



## CMAP helps Fox River Grove redesign marina area

**By: Michelle Stoffel/Triblocal.com staff reporter**  
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When Fox River Grove was approached by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning in spring of this year to receive free urban design and comprehensive planning work in spring, the village jumped at the chance.

“We raised our hand and said ‘You can do one here,’” Village of Fox River Grove President Robert Nunamaker said.

CMAP, the Chicago region’s official comprehensive planning agency, has been developing a strategy, called GO TO 2040, which envisions what the seven counties of northeastern Illinois will look like in 30 years, in light of the expected 2.8 million new residents that will live in the area by 2040.

“We’re in the middle of developing the region’s first comprehensive plan,” said Erin Aleman, a senior planner at CMAP on the GO TO 2040 project.

The GO TO 2040 team informed nearly every town in the seven counties to join, and eventually chose several of the municipalities that showed interest, including Fox River Grove and Barrington, to redesign a part of the town.

“We wanted to go out to our communities and have visual representations of what the communities will look like on the ground,” Aleman said. “We’re developing a plan and recommending policies to deal with the implications of an expanding population. We’re looking at quality-of-life issues—food systems, housing, jobs, open spaces, the environmental impact—as part of the plan. The designs show what will happen or could potentially happen if we were to focus on transit plans or community issues.”

Fox River Grove has even taken some of the plans, created by the Conservation Design Forum, and moved forward with them. So far, village planners have talked to six developers and will soon be choosing one, whose development plan they will present to the Board in November, Nunamaker said.

After meeting with planning officials from Fox River Grove and representatives from CMAP, the design team came up with three possible plans.

The three were in accordance with CMAP's design structure, which dictates that one plan must reinvest capital, one to preserve and one to innovate existing infrastructure.

"The second one [Innovate] looked very attractive to us," Nunamaker said. "They worked with the riverfront and worked out a system. We can take a row of mixed-use buildings, condos on the upper floor, business on the ground floor, and behind those have a walk to the river. They have this winding path and you'd have this park area and access to the riverfront. They did quite a lot of work on it."

All three plans involved utilizing and expanding upon Fox River Grove's key characteristics—easy access to the river, a train depot that runs to downtown Chicago, as well as Highway 14, which brings travelers in town.

"Having a riverfront is a great asset and we felt they could do even more than what they were," Aleman said.

The plans focused around the marina, which designers believed could be recast as a community gathering place.

"The concept was to use the marina as place where everyone can go, so it can be enjoyed by people whether they're boat owners or not," said Alan Scimeca, head designer who worked on Fox River Grove's redesign. "We created this very water-centric plan. Storm water doesn't just run over the property and into the river, you let it seep into the ground and let it trickle over days and weeks into the Fox River and that turns into a beautiful park space."

The riverfront and opportunities for socializing it could bring played an important role in the design.

"We envisioned some water-type sculptures in there, adding some art and some craftsmanship and some beauty. We also thought there were places in those buildings—social opportunities, coffee shops—giving people a chance to meet other people," Scimeca said.

Nunamaker and other village officials took the plans, combined with some previously done by Metra, to developers in order to realize improvements to the current infrastructure in Fox River Grove.

“We have an appetite for redevelopment of the downtown,” Nunamaker said. “The developers told us, ‘Well you’ve got much farther than most people. You have plans that are realizable.’”

According to Nunamaker, village officials are looking for appropriate fundraising for the redevelopment project, which is one of the elements Fox River Grove officials are asking the design teams to take into account when planning.

There is also the possibility of using a TIF district to fund the redevelopment, he said.

To see the three designs, go to  
[www.goto2040.org/scenarios/designworkshops/foxrivergrove](http://www.goto2040.org/scenarios/designworkshops/foxrivergrove).

—*By Michelle Stoffel, Triblocal.com reporter*