

June 12, 2013

Developer Panel Summary Report

Park Forest, IL

Prepared by:



Introduction

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has invested over \$3 million of its own funds during the past 13 years to complete approximately 75 transit-oriented development (TOD) planning studies through the RTA's Community Planning funding program. This program funds TOD planning studies that promote walkable, mixed-income, mixed-use development co-located and/or well-connected to retail and business uses in transit station areas while also increasing overall access to transit.

While there are many success stories from communities that have implemented their plans, several communities have encountered obstacles and barriers to implementing recommendations found in their completed TOD planning studies. The RTA would like to further invest in the communities we have worked with previously by offering an opportunity to receive additional technical assistance and support towards implementing their plans. In 2011, the RTA launched a new program targeting those communities that have completed a TOD planning study through the RTA Community Planning Program and have illustrated a need for technical assistance and support with implementation. The projects eligible as part of the RTA's TOD implementation technical assistance efforts is now a part of the RTA's Community Planning Program. From the RTA's perspective, pursuing and achieving implementation of these plans can result in more efficient transit operations, improved access to transit services and a potential for increased ridership for all three of our Service Boards (Metra, Pace and CTA). Implementation efforts can also increase private investment in TOD areas while promoting the principles of sustainability and livability.

As part of these increased efforts, the RTA is working with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) in Chicago to facilitate discussions between individual communities and development experts to shed light on the future of TODs and how this relates to the changing market and economy.

Developer Panel Participants

Tony Manno, RTA

Cindy McSherry, ULI Chicago

Janice Morrissy, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA)

Matt Nix, REVA Development Partners

Greg Terwilliger, McShane Construction Company

Art Zwemke, Robert Arthur Land Company

Village of Forest Park & Olympia Fields Participants

Hildy Kingma, Director of Economic Development & Planning

Thomas K. Mick, Village Manager

David Mekarski, AICP, Village Administrator, Village of Olympia Fields

John A. Ostenberg, Mayor

Sandra Zoellner, Assistant Director of Economic Development & Planning

Background Information

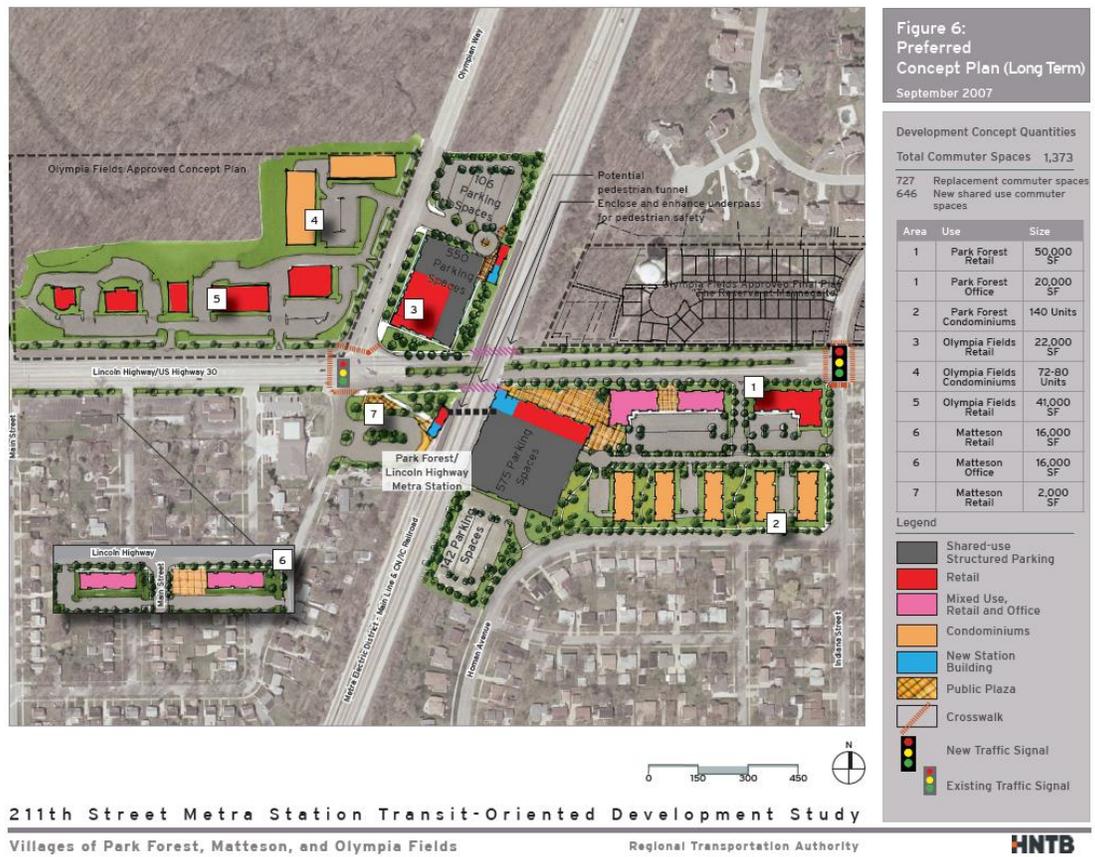
In 2007, the Villages of Park Forest, Matteson, and Olympia Fields completed a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study for the 211th Street Metra Station. The Village of Park Forest Board of Trustees adopted the TOD Study as part of the Village's comprehensive plan in January 2008. The Study includes a Preferred Concept Plan (see below) which identifies a mix of land uses and redevelopment opportunities within the station area. Proposed land uses include retail, office, multifamily residential and additional commuter parking spaces. The goals of the TOD Plan are to create a gateway to welcome visitors to the three communities, to improve connections between surrounding neighborhoods and the station and to promote multi-use development within the station area.

Building on the recommendations of the 2007 TOD Plan, the Villages embarked on an Implementation Study in 2010 (completed in August 2012) to examine several elements of the Plan in greater detail. The Implementation Study updated the market study that formed the basis of the Preferred Concept Plan, developed a detailed streetscape plan for the US30/Lincoln Highway corridor, recommended specific financial incentives and marketing approaches to attract development to the TOD area, and drafted a transit-oriented zoning district to expedite the entitlement process.

Additionally in 2010, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) was awarded a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Challenge Grant to seed the Southland Community Development Loan Fund (Loan Fund). SSMMA partnered with Enterprise Community Partners and the Chicago Community Loan Fund to manage the Loan Fund. The Loan Fund is currently a \$6million fund offering financing for predevelopment and acquisition strategies for transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Southland region. The Fund supports the development of mixed-income, multifamily rental housing as well as mixed-use developments that combine housing and retail. All project sites must be located within one-half mile of quality transit services, which includes Metra stations and major fixed-route bus transit.

The Village of Park Forest's portion of the TOD area consists of approximately 10.9 acres, of which the Village owns two parcels - 2.379 acres of vacant land at 3200 Lincoln Highway, and 4.2 acres at Commuter Lot #1. The third parcel, which is currently bank-owned, is 4.42 acres in size with a 49,000 square foot vacant building currently on the site. The Village demolished the vacant building at 3200 Lincoln Highway to enhance to attractiveness of this parcel for future development. The bank-owned property is currently being marketed for sale by the owner. Village Staff has been in contact with the owner and the broker to ensure that they are aware of the Village's vision for the property.

Study Area



Summary of Key Recommendations from Discussion

Short-Term (SE Park Forest Area)

- Pursue traffic signal on Lincoln Highway at Indiana Street to create a hard corner on the south side and better access to the Maynegate neighborhood on the north side;
- Identify ways to improve ease of access and connectivity between the commuter lot and train platform;
- Identify ways to improve pedestrian and bike access from the site and surrounding neighborhoods to the train platform and the commuter parking lot;

- Adopt a transit-oriented zoning district or multi-use zoning district as recommended in the August 2012 TOD Implementation Study;
- Continue to focus marketing the vacant Village-owned site at Lincoln Highway and Indiana Street for commercial uses;
 - Consider pursuing single-users that will attract high levels of traffic and will also capitalize on the amount of traffic currently along Lincoln Highway;
- Consider an adaptive reuse of the vacant building on Lincoln Highway;
 - Create a destination for the building/site to generate activity (entertainment uses, restaurants, grocery store);
- The Village should explore purchasing/controlling the vacant building so the entire TOD area is under Village control;
- Explore financing incentives such as creating a TIF district for the entire TOD area
 - A TOD TIF district could help to pay for the recommended traffic signal and acquisition of the vacant building;
- Focus on attracting retail/commercial that is appropriate for a TOD area
 - Consider a retail market study to help identify potential retailers
 - Continue to advertise the site to local grocery stores, local restaurants and local retail.

Long-Term (SE Park Forest Area)

- Pursuing a traffic signal at Lincoln Highway & Indiana Street should start in the short-term, but may take significant time to accomplish. Once this is accomplished, retail will be attracted to this area over the long-term;
- Focus on ancillary residential uses in the long-term. The immediate market opportunities in this area are retail and commercial that are appropriate for a TOD area;
- Work with Metra to assess parking needs at the Park Forest commuter lot. If it is determined that the amount of parking currently available is no longer needed, an alternative land use for the underutilized portions of the commuter lot should be considered in the future. This will require discussion with Metra to determine the future needs at the Park Forest commuter lot;
- Consider market-rate rental housing as an alternative land use on the underutilized portions of the commuter lot. This will require discussions with Metra to determine future parking needs.
- The extension of fiber optics to the TOD area will benefit business attraction efforts in the TOD area and community as a whole.

Short-Term (NE Olympia Fields Area)

- Pursuing a traffic signal at Lincoln Highway and Indiana Street should start in the short-term, but may take significant time to accomplish;

Short-Term (NW Olympia Fields Area)

- Explore a curb cut and frontage road off of Lincoln Highway for additional traffic control and movement. This will help attract additional commercial uses adjacent to the existing CVS.
- Consider signage promoting and directing commuters to additional parking at the Park Forest lot when the Olympia Fields lot is full.

Long-Term (NW Olympia Fields Area)

- Consider attracting Senior Housing and/or rental uses.