

## LETTERS

### Disagree with take on new regional planning group

Regarding your November guest essay, "A hitch in the plan" (see *Illinois Issues*, November 2006, page 25), as partners of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, we disagree with the suggestion that this important new organization represents anything like a missed opportunity. The enabling legislation for CMAP calls for implementation over a three-year period. In the interim, CMAP is working with its partners to define its role in the seven-county region and to establish its legislative agenda for the spring session.

By no means is that role simply an advisory one, as shown with the regional water-supply planning initiative that CMAP is spearheading to help our communities avoid potentially disastrous shortfalls of drinking water in coming decades. CMAP is also working to build on existing regional cooperation and play a leadership role in evaluating development and investment decisions that have significant regional impacts. This includes working collaboratively with partners toward a consensus on such issues as land use, transportation, housing and economic development.

With anticipated growth of 2 million more residents by 2030, CMAP is taking an innovative, integrated approach to planning for land use and transportation. The agency was created in part to coordinate technical assistance to local officials who for decades haven't been getting sufficient help to facilitate good decision-making about land use and how it relates to transportation. To a great extent, that gap has been due to a lack of funding for planning at the regional level.

An agency like CMAP exists to set the bar high, to take the long-term view and to show the region a vision of how things can be if, together, we apply sound planning principles. At the end of CMAP's first year, it is quite premature to declare the effort a success or a failure.

But as some of the most staunch proponents of combining land-use and transportation planning, we remain extremely optimistic about the new

organization. And as a region, we literally can't afford for CMAP not to succeed.

#### *External Partners of CMAP*

(See [www.chicagoareaplanning.org/partners](http://www.chicagoareaplanning.org/partners) for a list of the 16 organizations that signed this letter.)

### Legislature will take up regional planning in spring session

Thank you for the guest essay by Alan Mammoser on regional planning in northeastern Illinois, "A hitch in the plan." It succinctly points out the critical importance of strong, effective regional planning. In today's global economy, businesses are looking for places to invest that are great places to live and work. That means good transportation, excellent schools, open space, a clean environment and recreation opportunities. If this region can't provide these assets, we won't attract investment.

Reps. Suzie Bassi and Julie Hamos were the principal architects of the legislation that created the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. They wisely approached it as a two-part process. In 2005, the legislation they shepherded through the Illinois General Assembly created the broad structural outlines of CMAP. The legislation specifically mandated the CMAP board to make recommendations, in no less than three years, with respect to the overall powers and duties of the new organization. Those recommendations will be addressed during the 2007 legislative session in Springfield.

It is correct that there is unfinished business to be attended to. We at Chicago Metropolitan 2020 are confident that Reps. Bassi and Hamos will address the outstanding issues. We agree that CMAP represents profound change in the way we approach regional planning. It can provide all of us with the opportunity to create the kind of region we all want.

**George Ranney Jr.**  
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2020*



### Write us

Your comments are welcome. Please keep them brief (250 words). We reserve the right to excerpt them.

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