



THE METROPOLIS PLAN:
CHOICES FOR THE CHICAGO REGION

CHICAGO METROPOLIS 2020

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Chicago Metropolis 2020 is a nonprofit organization created by The Commercial Club of Chicago in 1999 to advocate for better regional planning and smart investments to promote the region's long term health. Some of these investments are in people. Chicago Metropolis 2020 has program areas in Early Childhood Education, Justice/ Violence, and Housing to enable all residents of the six-county region (Cook, DuPage, Lake, McHenry, Kane and Will) to reach their full potential. Some of these investments are in physical infrastructure. THE METROPOLIS PLAN: CHOICES FOR THE CHICAGO REGION is a call for radical changes in the region's land use and transportation policies.

Chicago Metropolis 2020's unifying vision is that the region's governments, businesses, and residents must make the kinds of informed choices that will make the region attractive and economically competitive 10, 50, and 100 years from now.

THE METROPOLIS PLAN: CHOICES FOR THE CHICAGO REGION is a blueprint for building a better region.

- We can spend less time in traffic.
- We can live nearer to our jobs.
- We can protect more open space and environmentally sensitive areas.
- We can build communities that are friendlier to walking and biking—and therefore healthier for the people who live in them.
- We can make economic opportunity available to more of our region's residents.

Chicago Metropolis 2020 was created by the same organization that commissioned Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago, a vision for the region that helped to make Chicago the robust and beautiful place that it is today. At crucial junctures in our history, the Chicago civic community has made and implemented such bold plans. THE METROPOLIS PLAN: CHOICES FOR THE CHICAGO REGION is a call for us to do that one more time.

Donald G. Lubin
Chairman

George A. Ranney, Jr.
President



STRONG REGION AT A CROSSROADS

The Chicago region has begun the 21st Century in a position of strength. Our region is diverse, attractive, and prosperous. The city of Chicago and the surrounding 272 municipalities produce \$300 billion worth of goods and services annually. If our region were a country, it would be the 18th largest economy in the world—more economically powerful than nations like Taiwan and Switzerland.

All the while, we have protected our extraordinary lakefront and set aside more green space per capita than most metropolitan areas in the world. Our cultural institutions are thriving. In 2001, Boeing moved its global headquarters to Chicago, not just because it is a great place to do business, but because it is a great place. “The word I use a lot is vibrant,” Boeing CEO Phil Condit said at the time. “Things are going on. Things are happening in this city and that’s important to me.”

None of this has happened by accident. The Chicago region has benefited from more than a century of strong civic leadership. In the early 19th Century, when both St. Louis and Milwaukee were larger cities vying for future leadership of the Midwest, Chicago business and civic leaders won approval to build the Illinois & Michigan Canal, the first water link between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. As a result, Chicago became the focus of future westward growth.

By the time of the World’s Fair, Chicago was described as “one of the most abysmally filthy cities in the industrial world.” How did civic leaders transform a fast-growing but filthy economic hub into a more livable place? By creating the Sanitary District of Chicago, one of the first regional authorities in the country, to design, finance, and oversee construction of a new canal that would carry sewage away from the city—and reverse the flow of the Chicago River in the process. The result would later be called “the greatest earth-moving and quarrying project in the history of cities.”

Think Regionally, Act Regionally

We are one region with one future. If we continue to act locally on issues that are inherently regional, then we will jeopardize our economic competitiveness and quality of life.

We can choose a better future. The decisions that we make today will determine what the Chicago region looks like in 2030.

Knock down the silos. Regional policy has been organized into artificial compartments: land use, transportation, economic growth, the environment, taxes, and education. Yet these issues are inextricably linked and must be dealt with as such if we are to have strong, healthy, regional growth.

At crucial junctures in our history, the Chicago civic community has made and implemented bold plans. When the river was flowing the wrong way, they changed it—literally in one case and figuratively in many others. THE METROPOLIS PLAN is a call for us to do that one more time.

In some ways this plan is more ambitious than what has come before it. The great feats that have shaped Chicago were engineering marvels; they required massive manipulation of earth, water, steel, and concrete. THE METROPOLIS PLAN is built on something far more complex: people. It requires changing private incentives and government policy in ways that provide more and better choices for the citizens of our region.

We have powerful new tools in that process. THE METROPOLIS PLAN was developed using the same kind of computer modeling technology that engineers use to design virtual planes and that military planners use to fight hypothetical wars over and over again. These tools allow us to project how and where growth will occur under different scenarios, such as different choices for housing density or transportation infrastructure, and then how those development patterns will affect our quality of life. We can build highways, add transit stops, or change zoning laws and then evaluate how those investments or policy changes would affect our region—all without pouring a single bucket of cement. **IN SHORT, WE CAN SEE THE FUTURE AND THEN MAKE IT BETTER.**

WE CAN CHOOSE A BETTER FUTURE

The Chicago region will grow by 1.6 million people over the next three decades. We will add nearly 800,000 new jobs and a million new cars. Where will they all go?

The question is not whether we will grow as a region. We will. The question is **how** we will grow as a region. Will our growth be a source of strength, diversity, opportunity, and economic vitality? Or will it be a source of congestion, pollution, and growing inequality?



Six-county region of Chicago.

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We can decide. The health and vitality of the Chicago region in 2030 will be determined by the choices we make today, just as our current region was shaped by decisions made decades, even centuries, ago.

The premise of THE METROPOLIS PLAN is simple. We can build a better region. We can spend less time in traffic. We can live nearer to our jobs. We can protect more open space and environmentally sensitive areas. We can build communities that are friendlier to walking and biking—and therefore healthier for the people who live in them. We can make economic opportunity available to more of our region’s residents.



The Chicago region will gain a million new cars by 2030. Placed end to end, these new cars would stretch from Florida to Alaska.

The health and vitality of the Chicago region in 2030 will be determined by the choices we make today, just as our current region was shaped by decisions made decades, even centuries, ago.

Chicago Metropolis 2020 recognizes that public policy influences private decisions. We do not believe in coercing people to behave differently. We do believe that people will behave differently if offered a better range of choices. If we design our communities to be more friendly to pedestrians, some people will choose to walk rather than drive. If we offer a broader array of housing options throughout the region, some people will choose to live nearer to where they work. If we invest in a more comfortable and convenient transit system, some people will gladly sell their second car and ride the train to work.

The goal of THE METROPOLIS PLAN is to broaden the range of private choices in a way that leads to a better collective outcome. Like the other civic enterprises that have made Chicago the robust and attractive region that it is, these changes won't happen by accident.



LISTENING TO OUR REGION'S RESIDENTS:

The purpose of THE METROPOLIS PLAN is not to tell people how they should live; it is to listen to how people would like to live and then help them get there.

Chicago Metropolis 2020 asked a broad swath of residents of the Chicago region about their views on growth and development. We met with groups ranging from business leaders to organized labor. We held town meetings around the region and conducted a public opinion survey of 1,450 Chicago area residents. We recorded what people told us about how they would like our region to grow. As a result of these conversations, Chicago Metropolis 2020 formulated a set of shared regional goals. They include the following:

- New development will make efficient use of existing infrastructure, land, buildings and, capital.
- Housing, jobs, and commercial services will be within walking distance of one another.
- The region will improve its efficiency in moving people and goods.
- People throughout the region will have access to quality affordable housing, good jobs, and good schools.
- Families will be able to choose to live near where they work, shop, and go to school.
- All people and places will benefit from the region's prosperity.
- The region will practice good stewardship of the environment, including air, water, natural habitats, and open space.
- A robust economy will make the region more prosperous and attractive.
- Residents of all income levels will have access to clean air and water and meaningful opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.



THE METROPOLIS PLAN was created using sophisticated modeling techniques, the advice of citizens from the region, and input from land use and transportation experts. These resources were used to create several different scenarios, each of which allowed us to take a virtual look at what life would be like in 2030.

The economic, land use, and transportation models were used to forecast trends, to organize an extraordinary amount of data related to our region, and to test what might happen if we added a new expressway, doubled the regional budget for transit, moved jobs and housing closer together, or made other policy changes that might affect the outcomes we care about.

Of the various scenarios created, two were selected to illustrate what the future might hold for us. The first is “Business As Usual”—a look at what might happen if our land use and transportation policies for the next three decades mirror what has happened in our region over the last 10 years. The second scenario is “THE METROPOLIS PLAN”—an alternative path that reflects the principles and preferences that residents of the region shared with us.

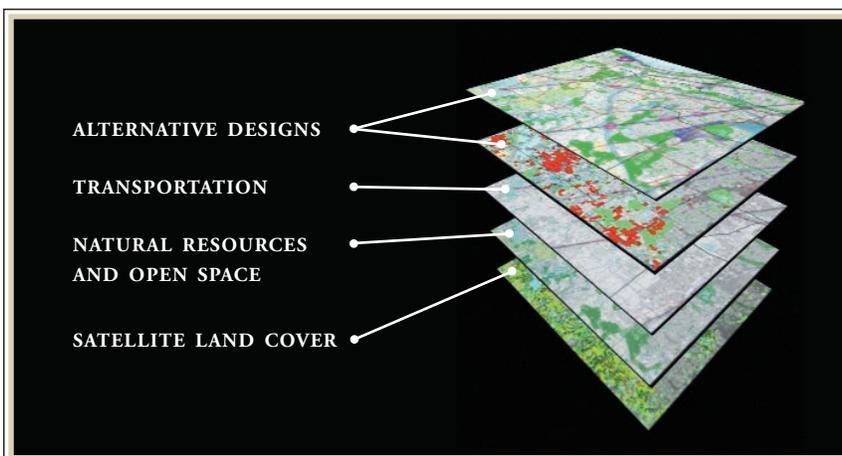
All of the scenarios were evaluated in the following way:

1. An economic model was used to estimate how the region will grow. The Chicago Region Econometric Input-Output Model (CREIM), developed by the Regional Economics Applications Laboratory at the University of Illinois, uses Census data and past economic trends to project how the industries that make up the six-county economy will grow or contract over the relevant time frame. In turn, this economic activity creates a demand for new jobs. By 2030, CREIM projects that the six-county region will add roughly 800,000 new jobs. This projected economic growth, along with the natural population growth predicted by demographic trends, will lead to a rise in the six-county population of roughly 1.6 million people by 2030.

2. A land use model was used to allocate where the new population and job growth are likely to locate within the region. The six-county region was mapped using Geographic Information System (GIS) software. The region was then subdivided into grid cells of approximately a quarter of an acre creating a “virtual reality” of the Chicago region with all its physical features. Each grid cell contains information on existing development, geographic features, political boundaries, environmentally sensitive areas, population, employment, public ownership, and other relevant features. Development patterns during the decade between 1990 and 2000 were used to project how new jobs and households are likely to be allocated throughout the region in the future. The model can be used to evaluate the land use implications of different policy scenarios, such as a change in housing density or the legal protection of specific undeveloped areas.
3. A transportation model was used to estimate the number and distance of trips that residents of the region will make using different modes of transportation (ranging from short trips on foot or bicycle to long trips by automobile). The model is sensitive to the fact that land use patterns, such as the proximity of housing to job centers, profoundly affect our transportation decisions. Similarly, the quality and attractiveness of public transportation affect the willingness of individuals to travel by bus or train rather than by car. These transportation decisions can be evaluated using indicators of regional significance such as air quality, traffic congestion, fuel consumption, and transit use.

The model is sensitive to the fact that land use patterns, such as the proximity of housing to job centers, profoundly affect our transportation decisions. Similarly, the quality and attractiveness of public transportation affect the willingness of individuals to travel by bus or train rather than by car.

The power of these models derives from their ability to evaluate different future scenarios. **EVEN DANIEL BURNHAM COULDN'T DO THAT.**



The scenarios were created using multiple layers of data.



MITCHELL A.
MARKOVITZ



“If you build it, they will come.” Yes, that’s the most memorable line from the movie *Field of Dreams*.” It also describes our failed attempt to alleviate traffic congestion by building our way out of the problem. No sooner have we poured tons of concrete than we are startled to find congestion and traffic creeping back to their old levels. Why?

Because building more roads creates more drivers. New highways make longer commutes feasible and encourage the development of areas even further from employment centers. Fighting traffic and congestion by building more road capacity is like trying to lose weight by loosening your belt: it does not get at the underlying problem.

So not long after we’ve cut the ribbon on a new highway, we end up back where we started—except that we’ve paved over green space, increased pollution, subsidized sprawl, and spent billions of dollars on infrastructure that could have been invested to better effect somewhere else. We cannot make investments in transportation infrastructure without taking into account their subsequent effects on land use, growth, and development.

Of course, it is also true that our land use policies should make the best use of our existing transportation infrastructure. At present, they don’t. The Chicago region has an extraordinary commuter rail network with 380 stations spread strategically throughout the six-county region. These rail stations are logical places for new development—yet local zoning laws often prohibit multi-unit dwellings within walking distance of rail stations, squandering a fabulous resource.

The Hillside Strangler: \$140 Million To What End?

The “Hillside Strangler”—the point at which the East-West Tollway and the Tri-State Tollway converge with the Eisenhower Expressway—was long a notorious traffic bottleneck. After a \$140 million construction project to “fix” the problem, the *Daily Herald* posed this question: “Many millions have been spent to change that evil Hillside Strangler. So, has it been rehabilitated?” This was the answer:

1. Getting through the Strangler is now about 15 minutes faster.
2. But the bottleneck has merely been pushed further up the road to a point where the Eisenhower funnels into three lanes.
3. And more motorists are now using the expressway since the Strangler work was completed.

The net effect? The *Daily Herald* concluded: “Overall, then, the commute time from the suburbs to the Loop, via the Eisenhower and its extension, is one hour—exactly what it was before the Hillside Strangler was repaired.”

“More Costly Roadwork, and Travel Still Tough,” *Daily Herald*, October 3, 2002.



How does that affect the region? New homebuyers who might have chosen to live in a townhouse near an existing rail station find that this kind of housing is not available—not because there is no market for it, but because local governments often forbid it. In short, government regulation precludes the market from delivering what many homebuyers would otherwise choose.

As a result, some new homebuyers find that the only homes they can afford are in far-flung developments carved out of farmland and forests. Green space is plowed under, and commuters who might have walked to a transit station every day must climb into their cars instead.

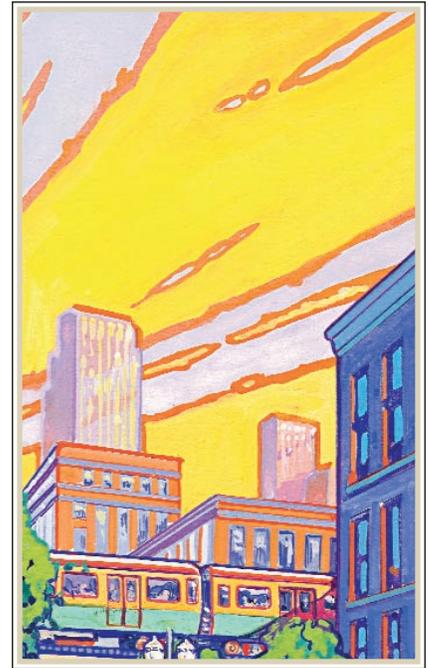
THE METROPOLIS PLAN recognizes that government policies—often made at the local level with little or no regard for the region’s health—affect individual decisions. Those private decisions—repeated millions of times over—have profound social consequences.

How will the Chicago region look by 2030 if we continue to develop as we did between 1990 and 2000? Here is a sample of Business As Usual:

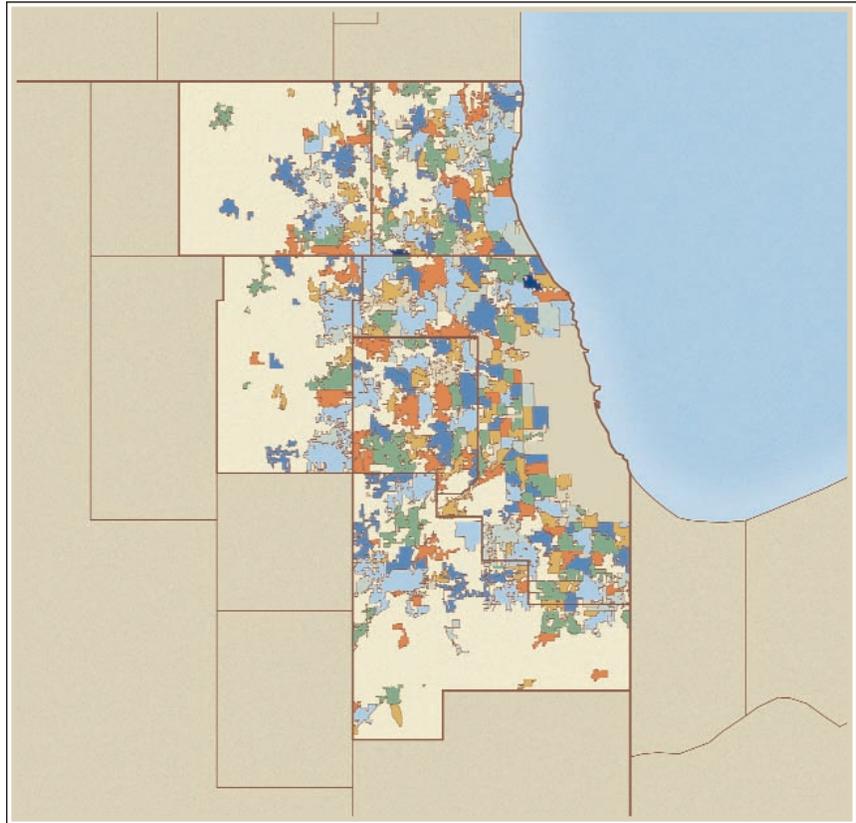
- **The time we spend in our cars will climb from 56 minutes a day per person to 70 minutes a day.**
- **The share of trips that we make on public transit will fall from 6 percent to 5 percent.**
- **Nearly 500 square miles of open land will be plowed under for new development.**

Does the current pattern of development simply reflect our individual preferences? No. In fact, the opposite is true: the incentives created by our fractured municipal governance lead to outcomes that often leave the very people who live in those municipalities worse off.

The Chicago region has over 1,200 units of local government, including six counties, 272 municipalities, 113 townships, 306 school districts, and hundreds of other special districts. The result is one unit of government for every 6,000 people—five times the ratio in greater Los Angeles and seven times the ratio in New York City.



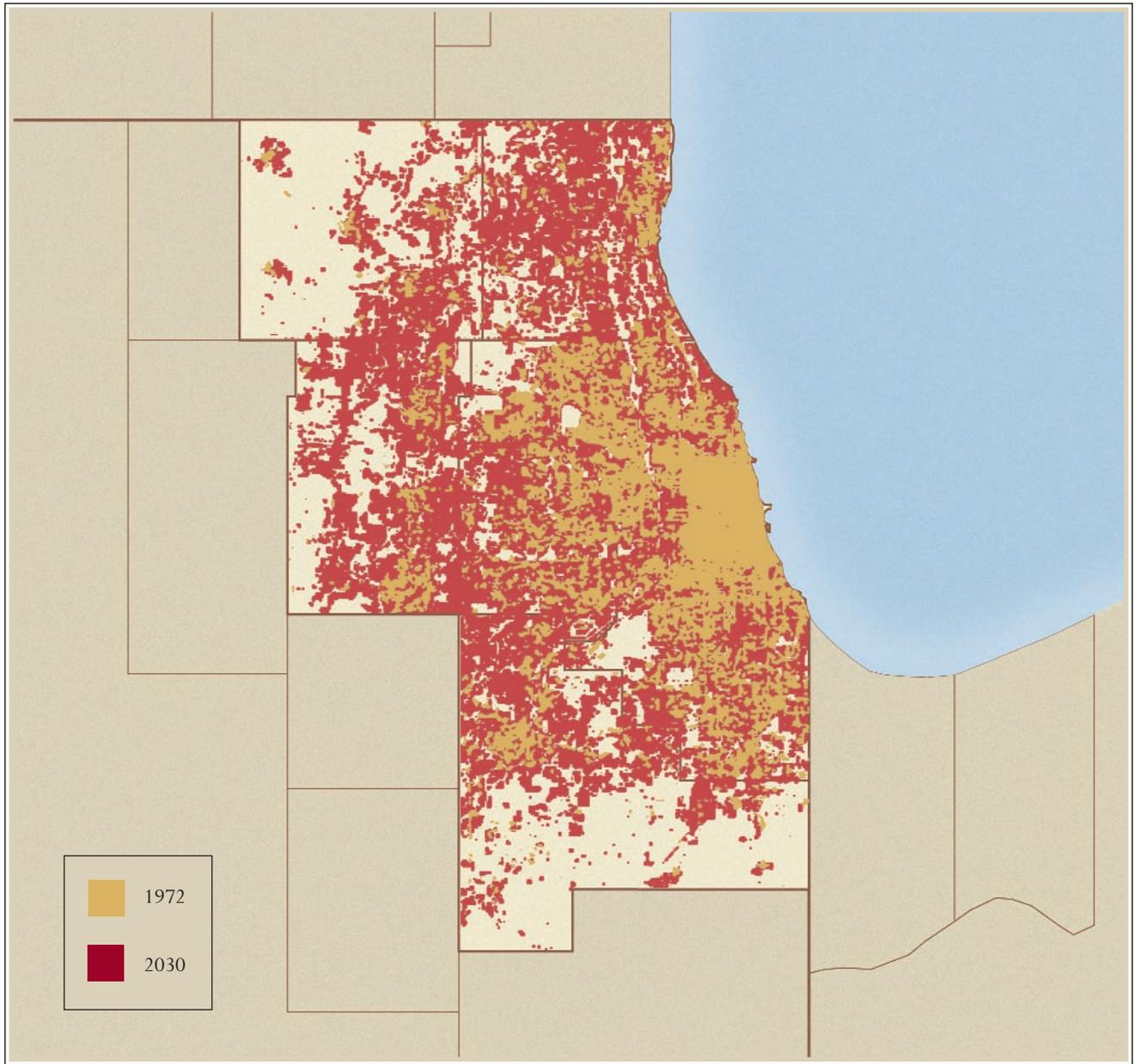
The time we spend in our cars will climb from 56 minutes a day per person to 70 minutes a day. The share of trips that we make on public transit will fall from 6 percent to 5 percent.



Municipal boundaries in the Chicago region.

THE METROPOLIS PLAN recognizes that local government is and always will be the cornerstone of our communities. Local government is an efficient way to provide local services. It preserves the distinct character of our communities and is highly responsive to the wants and needs of individual voters.

Yet problems arise when communities act locally on issues that are inherently regional. Some of the resulting problems are mundane, such as traffic signals that are poorly coordinated across municipal boundaries causing unnecessary traffic congestion. Others are complex and politically charged. For example, the Illinois school funding formula, which relies heavily upon local property taxes, creates an incentive for communities to compete aggressively for businesses while excluding all but the most expensive housing—thereby making it extremely difficult for moderately paid workers to find affordable homes near their jobs. The resulting long commutes contribute significantly to traffic congestion.



Land covered by development in the six-county region: 1972–2030 under the Business As Usual scenario.

A strong region requires that communities cooperate on issues that transcend local political boundaries. Local governments can give up a little in order to get back much more: a region that is attractive and prosperous.

The relationship between the region and its component communities should be similar to the relationship between local governments and private households. Local governments do not tell individual homeowners what color they ought to paint their kitchen cabinets. But local governments do intervene when the activities of one homeowner negatively impact his or her neighbors. Why? Because such behavior can harm a neighborhood or even an entire community.

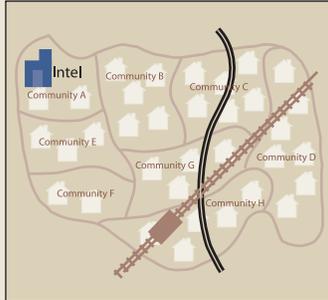
Property owners understand that by ceding some control over their property to local governments, they can create stronger, more attractive communities. After all, when a homeowner gives up the right to build a skyscraper on a private parcel of land, he or she is also getting an assurance that the neighbors won't be building skyscrapers either. We give up a little control over our property in order to get back much more control over our neighborhoods and communities.

The same relationship ought to hold true at the regional level. A strong region requires that communities cooperate on issues that transcend local political boundaries. Local governments can give up a little in order to get back much more: a region that is attractive and prosperous.



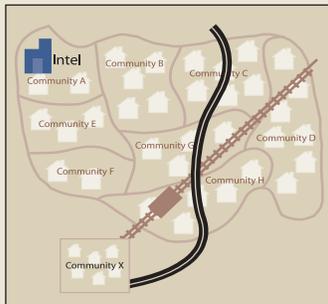
Case Study: Adam Smith's Invisible Hand Drops the Ball

How regional thinking serves all communities

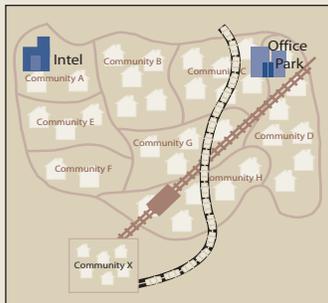


Development: Intel declares its intention to build a high-tech plant that will provide desirable jobs for workers throughout the region. Because of the state's "winner take all" tax system, communities A through G compete to attract the plant rather than cooperating to determine a location that makes the most sense for the whole region.

Result: Community A captures the tax revenue from the new plant. Yet all communities in the area must bear both the costs of new traffic congestion and the costs of providing additional public services related to the Intel development.



Meanwhile: No community has an incentive to create affordable housing for the new Intel workers because this would incur large education costs, most of which must be funded locally. Thus, many Intel workers must live in distant community X and drive to the Intel plant. The result is more traffic for everyone.

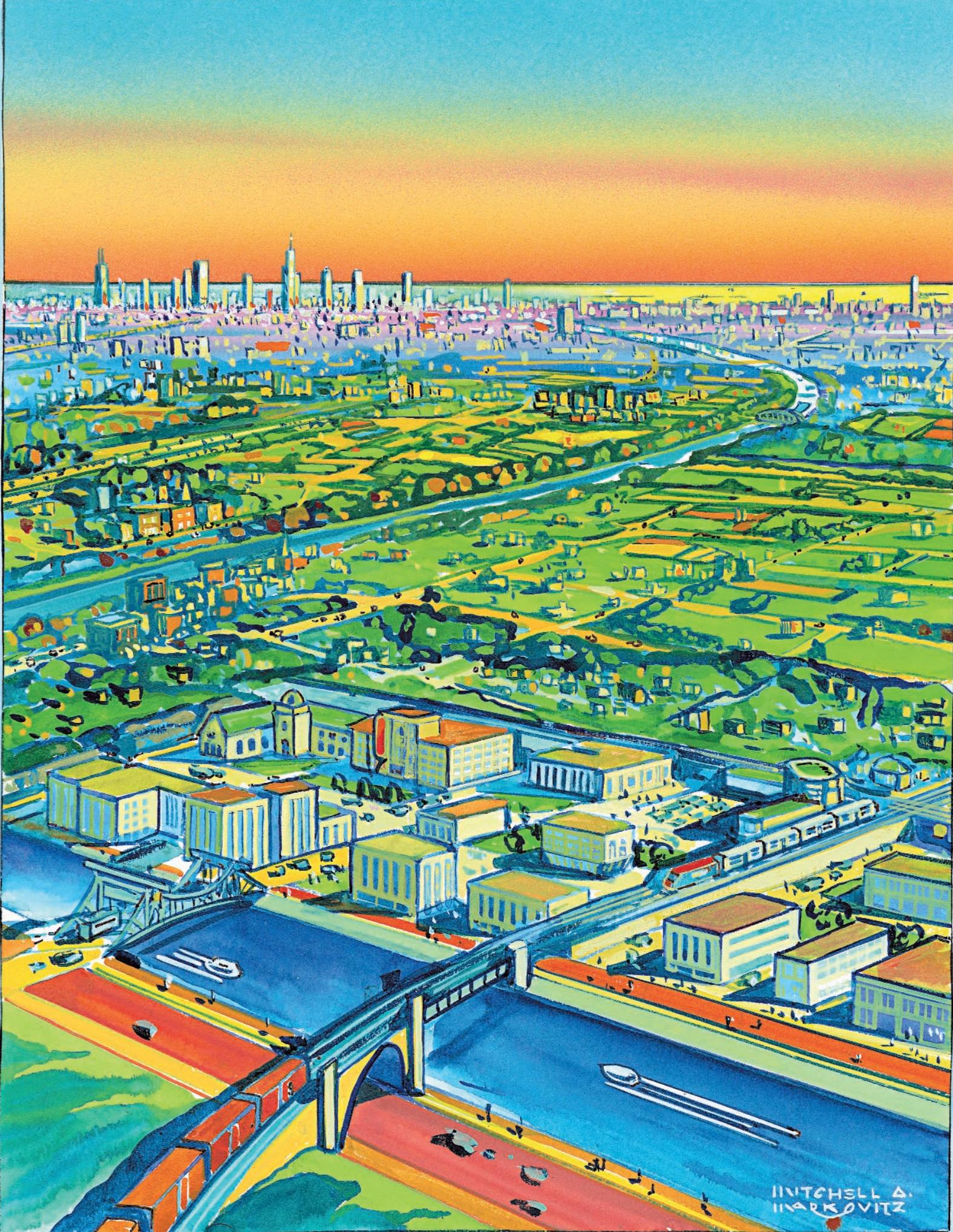


Long-term: Even community A is not a winner. Months later, the same communities compete for a new office park. Community D is the winner, creating a whole new set of traffic challenges for which the region has not planned. Again, there is no incentive for any community to create workforce housing.

A better solution: If there were a mechanism in place to promote regional cooperation, the same development could be done far more efficiently. The result would be:

- Less local traffic.
- Development that is built around existing public transit.
- More housing near jobs, shopping, and services so that residents are not forced to drive long distances.





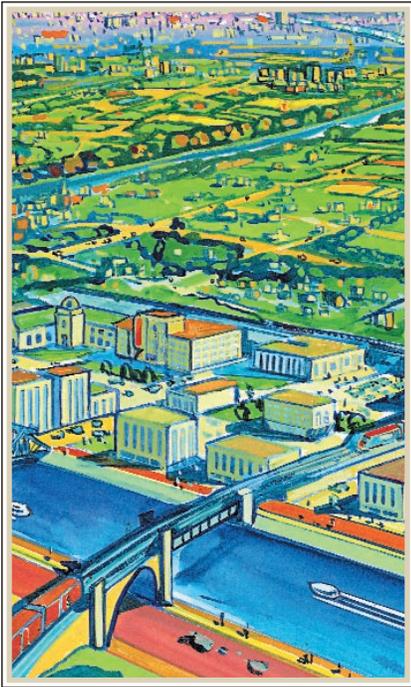
MITCHELL A.
MARKOVITZ



THE METROPOLIS PLAN is a vision for the kind of place our region could be in 2030. It is rooted in the wisdom of the participants in our Community Leaders Workshops. Over a period of four months, we held a series of workshops around the region in which we solicited input from many of the people who know and care the most about the future of our region: mayors, business leaders, members of the clergy, environmental experts, transportation planners, and other community leaders.

We unrolled maps at these workshops and asked the participants the question at the core of how our region will grow and develop: **We are expecting 1.6 million new residents by 2030; where should they all go?**

These leaders made choices that reinforced the principles developed in the original Chicago Metropolis 2020 report: redevelop existing urban centers and abandoned areas; encourage growth in the Chicago Loop; protect open spaces; provide greater choices in housing and transportation.



In turn, these strong regional cities would provide an urban lifestyle outside of Chicago, create strong local transit hubs, and reduce the need for some workers to travel long distances between work and home.

These choices were evaluated and refined using our land use and transportation computer models. Thus, we could test the growth and development ideas proposed by these community leaders and determine how they would affect outcomes that people in the region care about: traffic congestion, time spent commuting, air quality, transit ridership, economic opportunity. We were able to see a different future.

THE METROPOLIS PLAN CALLS FOR THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF INVESTMENTS AND POLICY CHANGES:

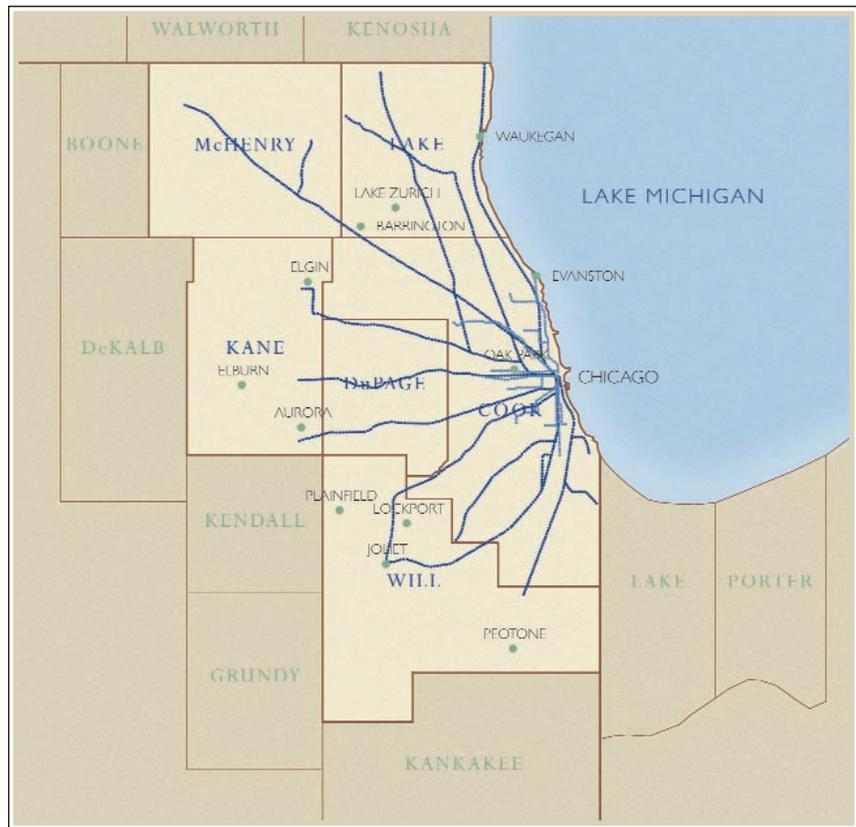
- **INVEST IN STRONG “REGIONAL CITIES”**—PLACES LIKE ELGIN, JOLIET, AURORA, SCHAUMBURG, NAPERVILLE, AND WAUKEGAN—THAT ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE MULTI-CENTERED REGION THAT WE HAVE BECOME. Similarly, a strong Chicago downtown is essential to our region’s future. By developing strong centers in each major area of our region, we can provide a better mix of housing, jobs, and services in these areas. In turn, these strong regional cities would provide an urban lifestyle outside of Chicago, create strong local transit hubs, and reduce the need for some workers to travel long distances between work and home. Similarly, THE METROPOLIS PLAN calls for reinvesting in neighborhoods that have seen decades of neglect, such as Chicago’s South Side and the south suburbs. These areas have solid infrastructure, good access to transportation, and plenty of vacant land. Overall some 40 percent of new households under THE METROPOLIS PLAN would live in homes built on redeveloped land or infill—thereby reducing pressure on environmentally sensitive areas that might otherwise fall prey to development.

The Metropolis Plan At-A-Glance

- Invest in strong “regional cities”—places like Joliet, Aurora, and Waukegan—that are an important part of the multi-centered region that we have become.
- Remove distortions to the housing market, such as overly restrictive local zoning ordinances, that artificially limit housing choices for residents of the region.
- Invest in transit modernization to make public transportation—and buses in particular—more attractive.
- Make better use of our existing rail infrastructure.
- Help communities build more walkable neighborhoods and business districts.
- Reinforce the use of expressways for long trips, for which they were originally intended, and the use of arterial streets for shorter trips.
- Restore and protect our region’s prairie reserves, woodlands, and wetlands.

- **REMOVE DISTORTIONS TO THE HOUSING MARKET, SUCH AS OVERLY RESTRICTIVE LOCAL ZONING ORDINANCES, THAT ARTIFICIALLY LIMIT HOUSING CHOICES FOR RESIDENTS OF THE REGION.** THE METROPOLIS PLAN incorporates a broader mix of housing types in each part of the region, allowing the market to respond better to the demand for moderately priced housing near job centers. This would have three profoundly beneficial effects. First, it would provide opportunities for more residents of the region to find affordable housing near their jobs. Second, it would help to decrease traffic congestion for all residents of the region by decreasing the number of commuters making long trips between work and home. Third, it would dramatically reduce air pollution, which is a function of how much time we spend in our cars every day. Indeed, coordinating land use policy and transportation investments in a way that allows workers to live closer to their jobs is one of the most significant environmental improvements that we can make.

- **MAKE BETTER USE OF OUR EXISTING RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE.** ONE OF THE REGION'S RICHEST RESOURCES IS OUR REMARKABLE RAIL SYSTEM, WHICH INCLUDES 380 RAIL STATIONS. One of the clear messages from our community workshops was that these rail stations should be focal points for future development. They have the potential to be anchors for retail and housing development. They should also be part of a seamless transit system in which passengers can move easily from bus to commuter train to subway. Under THE METROPOLIS PLAN, a third of all new housing would be built within a half mile of a passenger rail station, compared to only 20 percent in the Business As Usual scenario.



Our existing rail infrastructure is one of the nation's finest. Existing rail stations should be focal points for future development.

- INVEST IN TRANSIT MODERNIZATION TO MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION—AND BUSES IN PARTICULAR—MORE ATTRACTIVE.** The evidence is clear from around the country that building more and bigger highways alone is not an effective strategy for dealing with traffic congestion. A better strategy is to encourage more use of public transit—and the best way to encourage more use of public transit is to make it more convenient and attractive. Among other transit investments, THE METROPOLIS PLAN calls for the development of a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that would connect our regional cities and serve all six counties in the region. Bus Rapid Transit offers many of the attractive features of rail transit, such as dedicated lanes to avoid road congestion and stations with raised platforms to allow level boarding and off-bus fare collection. Thus, BRT is more comfortable and efficient than traditional bus service but far more cost effective than light rail.
- HELP COMMUNITIES BUILD MORE WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS.** One of the near universal themes to emerge from our workshops is the desire for communities that are more hospitable to pedestrians and bicyclists. This is not merely an aesthetic consideration; it is a matter of public health. Some two thirds of Americans are now obese or overweight. One recognized way to improve our health and life expectancy is to walk a mere 20 minutes a day, which would happen naturally if we were to live in more walkable neighborhoods and business districts.
- REINFORCE THE USE OF EXPRESSWAYS FOR LONG TRIPS (FOR WHICH THEY WERE ORIGINALLY INTENDED), THE USE OF ARTERIAL STREETS FOR SHORTER TRIPS, AND THE SMART DESIGN OF COMMUNITIES AND SUBDIVISIONS TO PROMOTE THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC.** There is a science to managing traffic, and all too often we have ignored it. THE METROPOLIS PLAN would establish a system of boulevards and parkways to facilitate shorter trips by auto. This kind of arterial grid naturally diffuses congestion and allows cars to move more freely at lower speeds, providing convenient access to the most possible locations.

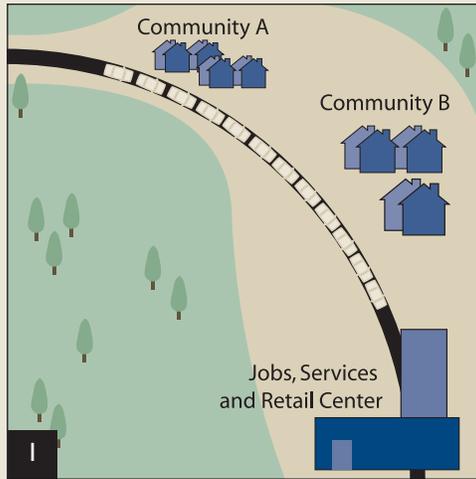


Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) can provide the comfort and convenience of rail transit at a fraction of the cost.

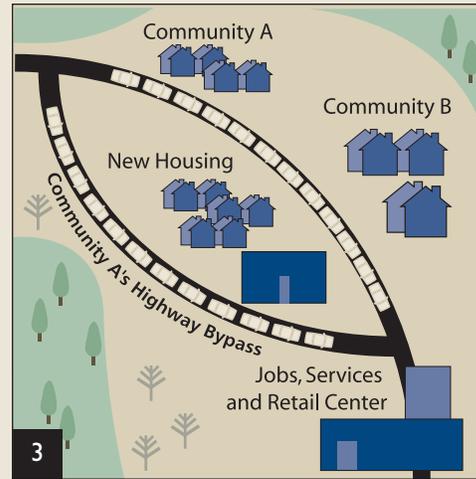
One of the near universal themes to emerge from our workshops is the desire for communities that are more hospitable to pedestrians and bicycles. This is not merely an aesthetic consideration; it is a matter of public health.

Case Study: Highway Bypass

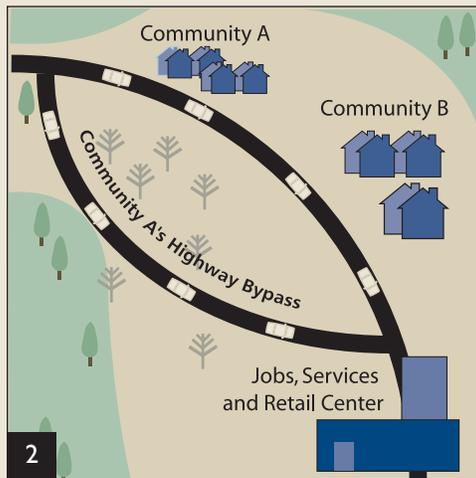
How regional thinking serves all communities



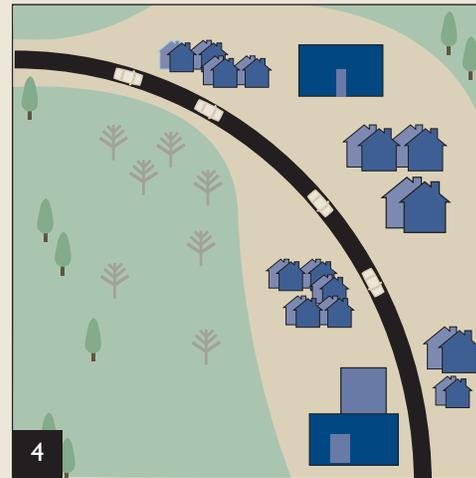
Current situation: Workers from communities A and B commute to a job and service center on a highway that has become prohibitively congested.



Problem: The new highway bypass encourages new development and ultimately becomes the center of more congestion. Traffic congestion has returned to its old levels. Open space has been destroyed. And, millions of public dollars have been spent.



Seemingly simple solution: Community A builds a new highway bypass through existing green space, connecting their community to the job and service center.



Better solution: The most powerful solution to alleviate traffic congestion is to build affordable housing closer to where people work and shop. This solution preserves open spaces and saves money on infrastructure investments.

Meanwhile, THE METROPOLIS PLAN calls for the use of “value pricing” on the region’s expressways. Under this system, tolls would be highest at hours of peak travel and lowest during off-peak times. As a result, some drivers would shift their travel to off-peak times, spreading the traffic burden more evenly throughout the day. The plan also calls for local “connectivity” standards to increase the linkages among streets, reduce the reliance on congested arterials, and improve the traffic flow through and within communities.

- **RESTORE AND PROTECT OUR REGION’S PRAIRIE RESERVES, WOODLANDS, AND WETLANDS.** One risk associated with regional growth is the destruction of open space. While the six-county population grew by 11 percent between 1990 and 2000, the amount of land consumed by residential development grew by 21 percent. THE METROPOLIS PLAN would spare some 300 square miles from development—roughly the size of DuPage County! As a result, more than two thirds of new households would be within walking distance of a park or open space compared with fewer than half under Business As Usual. The Metropolis Plan also dramatically reduces the number of acres of impervious surface, which improves water quality and reduces flooding.

Can Americans Wedded to the Auto Be Persuaded to Ride Trains and Buses?

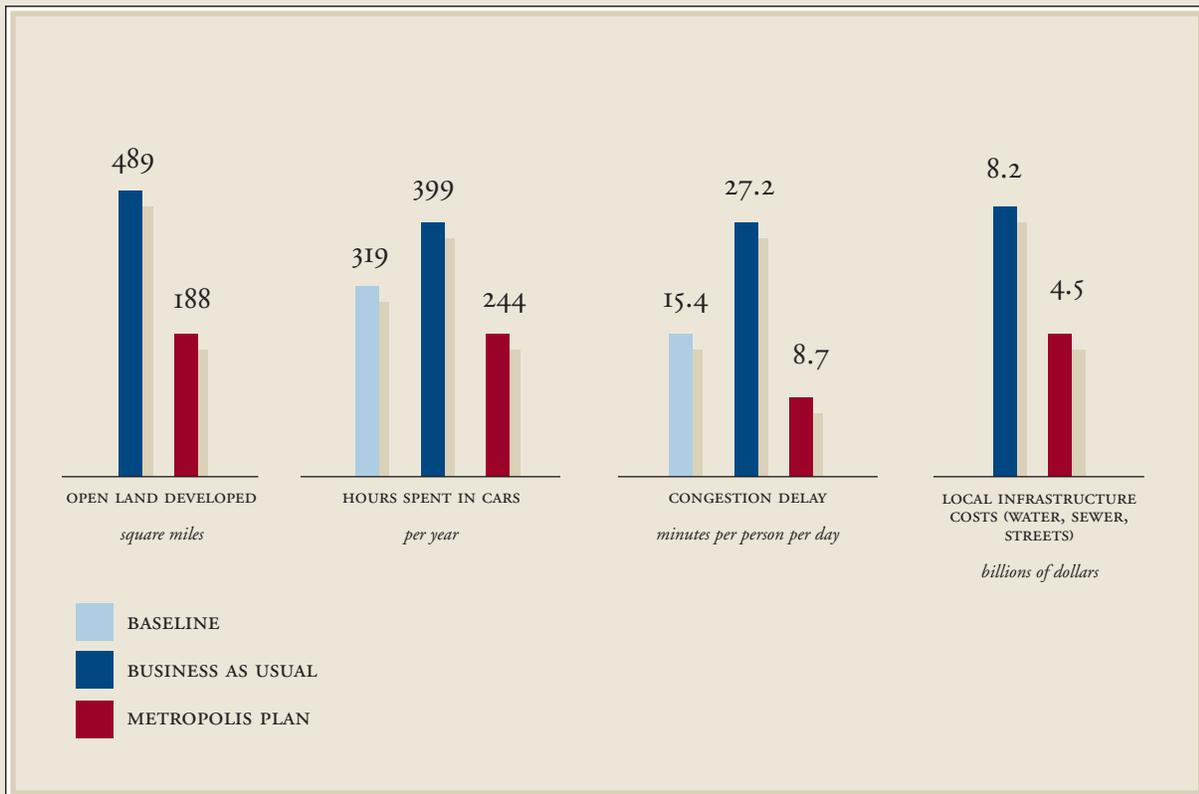
Yes. There is no more auto-centric culture than LA. Yet transit ridership in LA rose 11 percent in 2001, compared to a slight decrease in Chicago. Ridership rose 4 percent in Washington, DC, and nearly 5 percent in New York.

THE METROPOLIS PLAN encourages the use of “transit-oriented development.” This kind of development uses a transit station as the focal point of a mixed-use neighborhood. The goal is to make transit use as convenient as possible by creating a high-quality pedestrian environment that links the transit station to nearby development. The walk from the transit station to nearby housing, retail, and commercial development should be convenient, attractive, and short. Studies have found—not surprisingly—that residents who live near transit stations are five to six times more likely to use transit to commute to work than are other residents in the region.

Metropolis Plan vs. Business As Usual

How much difference would it make to people in the Chicago region by 2030 if we were to adopt THE METROPOLIS PLAN for Growth and Development rather than Business As Usual? Here is a sample:

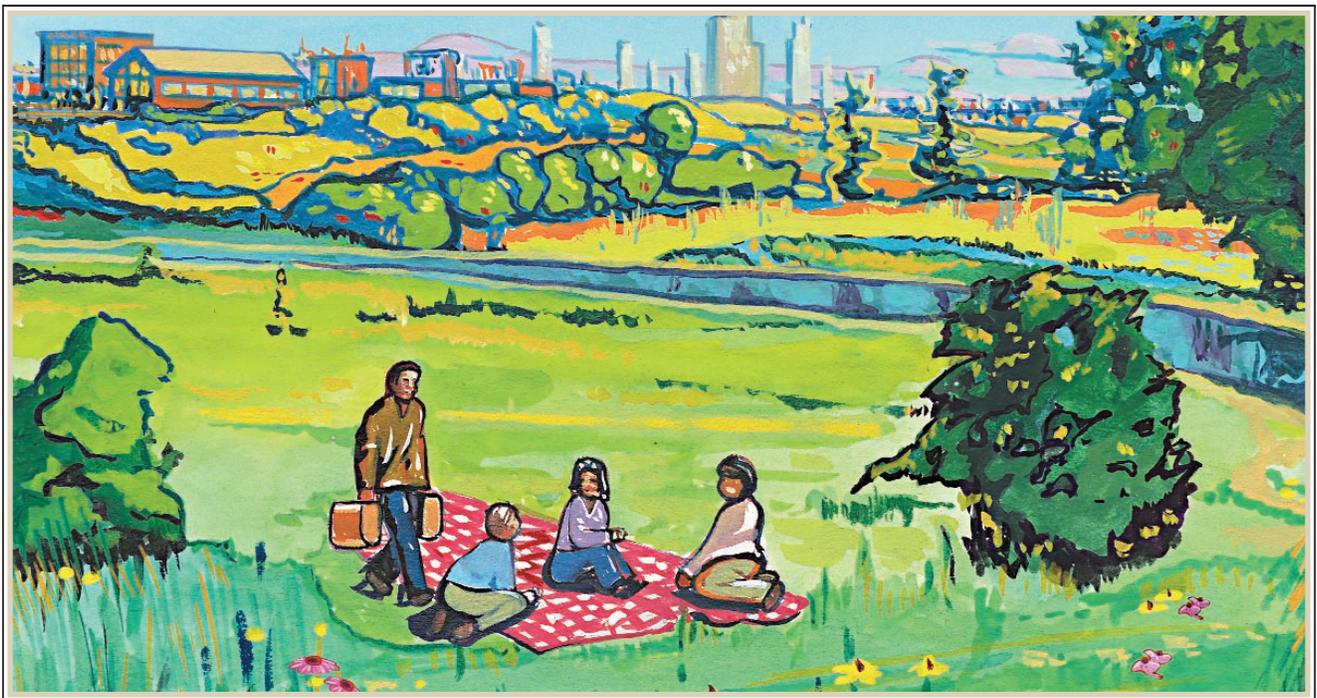
- The average resident of the Chicago region would spend 155 fewer hours a year in traffic—or four work weeks.
- We would travel three million fewer miles in our cars every day during the peak travel hour.
- About 37 percent of the region's new households would live within 1/2 mile of a Metra or CTA station, compared with only 20 percent under Business As Usual.
- We would spare 300 square miles of open space from development.
- We would emit 52 fewer tons of carbon monoxide every day during the peak travel hour.
- We would double the use of public transit and increase walking and bicycling by some 60 percent.
- We would save \$3.7 billion in local water, sewer, and street costs.



THE METROPOLIS PLAN DELIVERS WHAT RESIDENTS OF THE CHICAGO REGION WANT: PROTECTED OPEN SPACE; WALKABLE COMMUNITIES; INVESTMENT IN OUR EXISTING URBAN AREAS; ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE OF ALL INCOME GROUPS. And less of what we don't want: traffic, congestion, pollution, and sprawl.

We can build a more attractive region—and one that is productive and economically competitive. When Daniel Burnham prepared his 1909 Plan of Chicago, he recognized that the region's vitality grew from its attractiveness as a center of commerce and industry. Our economy has evolved since then, but one fundamental challenge hasn't changed at all: We must be able to move people and goods efficiently.

THE METROPOLIS PLAN is not just about building more attractive communities and saving open space; it is about making the next 100 years as good for business in the Chicago region as the last 100 years have been. And it is about making sure that every person and community in the region has an opportunity to share in that prosperity. A region that is better designed for its residents will also have a stronger economy.





HOW WE GOT HERE:
obstacles to change

THE METROPOLIS PLAN is not a proposal that can be passed with a simple yes or no vote. There is not even a single unit of government, let alone a specific agency, with the authority to make all of the changes that need to be made.

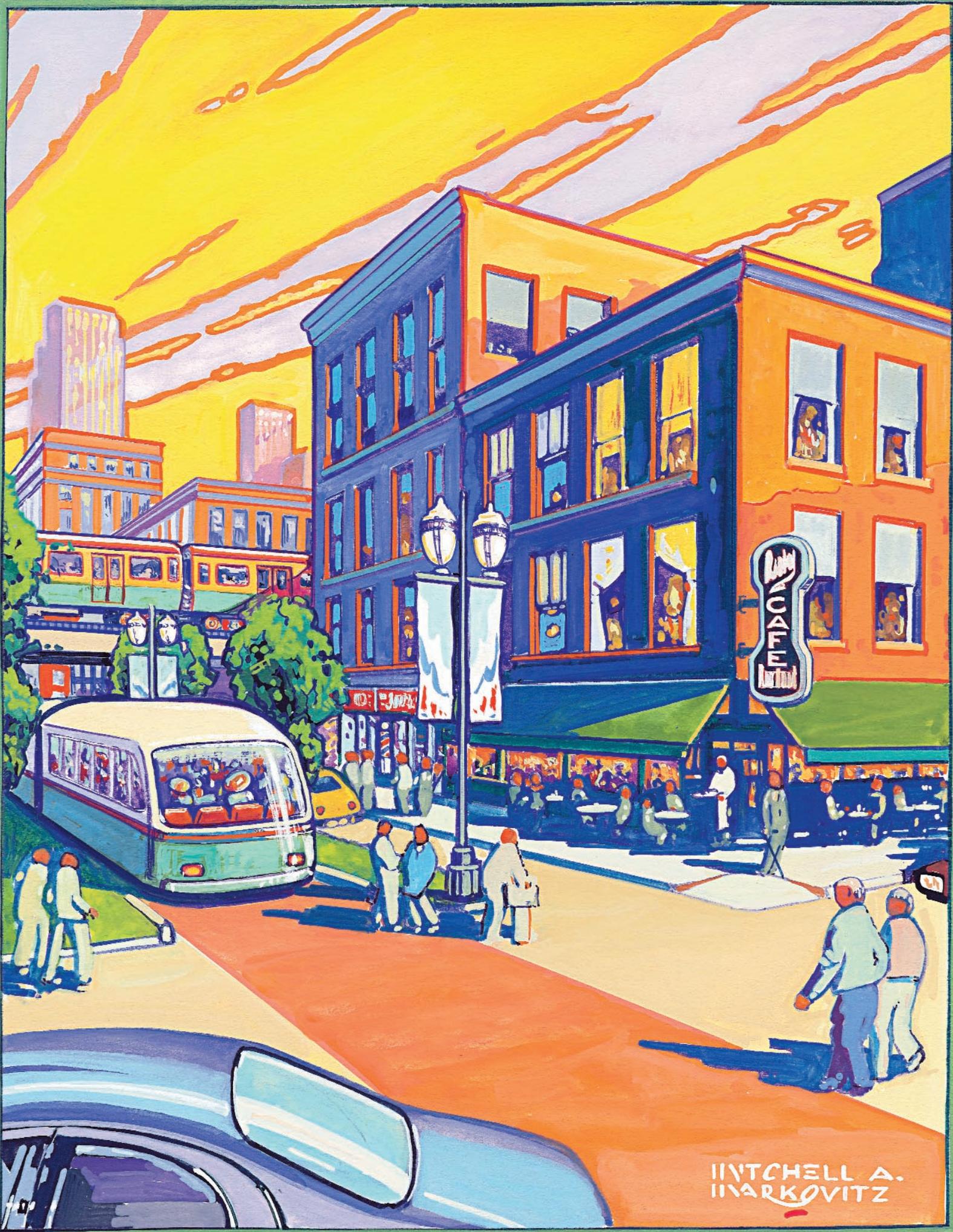
Achieving the vision of THE METROPOLIS PLAN will require policy changes at every level of government. The first step is to recognize the institutional limitations that lead to poor regional outcomes:

1. Land use and transportation planning are done separately with little coordination. Why is it that our enormous investments in transportation infrastructure often have little positive impact on traffic congestion? Because they are not connected to land use plans. We make major investments in transportation infrastructure with little regard for their subsequent impact on land use, growth, and development. It is the planning equivalent of one hand clapping.

Similarly, our land use policies make very little effort to maximize the value of our existing transportation infrastructure. In fact, Northeastern Illinois has no regional land use plan at all. A Blue Ribbon Panel convened by the Illinois Gubernatorial Candidates to study growth and transportation issues in the fall of 2002 noted in its findings that the Chicago region has an extraordinary commuter rail network with 380 stations spread strategically throughout the six-county region that should be logical places for new development, except that local zoning laws often prevent such development.

2. Our strong institutional support for local control makes it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to deal with growth issues that transcend local political boundaries. Illinois delegates primary authority for land use planning to cities and villages—of which there are 272 in the six-county Chicago region. Yet local development activities often have effects that spill over into neighboring cities and counties that have no say over those activities. The Illinois Growth Task Force, a bipartisan task force of the Illinois General Assembly that issued its final report in February of 2002, concluded, “Residents look to their local officials to address problems like traffic congestion, but find that no one has the authority to coordinate land use and transportation to the extent needed to reduce congestion.”
3. Responsibility for transportation policy is divided among many agencies, none of which has the authority or scope to provide an integrated regional transportation system. The Toll Authority is completely independent. Our public transit agencies actually compete with one another. There is no regional institution with the authority or capacity to make improvements in our freight system, which must happen if we are to remain an international hub for freight and commerce.
4. The State has no coherent planning process and no stated goals for growth management. The Illinois Growth Task Force described the current growth management practices in Illinois as “an uncoordinated, inefficient, distributive decision-making model that frustrates all participants.” State government heavily influences regional development patterns through its choices for infrastructure investments, tax policies, economic development incentives, and by ceding control over many kinds of development decisions to local governments. Yet there is no unified planning process to coordinate these decisions and no goals against which their outcomes can be measured and evaluated.

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MITCHELL A.
MARKOVITZ



GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE:
THE METROPOLIS PLAN *recommendations*

We have identified a set of first steps to begin addressing these challenges:

COORDINATE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICY MORE EFFECTIVELY.

1. Create a Regional Growth and Transportation Commission to plan, fund and coordinate growth and transportation in Northeastern Illinois. This will require state legislation to merge and reorganize the functions of the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), the Illinois Toll Highway Authority and other relevant agencies into a single agency with responsibility for regional land use and transportation policy and long-term planning. The new Regional Growth and Transportation Commission would do the following:
 - Prepare a regional plan to coordinate land use and transportation policies, conservation priorities, housing needs, economic development priorities, and other regional development issues.
 - Serve as the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), designated by the Governor and certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation as the entity responsible for allocating federal and state transportation funds for Northeastern Illinois.
 - Implement an integrated transit fare system and other policies designed to increase ridership and make public transit more convenient and attractive.
 - Absorb the current functions of the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority.
 - Develop a comprehensive 20-year capital and operating plan for transportation that is consistent with regional growth and land use goals.
 - Plan and fund freight system improvements.

Metropolis Recommendations At-A-Glance

- Coordinate land use and transportation policy more effectively.
- Create a broader range of housing options throughout the region.
- Rebuild and redevelop existing communities, ensure adequate affordable housing near jobs and transit, and promote economic growth in communities facing economic hardship.
- Ensure that the Chicago region remains a preeminent national and international hub for freight transportation.
- Design communities that are friendly to walking, biking, and the use of public transit.
- Protect natural areas, open space, and farmland.
- Align economic incentives in ways that encourage individuals and local governments to make choices that benefit the region.

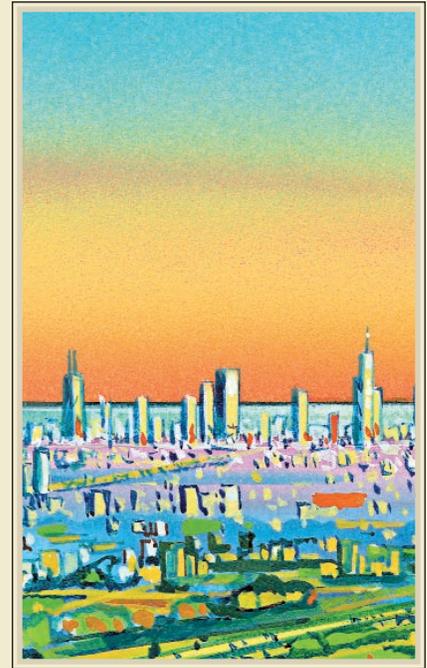
2. Adopt an Intergovernmental Growth Management Act to provide a mechanism for municipalities and counties to develop and implement plans for growth and transportation that are consistent with healthy regional growth.

- This legislation would authorize any county to create an Intergovernmental Cooperation Council similar in organization to the Stormwater Management Commissions currently operating in Northeastern Illinois. Each Council would be governed by a board with an equal number of representatives of the county board and the county's municipal governments (plus other members as determined by the Council).
- Councils would have the authority to develop and implement intergovernmental plans related to land use, transportation, housing, economic development, protection of natural resources, and homeland security.
- Councils would be allowed to receive grants from public and private sources, to charge user fees, and to collect monies from local governments. Councils would also be authorized to finance and construct capital improvements and to sell bonds secured by identified sources of revenue.

CREATE A BROADER RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

1. Adopt a State Housing Act. The Act would do the following:
 - Require every Illinois community to adopt a plan to provide a range of housing options for people who live or work in the community.
 - Direct state and regional agencies to give funding priority to communities that either have in place or are implementing programs to provide workforce housing.
 - Provide state funding to assist local, county, and regional efforts to plan for and provide affordable housing near jobs and transit.
 - Ensure that any effort to create new jobs is matched with an effort to provide housing that is affordable for the people who will work in those jobs.
 - Require that any new residential development or redevelopment include concurrent development of housing options for residents of all income levels.
 - Reorganize and rename the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) to become the department with responsibility for all state housing programs.
 - Direct the development of a regional housing plan for North-eastern Illinois.

2. Encourage businesses to adopt the Metropolis Principles. Signatories to these principles pledge that future business location decisions will take into account access to public transit and affordable workforce housing.



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REBUILD AND REDEVELOP EXISTING COMMUNITIES, ENSURE ADEQUATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEAR JOBS AND TRANSIT, AND PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN COMMUNITIES FACING ECONOMIC HARDSHIP.

1. Establish state goals for growth and a Growth Advisory Council to provide expertise and counsel on growth issues.
2. Centralize state planning responsibilities in the Bureau of the Budget to ensure that state spending is consistent with state growth goals and regional land use and transportation plans. The planning process should include a long-term capital plan for investments related to growth and transportation.
3. Direct the reorganized Department of Commerce and Community Affairs to support the growth management efforts of local governments. All programs, grants, and economic development incentives would give priority to rebuilding communities, ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing near jobs and transit, and investing in economically struggling areas.



THE METROPOLIS PLAN would spare some 300 square miles of open space and farm land from development.

Projects Embedded in the Metropolis Plan

THE METROPOLIS PLAN: CHOICES FOR THE CHICAGO REGION compares future scenarios and evaluates them based on the outcomes that people in the Chicago Region have said are important. In choosing a preferred scenario, we chose to include or not include some major regional transportation projects currently under discussion. Our preferred scenario, THE METROPOLIS PLAN, would do the following:

1. Expand O'Hare International Airport and build a western expressway bypass connecting I-90 and I-294 and access to the airport from the west.
2. Proceed with plans for a new south suburban airport at Peotone.
3. Build I-355 as a tollroad, but with land use controls that create walkable mixed-use communities that would support transit in the corridor.
4. Build the currently approved Metra commuter rail extensions.
5. Implement the DuPage Area Transit Plan.
6. Build Bus Rapid Transit throughout the region, including Chicago's Mid-City corridor as well as the Waukegan-Elgin-Aurora-Joliet corridor and the Northwest corridor to Schaumburg.
7. Expand and improve the arterial street system in Lake County rather than building a Route 53 expressway extension.
8. Build the Circle Line transit connector service proposed by the CTA.
9. Grow downtown Chicago as proposed in Chicago's Central Area Plan.

That said, THE METROPOLIS PLAN emphasizes that land use decisions can yield far greater returns than any specific transportation projects. The results of our transportation and land use models strongly demonstrate that the most significant improvements in traffic congestion, air quality, preservation of open space, and other quality of life indicators come from better decisions about land use. Effective land-use planning must do the following:

1. Provide a range of housing for people of all incomes in all parts of the region.
2. Locate new residential development near job centers, services, schools, and transit facilities.
3. Focus job growth in areas with existing services, homes, schools, and access to transit.
4. Target new public and private investments toward redevelopment and infill development rather than sprawling "greenfield" developments.
5. Align policies and economic incentives in ways that encourage individuals and local governments to make decisions that benefit the region.



*Same corner, different land use.
THE METROPOLIS PLAN would help
communities build more walkable
neighborhoods and business districts.*

ENSURE THAT THE CHICAGO REGION REMAINS A PREEMINENT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL HUB FOR FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION.

1. Prepare a freight plan for the Chicago region to improve the capacity and efficiency of the freight system.
2. Enact state legislation to establish a regional public/private freight entity to plan, coordinate, and finance improvements to the region's freight transportation system. This freight entity should be integrated into the proposed Regional Growth and Transportation Commission.
3. Create a national rail infrastructure program that would help to fund critical freight infrastructure improvements in the Chicago region.

DESIGN COMMUNITIES THAT ARE FRIENDLY TO WALKING, BIKING, AND THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT.

1. Invest in transit modernization, such as low-platform buses that can preempt traffic signals, in order to make public buses and trains more comfortable, efficient, and convenient.
2. Identify corridors that would be appropriate for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and invest in such systems.
3. Develop street and highway design standards that are sensitive to communities and neighborhoods and create a positive environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit.
4. Develop local "connectivity" standards to increase the linkages among streets, reduce the reliance on congested arterials, and improve the traffic flow through and within communities.
5. Invest in road projects that improve traffic flow by reinforcing the use of arterial streets for shorter trips and the use of expressways for long trips.
6. Provide incentives to developers to create transit-oriented development.
7. Provide incentives to local communities to amend zoning laws in order to allow greater housing and job density near existing rail stations.

PROTECT NATURAL AREAS, OPEN SPACE, AND FARMLAND.

1. Use regional land use and transportation plans to set priorities for the preservation of natural areas, open space, and farmland.
2. Provide state funding for the acquisition and preservation of open lands and natural areas consistent with the State goals for growth and the regional land use and transportation plans.
3. Provide state funding and technical assistance in order to map, inventory, and preserve key natural areas and farmland in urbanizing counties.

ALIGN ECONOMIC INCENTIVES IN WAYS THAT ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO MAKE CHOICES THAT BENEFIT THE REGION.

1. Reform the property tax and sales tax systems to minimize the current “winner take all” incentives that distort local development decisions, create fiscal disparities among school districts and communities, and adversely affect school quality in many communities. Effective reform would do the following:
 - Reduce the reliance on local property taxes to support public education in favor of taxes with a broader geographic base.
 - Eliminate property tax classification policies in Cook County that punish businesses and discourage economic development, particularly near its borders with the collar counties.
 - Adopt a “shared sales tax system” for Northeastern Illinois that would distribute a portion of any new or incremental sales tax revenues to resource-poor municipalities and/or school districts.
 - Require that any state or local tax incentives for economic development be used to redevelop existing communities and to promote investment in communities facing economic hardship. Any such incentives should include criteria for evaluating success relative to these objectives.
2. Implement a system of “value pricing” on the region’s tollroads.
 - Such a system would use variable pricing on the region’s expressways—higher tolls during peak travel periods and lower tolls at off-peak hours—to spread the traffic burden more evenly throughout the day.
 - Any new expressways should be tollroads that make use of value pricing.



M A K E N O L I T T L E P L A N S — A G A I N

Is THE METROPOLIS PLAN ambitious? Absolutely. So were the many other projects that have made Chicago the robust and attractive region that it is today.

We draw our inspiration from Daniel Burnham’s 1909 Plan of Chicago. The Commercial Club of Chicago—the very same institution that created Chicago Metropolis 2020—had the foresight to commission the Plan of Chicago. Daniel Burnham had the genius to identify Chicago’s most important future assets: an open lakefront; parks, playgrounds, and forest preserves; a scientific plan for roadways from the city to the suburbs beyond. Finally, Chicago civic leaders had the political wherewithal to educate the public about the plan and then implement many of its most important ideas.

That is why Chicago looks the way it looks today. Not because the market, left to its own devices, protected the lakefront and built parks and roads and forest preserves; indeed, this is an area where Adam Smith’s invisible hand is known to fumble. Rather, the civic community came together, developed a plan, and then made the future better.

We must do it again. The decisions we make today will determine what kind of region we leave for our children and our grandchildren. Will it be “business as usual” for the next three decades—a path that will squander natural resources, deny opportunity to many of our residents, tie up the region in traffic, and jeopardize our robust economy?

Or will we do better. THE METROPOLIS PLAN is a vision for the latter. Join us as we begin to implement this vision. It is, to quote Ernest Hemingway, “worth the fighting for.”

WHY NOW?

The social, political, fiscal, and economic circumstances have aligned in a way that favor the kinds of changes advocated in this plan.

Illinois has a new governor, which provides an opportunity to revisit state policies related to land use, transportation, taxation, governance, and infrastructure. In the states that have dealt most effectively with the issues broadly characterized as “growth management,” the governor has almost always taken the lead.

Meanwhile, we are in the midst of a fiscal crisis. The reforms advocated in THE METROPOLIS PLAN will help the Chicago region, and therefore the State, grow in a more fiscally responsible manner. Poorly planned growth has all kinds of ugly byproducts; one of them is that governments are forced to squander money on infrastructure as they attempt to “catch up with sprawl.”

The communities that make up the Chicago region have come to recognize the importance of regional cooperation and how difficult it can sometimes be. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, an association of 272 regional mayors, celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2002. This group represents an important step towards building a stronger region.

But the most compelling reason to act now is that seemingly small decisions—especially the decision to do nothing—have consequences that are magnified enormously over time, just as a rocket that is a mere one degree off course can end up thousands of miles from its target. Our current trajectory is not a good one, and we ought to change it sooner rather than later.

Experts predict that in the coming decades only a handful of American cities will emerge as truly “global cities.” Those regions will attract the most talented workers and the most dynamic companies. They will have the best cultural venues, the most vibrant communities, and the greatest economic opportunity. In short, they will offer the finest quality of life. Will we do what it takes to be one of them?

PHOTOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTION CREDITS:

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Prairie Crossing photo by Vaughn Wascovich

Intersection series by Urban Advantage

BRT photo by Lane Transit District; Eugene, Oregon

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Chicago Metropolis 2020 wishes to thank the members of its Executive Council for their guidance and support of THE METROPOLIS PLAN. We extend special thanks to the founding Chairman Andrew J. McKenna for his leadership and counsel.

The first step in preparing THE METROPOLIS PLAN was to convene a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to assure that the plan was based on the best professional analytical and planning practices. Over two years the TAC gave their time and energy to advise Chicago Metropolis 2020 on critical matters such as data resources, forecast and modeling methodology and alternative scenario construction. We thank the TAC for their advice and recommendations throughout the plan development process.

Finally, Chicago Metropolis 2020 is grateful to the residents of the region who gave their time, ideas and enthusiasm in the many forums and planning workshops that we used to design THE METROPOLIS PLAN.

