

For Immediate Release
April 23, 2011

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Valerie F. Leonard Selected to Serve on CMAP Citizens Advisory Council



Valerie F. Leonard

Valerie F. Leonard has been recently selected by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Board of Directors to serve on its 16-member Citizens Advisory Council. She will represent the City of Chicago, including its West Side.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is authorized to establish a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to:

- Promote public awareness of CMAP plans and programs, and encourage participation by citizens and other interested parties.
- Assist on promotion and dissemination of public information and related materials.
- Provide continuous and balanced public representation in the development of regional plans and policies.
- Provide CMAP and the CMAP Board with guidance that conveys residents' perspectives.
- Ensure the effectiveness of CMAP outreach

and engagement strategies by working with staff to serve as a “speaker’s bureau” and a local voice to spread awareness of the GO TO 2040 plan.

- Serve as a liaison between CMAP and personal networks and local activities.
- Offer advice and assist as local advocates for CMAP and GO TO 2040.
- Assist as implementation allies of GO TO 2040 throughout the region

As CMAP focuses on the implementation of GO TO 2040, the CAC will play an important role in providing feedback on how GO TO 2040 programs and policies are playing out on the local level.

CMAP is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. To address anticipated population growth of more than 2 million new residents, GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

Ms. Leonard is a community development consultant who works to strengthen the capacity of organizations through technical assistance, specialized workshops, resource and organizational development and project management. This includes strategic planning, policy analysis and advocacy, board development and financial management. Ms. Leonard is also the Co-Founder of the Lawndale Alliance and serves as a resident journalist, writing for the North Lawndale News.

Other members of the Citizens Advisory Council include

Wendy Walker Williams Executive Director of the Southeast Chicago Commission (Chicago)

David Thigpen, Member, Mayor-elect Rahm Emanuel's Transition Committee, Economic Development and Planning division (Chicago)

Kimberly Bares, Executive Director of the Rogers Park Business Alliance (Chicago)

Saul Guzman, Vice President of Business Development, The Resurrection Project (Chicago)

Martin Eagen, President of the School Board District 401 (Suburban Cook)

Stephanie Presseller, Sustainability Manager, Moraine Valley Community College (Southwest Cook)

Jennifer Artis, Director of Public Affairs for St. James Hospital (South Cook)

Thomas Jacobs Associate Principal with Krueck and Sexton Architects (West Cook)

Ken Nelson, Mayor of Rolling Meadows (Northwest Cook)

DuPage County – Vacant

Lulu Blacksmith, Director of Governmental and Multicultural Affairs at Waubensee Community College (Kane County)

Kendall County – Vacant

Faye Sinnott, Founder of Solution Navigators, (Inc, Lake County)

Kevin Ivers, Trustee of the McHenry County Conservation District

John Knoelk, Professional Home Builder (Will County)