** Bill Balling

**Area:** Buffalo Grove, Lake Co.

**Location:** Buffalo Grove Village Hall, Buffalo Grove, IL

**# of participants:** 10

**3 top topics:** Energy & Resource Conservation  
Environmental Health  
Reinvestment

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** transportation (concern for access for elderly and also access to surrounding counties), environmental concerns, open space, green development

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Energy and Resource Conservation*

- Deerfield is a model community for green energy.
- Vernon Hills is a green village and was built with a TOD plan
- There has been more response to open space in terms of resource conservation
- LEED standards are in place but there are too many loopholes in the system
- A new recycling facility was constructed

*In terms of Environmental Health*

Open Space is strongly promoted. More work is needed to address water resources

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Energy and Resource Conservation*

The issue is not being addressed and there needs to be more awareness about how to conserve energy.

A list of ways to conserve energy that could be distributed in different townships would be helpful. Educating residents is an important way to address conservation.

Energy and conservation is being overlooked because the bigger concern is revenue and operation of the villages. The county could do more to address this issue

Overall, the responses by municipalities vary so it important for the County to play a role.

*In terms of Environmental Health*

There hasn't been much done around energy consumption

Enforcement and compliance are issues regarding businesses and municipalities

There needs to be more discussion about how water and air quality are affected by congestion and development. There needs to be more linking between the environment and health

There is economic conflict on what developers want and what is best for the environment

Need a better transit system which would improve air quality

It will be important for grass root organizations to get involved with improving environmental health

**Community Conversation #: 6**

**Date:** February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Host:** Stephen Porras

**Area:** Downtown Chicago, Cook Co.

**Location:** CMAP offices, Chicago, IL

**# of participants:** 6

**3 top topics:** Education  
Reinvestment  
Housing

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** Education

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Housing*

Chicago has a good sense of neighborhood.

Has many walkable neighborhoods, many amenities

In the city everything is relatively accessible (compared to other cities like LA)

Housing prices are accessible for a nice city as Chicago is.

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Education:*

Good and bad schools

We need to focus more in good quality education because that is what will make us competitive tomorrow

Schools in some neighborhoods are overcrowded so that is making family to move out to other municipalities

Basic education is deficient; higher education in Chicago is good. We need to focus more on providing good education from the beginning because that builds the base in our kids

Necessary to keep a good mix of skills taught at schools, from research to practical or more technical skills

*In terms of Housing*

Neighborhoods are gentrifying

We need to preserve housing stock. The diversity of housing, makes Chicago neighborhoods very attractive

TOD planning necessary

**Community Conversation #: 7**

**Date:** February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Host:** Nancy Seeger

**Area:** Evanston, Cook Co.

**Location:** Village of Evanston, Evanston, IL

**# of participants:** 14

**3 top topics:** Sustainability  
Coordinated Planning and Government  
Transportation

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** taxation, regional options; preservation of good education system, transportation - roads

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Sustainability*

The JRC is a green building, huge community/congregation support. City has great recycling options, tree-planting, urban forestry.

Building new condos near the EI, that's TOD.

Master Planning

Grocery stores offering reusable bags, farmers markets, multi modal, bike plan and lanes.

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Coordinated Planning and Government*

Transportation is a good example of coordinated planning and government - but isn't the best in the suburbs.

When you look at taxes, each town has different taxes, but we all use services in each other's towns. This is driven by schools, but maybe it should be done on a regional level. But school is last stronghold of local control, we get to vote on referendums or not. By 2040 we're just going to be all one mega polis - we need to coordinate with more than just our region, other states as well.

What comes first: roads or houses? Not everything should be focused on the car

**Other comments:**

Get rid of "lip service" when talking about more sustainability.

More groundswell needed from community to push leaders to do something

Economic opportunity

Better transit connection in Evanston - easier to get to the loop

**Community Conversation #: 9**

**Date:** March 20th, 2008

**Host:** Jennifer Hill

**Area:** South Side Chicago, Cook Co.

**Location:** University of Chicago, Chicago IL

**# of participants:** 9

**3 top topics:** Education  
Sustainability  
Housing

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** equity, human services, externalities affecting family life - specific to school and primary education

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Sustainability*

You can live in Chicago without a car and that is good for the environment

Park system is a good example. We need to keep and expand.

Forest Preserve Districts are an excellent asset in our community

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Sustainability*

Green space in every community, should be a safe space.

Parks and green space is good, but sometimes you can have too many - Hyde Park is a good example where there are too many parks

More density is good - infill

Soldier Stadium was and is a huge tax burden - big investments need to be smart

Job/housing match should be adjusted

Olympics: the stadiums that are being proposed will be constructed then deconstructed and that doesn't sound sustainable

*In terms of Education*

Kids should be more encouraged to do more physical activities

There needs to be more parental involvement and encouragement

Often times schools in low-socio-economic brackets get too focused on vocational tracks and that's okay, but schools should offer equal number of vocational as they do AP to address issues of equity.

There are numerous after-school programs at United Way but the challenge is getting and keeping volunteers and funding.

Education funding is a big problem

Equity in who can attend certain schools

Schools block of time needs to be evaluated. School is between 8:30 am and 2:30 pm, what happens after that time, there are other factors affecting education - nutrition, family life

NYC is begun a pilot program to encourage families to encourage their kids to graduate or get good grades. Eligible families are paying students and families for their academic achievements, immunizations, keeping kids covered under health insurance

Good schools in areas that are only accessible by car. We need more transit options to school, other than car

**Community Conversation #: 10**

**Date:** March 25th, 2008

**Host:** Cindy Ellis

**Area:** Minooka, Kendall Co.

**Location:** Seward Town Hall, Minooka, IL

**# of participants:** 12

**3 top topics:** Sustainability  
Coordinated Planning and Government  
Energy and Resource Conservation

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** Preserving the land, resisting expansion

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**  
(no positives)

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Sustainability*

Everyone has their own vested interests until common problems affect them all and they united against the cause (i.e. Joliet issues)

There is a need to provide a balance between rural life and the city/urban life.

Regional plan allows for the county to encourage sustainability.

Concerted efforts to preserve the land (i.e. selling properties to the Park District)

There is a need to create incentives to promote sustainability. Also a need for greater law enforcement presence for violations.

*In terms of Coordinated Planning and Government*

Promote ordinances that promote sustainability so community members can demand it be enforced.

**Community Conversation #: 11**

**Date:** March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Host:** Geno Bilotto

**Area:** Flossmoor, Cook Co.

**Location:** Flossmoor Village Hall, Flossmoor, IL

**# of participants:** 33

**3 top topics:** Reinvestment  
Education  
Coordinated Planning and government

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

Cultural activities  
Easy commute, commuter transportation  
Not too much congestion  
Property values  
Low crime rates

**What would you like to improve in your community?**

*In terms of Reinvestment*

More investment necessary in Transportation infrastructure  
There is not enough investment in this area  
When thinking of investment it should be more equitable  
More actions needed to attract businesses to the area. Now too much tax burden on them

*In terms of Coordinated planning and government*

Homewood and Flossmoor share parks and education due to size population. There is a need for more coordination in the decisions made  
Gov. should involve residents of the area more in the decision making process

Other comments:

In Transportation  
Peotone Airport Development should be advanced  
New interchange needed from 57 to 294  
Traffic lights need to be updated  
Need to update highway system to keep congestion

**Community Conversation #: 12**

**Date:** March 27, 2008

**Host:** Bill Baltutis

**Area:** Palatine, Lake Co.

**Location:** Village of Palatine, Palatine, IL

**# of participants:** 6

**3 top topics:** Sustainability  
Energy and resource conservation  
Transportation

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** Preserving quality of life – specifically in terms of transportation

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Transportation*

Palatine has rebuilt its Metra station; created more parking.

Palatine is near many great forest preserves, parks, and open lands - needs to be promoted.

**What would you like to see change in your community?**

preserve quality of life  
reduce traffic, access to transit  
be "greener"

*In terms of Transportation*

Love the idea of a STAR line, need more intra-suburban transit options.

Need for modernization of roads in Schaumburg; wider lanes, turning lanes;

Need for more coordination - both for planning for roads and for transit - nothing seems connected, especially major corridors (ie Rand Rd) which are congested, unsafe  
some bike paths

Need more connections so biking is a real option

Too auto-centric, have to drive to make a 1/2 mi trip to grocery store; unsafe to walk, bike.

*In terms of Sustainability*

Need to get around efficiently, protect the environment, and not go backwards economically

Concern about IL's strong history of local control, creates barriers to changing the future...

Keep our current communities attractive for future generations, too much quick change in development, let's think about retrofitting, adapting.

Ideas for being "greener"... need to be more creative, all-encompassing

More cooperation among communities, less competition - too many big houses being built in one place before they are even sold, all speculation.

**Community Conversation #: 13**

**Date:** April 17, 2008

**Host:** Angela Larsen/Jimena Sayavedra

**Area:** Downtown, Cook Co.

**Location:** College of Urban Planning, UIC

**# of participants:** 12

**3 top topics:** Sustainability  
Education  
Transportation

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** keeping Chicago competitive, updating the transportation infrastructure

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Transportation:*

City seems to be trying to revamp the public transportation system. Seems to be putting lots of \$\$\$ to improve it.

It is not difficult to get around the city.

*In terms of sustainability*

- . Chicago is one of greenest cities in the country
- . LEED standards, supported by the city, have worked really well.
- . Other environmental initiatives that city is pushing
- . Economic sustainability: good diversity of industries: that should be maintained

**What would you like to see change in your community?**

*In terms of Transportation:*

Transportation system is not even better due to corruption/mismanagement

Allocation of resources should be improved. South Side not many transportation options (putting expensive GPS equipment in buses while no buses in the South Side)

Bike lanes are poor

Need to Increase the investment in public transportation

CTA should do more TOD planning

Extend Green line

Add something as simple as showing bus schedules in every bus stop

Create dedicated lines for bikers

Hybrid buses, energy efficient buses

*In terms of Sustainability:*

Important to educate population for future needs



**Community Conversation #:** 14

**Date:** April 29, 2008

**Host:** Prof. Brad Breems (not CAC member)

**Area:** Palos Heights, Cook Co.

**Location:** Trinity Christian College

**# of participants:** 35

**3 top topics:** Public Health and Safety  
Sustainability  
Education

**Most frequent themes of concerns:** safety within University settings, walkability, safe access to key points within University

**What has been done in your community/what should be kept? (Positives)**

*In terms of Public Health and Safety*

A lot of security procedures to give more safety to people in campus (ID cards to gain access to building, security pole in east lot, escort service  
Nurse practitioner station (health center), required to have health insurance  
Palos Heights – hospital; clinics; immediate care (limited hours); crisis pregnancy care center; fire/police departments; emergency services; fitness clubs for “healthy lifestyles”  
Gate with attendant for entry

*In terms of Sustainability*

Recycling actions within campus

**What would you like to see change in your community?**

*In terms of Sustainability*

Access to CTA service, to use the car less  
Smaller parking lots -- fewer exhaust emissions  
Provide transportation options to airport  
More bridges and sidewalks within school campus, become more biker and walker friendly  
Preserve forests – exercise  
Encourage tax write-offs to have our own garden, grown our own food  
Promote businesses that “sell local”, “sell smart”

*In terms of Public Health and Safety*

Better health care (access for everyone)  
Increase hospital technology  
Emphasize exercise  
Bus transport around campus/community – free for students (adds personal safety, security and economic sense)