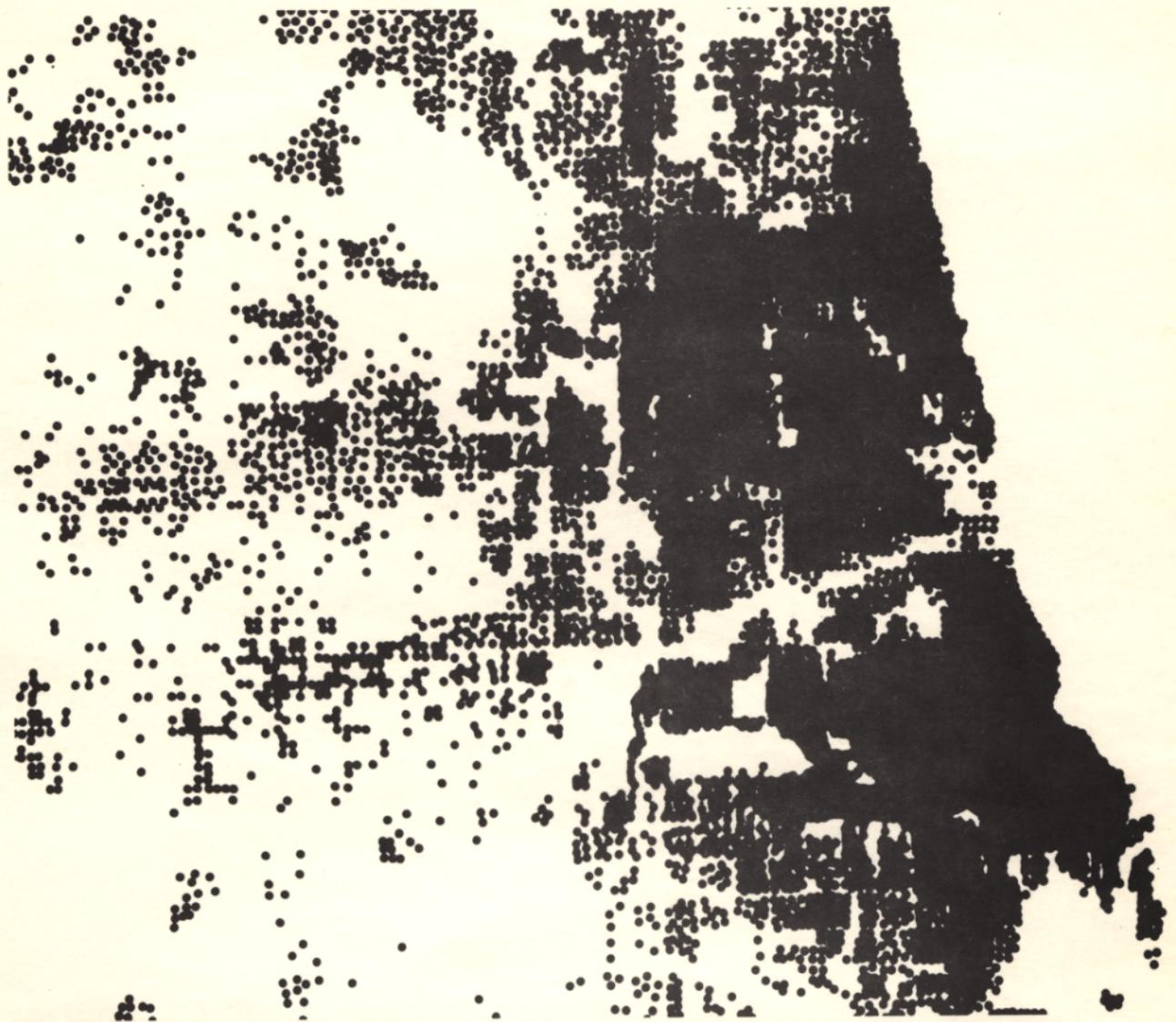


REGIONAL FORECASTS AND THE FUTURE OF NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES: executive summary

a discussion document for local participation
in the region-wide forecasting process



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION--WHY REVISE MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY FORECASTS?

The Regional Downturn in Growth/What are the Realistic Expectations?

Recent trends indicate that population growth in the region between now and the year 2000 will be significantly less than previously anticipated. NIPC is now beginning a cooperative process with northeastern Illinois counties and municipalities to bring forecasts into line with realistic expectations as well as local and regional growth policies. This document is intended to provide background information to aid and focus the forecast update process by identifying the major issues involved and the kinds of local and regional actions required to implement desired forecasts.

Options for Expansion and Conservation

In response to concerns for the continued quality and vitality of the mature, fully developed communities of the region, the Commission has adopted a Regional Conservation and Development Strategy in order to encourage the conservation of existing developed areas and to promote the effective management of new growth.

"Continue trends" and "arrest trends" forecast scenarios have been developed which create high and low ends of a reasonable forecast range. This is the first opportunity to incorporate the regional strategy into a concrete, frequently used planning tool such as the regional forecasts. The forecast decisions that are made will indicate the degree to which the region's communities and the region as a whole are opting for the conservation and managed growth implied by arrest trends forecasts.

The Local Choices

It is important for the counties and municipalities to examine the forecast range represented by the trends and arrest trends scenarios in order to consider the forecasts' relationship to local growth trends and policies. Governments need to consider what kind of growth decisions they want to make and what kinds of local and regional actions would be appropriate to implement that growth policy.

CHAPTER II WHAT CHANGE IS IMPLIED BY THE FORECAST DECISIONS?

Changes in the Distribution of People and Households

The continue trends scenario suggests:

- continued rapid growth in the five counties other than Cook with some moderation in DuPage County
- continued decline in Cook County and the City of Chicago with Chicago losing 18 percent of its 1975 population

The arrest trends scenario suggests:

- less but significant new growth in outlying counties
- suburban Cook population gain of 261,000
- stable Chicago population
- increases in numbers of households in all areas, Chicago gaining 243,000

Impacts on the Quality of Life

The continue trends scenario could result in:

- major new extensions of water, highway and sewer systems with resulting maintenance expenses
- increased dispersal of housing, job and other opportunities with social, economic and energy costs
- necessary additional public commitments to provide equality of opportunities
- increased difficulty in maintaining mature communities
- ease of infrastructure installation in growth areas as compared to difficult renovations and "retrofitting"
- continued personal mobility and flexibility as offered by a predominantly auto-oriented transportation system

The arrest trends scenario could result in:

- greater reliance upon the existing services and facilities with new commitments to their preservation and upgrading
- increased utilization of land already provided with service
- increased viability of public transportation systems
- greater attention to developing a higher quality living environment in older areas
- improved access to jobs and housing
- increased costs of overcoming problems associated with increased densities in some areas

Possible Actions to Implement an Arrest Trends Scenario

- new financial incentives for investment in older areas
- higher priorities for maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure
- limitations on/or phasing of growth inducing public investments in outlying areas
- strengthened growth management at the county and municipal levels

CHAPTER III MAINTAINING EXISTING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Benefits of Conservation

An arrest trends approach to growth management suggests that there are overall advantages to using and maintaining the existing built environment rather than allowing a process of development, decline and redevelopment. Proponents of conservation agree that change downward need not be inevitable, and that intervening in prevailing trends helps to avoid many social, economic and other costs.

Strategy in Use of Scarce Public Dollars

There is an increasing body of public works literature which reveals the poor and declining condition of large portions of urban infrastructure. It is unlikely that resources will be available to serve widespread expansion while maintaining the roads, sewer and other services in existing community areas.

- What are the fiscal needs in each community for conservation and how can these be reconciled with costs of serving new growth?
- How thinly can federal and state dollars be spread and yet effectively serve expanded growth areas and already developed areas?
- How can land-locked communities finance preservation and revitalization activities?

Maintenance and Repair Needs

Governmental agencies are beginning to document the magnitude of the preservation task and to consider these needs in capital investment programming. Municipal budgets demonstrate the dramatically rising costs of maintaining a viable community. There are major disparities between maintenance needs and available revenues for such basic facilities as:

- roadways
- sewers
- bridges and viaducts
- public transportation systems

These needs can be illustrated with reports of such jurisdictions and agencies as the Illinois Transportation Study Commission, the Chicago Department of Public Works, the Chicago Capital Improvements Program Committee and the Village of Maywood.

CHAPTER IV ACCOMMODATING NEW GROWTH AT LOWER COST TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TAXPAYERS

Fiscal Impacts of New Growth: Managing Sprawl

Nearly all outlying areas of the region will be experiencing an outward expansion of development due to increases in the numbers of households. Some new growth will be accommodated within developed areas or in areas already provided with urban services. Consequently, the impacts of that expansion and infill on fiscal health, environmental quality and availability of opportunities will be of concern to local governments. The way in which new growth occurs will affect local government finances.

A number of studies have indicated that a planned growth pattern is less costly than "urban sprawl." Real Estate Research Corporation's well known Costs of Sprawl study is one example. The assumptions of the Costs of Sprawl, if applied to

forecasted growth in northeastern Illinois, indicate reduced public and private sector costs for a diverse but well planned growth pattern. In addition, local communities could consider the additional savings that could be achieved by encouraging the development of under-used but serviced land. The Seattle metro area has similarly found that costs of services and facilities in expansion areas can be reduced through a "managed growth" strategy.

Extending Regional Systems/A Water Supply Example

A regional water supply program was developed in 1977 using year 2000 forecasts endorsed by NIPC in 1976. The program contained three alternatives, each providing Lake Michigan water to an expanded group of suburban communities in DuPage and northwest Cook Counties. With reductions in forecasts and decisions being made regarding the distribution of growth (vis-a-vis the two scenarios), the water supply programming in the region will be affected. The municipalities, counties, and the State of Illinois will need to be making new choices regarding the extent to which Lake Michigan water will need to be distributed and the financing of the regional water distribution system. These choices will affect the fiscal situations and growth potential of newer and older communities alike.

Protecting the Environment/Water Quality Programs

The task of maintaining and improving water quality in the region will also be affected by the amount and location of growth. Preliminary tests of water quality plans for northeastern Illinois river basins have indicated significantly improved water quality and reduced wastewater facility construction, operation and maintenance costs when population forecasts in the basins were reduced.

CHAPTER V ENERGY CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY GROWTH

Lower Energy Consumption in Older Areas

The older mature communities of northeastern Illinois are consuming much less electrical energy per residential customer than the lower density, newer and more affluent communities. These differences may be partly explained by the characteristics of the individual communities as well as by other factors, such as income and life-style. If the type of development that is encouraged in a community will increase energy conservation, local level policy-makers may want to consider local options in planning for new growth.

Potential Reduction in Transportation Energy Consumption

While the forecast scenarios have not as yet been tested for their energy saving implications, such information would be useful in future forecasting activities. It is very likely that the arrest trends scenario, for example, would reduce fuel consumption for transportation in the region.

Developers' Responses to Energy Limitations

Developers have indicated to the Urban Land Institute a number of likely responses to energy limitations. While most of them will be (and thus far are) in the form of more energy efficient building design and construction, they also identified such changes as more compact development and more infill, more development near public transportation, more diversity of uses and activities in developments and, possibly, changes in the site design of projects. These responses are more in keeping with the arrest trends scenario than the trends scenario.