

Hear Every Voice

Case Study: Chicago GO TO 2040



Long-range planning effort to prepare for anticipated growth in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Chicago, Illinois

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

Public Involvement: In anticipation of increased population in the region, Chicago's metropolitan planning organization, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), spearheaded a long-range planning effort: GO TO 2040. The result is a regional plan for the Chicago metropolitan area that "links transportation, land use, housing, economic growth, the natural environment, and community development with the goals of improving livability and creating sustainable prosperity" (Institute for Sustainable Communities 2011).

The planning effort spanned seven counties of the Chicago metropolitan area and was developed over a three-year period.

Public Involvement: The public engagement efforts of GO TO 2040 were extensive, and an estimated 35,000 residents were engaged throughout the life of the project (ISC 2011). In 2007 CMAP developed a comprehensive participation plan for its organization, and this plan informed the GO TO 2040 engagement effort.

The CMAP Public Participation Plan identifies three key components of public engagement:

1. Outreach – the task of identifying and providing notice to participants across multiple demographic sectors;
2. Engage – the task of informing, educating, listening, and sharing in the planning process; and
3. Sustain – maintaining the relationships with residents to keep them interested in participating.

The clearly articulated components of CMAP's public participation plan provided a solid framework for engagement efforts in the GO TO 2040 planning process. CMAP and its partners used a variety of tools and techniques to encourage participation in GO TO 2040. The process launched with a visioning event held at the Illinois Institute of Technology and followed with public workshops, meetings, and computer-based activities (ISC 2011). CMAP also provided grants to ten community-based organizations to be used to organize meetings in effort to gather input from low-income, minority, and disabled residents (ISC 2011). All engagement efforts were conducted to encourage residents to be an active, integral part of the overall planning process.

This case study focuses on the Invent the Future initiative and use of MetroQuest as part of the GO TO 2040 long-range planning effort.

Project Details

Location

Organizations

Case Summary

Visualization

Internet

Meeting Activity

The *Invent the Future* Phase had two primary goals:

1. To educate the region on the impacts of multiple planning strategies; and
2. To gain public input on the development of CMAP's preferred future (CMAP 2009).

As part of the GO TO 2040 planning process, CMAP was interested in developing a land-based regional scenario to accommodate the 2.8 million new residents expected by 2040. From May to September 2009, CMAP launched the "Invent the Future" initiative to engage the public in developing a preferred future scenario. To encourage interactive engagement CMAP employed an innovative new online technology, MetroQuest.

MetroQuest is an interactive tool that allows users to experiment with different variables such as development patterns, transportation options, and resource policies. Users can experiment with different combinations of preferred variables and immediately view the outcomes. The technology is useful in illustrating the relationship among land use, transportation, and resource decisions through animated maps, graphs, and charts (CMAP 2009). For the *Invent the Future* scenario development exercise, MetroQuest was used at public meetings, on the web, and in stand-alone kiosks in high traffic locations.



To fine tune the tool specifically for the Chicago area, CMAP worked directly with MetroQuest developer Envision Sustainability Tools, Inc, for an eight-month period in 2008. The technology relied on local and regional data such as current land-use inventories, conservation inventories, water and energy consumption, travel data, and Census data.

As participants accessed the GO TO 2040 MetroQuest web page, they were able to view an introductory presentation explaining the project process and interactive activity, use the interactive scenario tool, or compare already developed scenarios. The website was easily navigable, and participants could easily chose to just read information or fully engage in website activities.

If participants wanted to engage in the interactive activity, they were led through a variety of online activities including indicating preferences (e.g., highly compact development densities, minimum maintenance of transit system, maintain existing natural resource programs) and comparing scenarios.

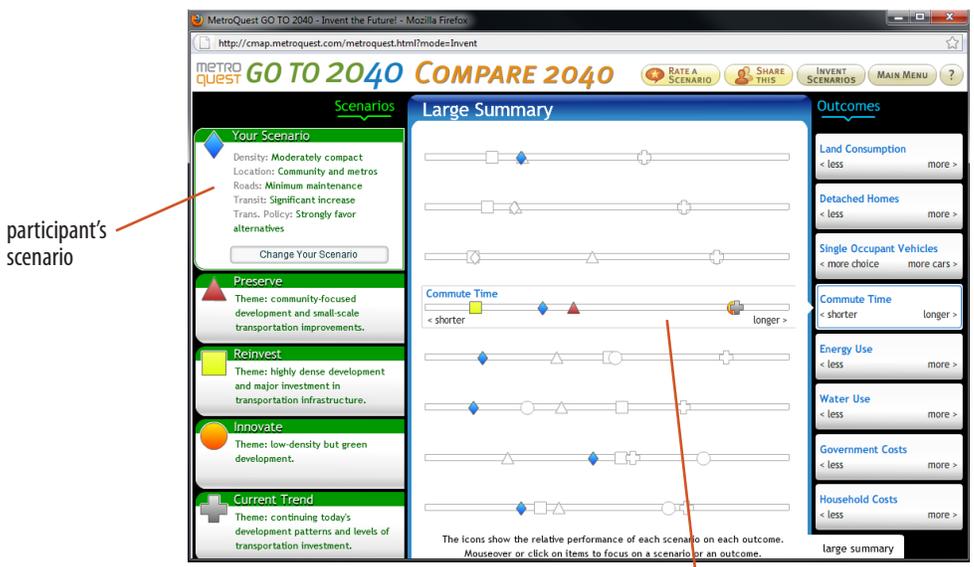
In the scenario exercise, Invent 2040, participants were asked a series of six questions on topics such as development density, development location, road network, transportation policy, and resource policy. Participants would click on their response to each of the questions and would immediately see the implications of their preferences in terms of land-use patterns on a map of metropolitan Chicago, scores on a sliding scale for impacts such as commute time, energy use, and water use, and in summary graphs for items such as government and household costs.

participant selects an option

as options are selected, land cover shifts to to illustrate how options play out on landscape

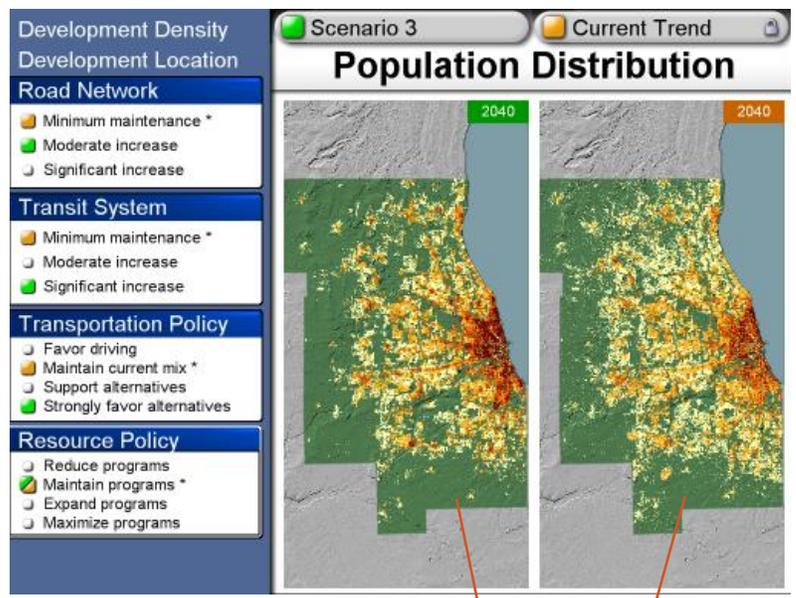
as options are selected, indicators slide to illustrate impact in various areas.

Built into the exercise was a “current trend” reference scenario intended to illustrate regional change if it continued on its current path. The current trend scenario also served as a comparison tool as users developed their own scenarios (CMAP 2009).



participant's scenario

Commute time comparison of participant's created scenario, a current trends scenario, and other scenarios named "preserve," "reinvest," and "innovate."



source: CMAP 2009
Comparison of population distribution based on a participant's scenario and current trends scenario.

Participants could dive deeper into the scenario, reading small vignettes that described aspects of their scenario or other scenarios, providing comments, and rating the other scenarios that were offered in comparison to the one they created. After exploring the various scenario outcomes, participants could then refine their scenario to achieve a desired outcome (CMAP 2009).

After creating a scenario, participants could look at alternative scenarios and different policies in the Compare 2040 module. Detailed descriptions of three pre-made scenarios were available to read, and participants could look at each scenario individually and compare across scenarios. The intent of this exercise was to invoke discussions on different policy directions for GO TO 2040 and to create “a seamless transition for users between the scenario they created and all for the data, research, and analysis that is encapsulated in the CMAP sample scenarios” (CMAP 2009, 7).

CMAP notes, “building flexible opportunities for participation was key for the implementation of this project” (2009, 1). Invent the Future MetroQuest technology was used in a variety of settings such as public meetings, kiosks stationed at libraries, fairs and festivals, and online at the GO TO 2040 website. During the four-month phase of this project, an estimated 1,500 people attended workshops, 14,000 people completed a kiosk session, and 2,800 people filled out surveys at fairs or festivals. The MetroQuest GO TO 2040 website had approximately 10,000 unique visitors.

The public input during the Invent the Future initiative, along with CMAP’s extensive research and analysis, was used to create the preferred future scenario and ultimately guide the long-range regional comprehensive plan – GO TO 2040.

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Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. 2009. Invent the future full report. Retrieved from <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/invent>.

1. **CMAP Public Participation Plan:** <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/public-engagement>
2. **CMAP GO TO 2040 website:** <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/>
3. **Metroquest:** <http://www.metroquest.com/>

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References

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