

November 2, 2012

Developer Panel Summary Report

Midlothian, 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 continues to 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, entitled *Setting Ideas in Motion: TOD Implementation Technical Assistance Program* targeted to those 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. 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
Matt Nix, Kinzie Real Estate Group
Steve Park, Alter Group
Greg Terwilliger, McShane Construction Company

Village of Midlothian Participants

Don Killelia, Trustee
Karen Kreis, Trustee
Terrence M. Stephens, Mayor
James C. Lang, Village Administrator

Background

In December 2005 the Village adopted Phase I of the Midlothian Village Center Enhancement Plan. The focus of this plan was TOD surrounding the Midlothian Metra station. In May 2008, the Village adopted a Phase II plan which established a detailed plan for the movement of pedestrian traffic and parking within the Village Center area, based off of a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) convened by ULI a few years earlier.

Most recently, the Illinois EPA Office of Site Evaluation has provided two Phase II assessments to the Village, one in 2011 (on the former Watson property on 147th Street) and one in 2012 (on the former Chicago Sports & Cycle on Pulaski). The Village is currently awaiting the Phase II report on the Chicago Sports & Cycle study. The Village was also awarded a \$400,000 US EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant in 2012, which will be utilized to conduct 20 Phase I assessments and 12 Phase II assessments throughout the Village. The Village has also spent considerable effort in preparing for a Letter of Map Revision for the flood plain in the west side of the Village Center.

Additionally, Midlothian is a part of a collaborative working on green infrastructure improvements along Midlothian Creek through the [Millennium Reserve](#). This effort is being funded via a grant from Chicago Wilderness and Boeing. Midlothian Creek runs through the Midlothian TOD Area and is also the subject of the flooding efforts led by MWRD in the community. As of the date of this report, the Village is in the mapping and planning stages, but the next step would be to apply for a Green Infrastructure Grant through the Illinois EPA.

Planning efforts thus far have provided the Village with an excellent framework to prepare for and work towards a transformation of their downtown. Below is an aerial map of all Village-Owned properties within the TOD area, as well as short-term and long-term recommendations discussed by the ULI Panel.



Summary of Key Recommendations from Discussion

Short-Term

- Address floodplain issues. MWRD is currently helping the Village coordinate with IDNR and FEMA to remedy the floodplain map issues. This process could take up to 2 years, but is currently the Village's top priority.
- Consider decreasing the boundaries of the TOD area in order to focus on land uses immediately surrounding the Metra Station **(3-6 months)**.
- Explore Senior Housing opportunities on the property located at the NW Corner of Hamlin/145th ("East Triangle") by releasing an RFP **(3-6 months)**.
- Explore attracting (or relocating) a coffee shop near the Metra station **(3-6 months)**.

- Focus on Downtown beautification **(6-12 months)**.
- Implement and expand the bike path/riverwalk planning efforts **(6-12 months)**.
- Create a TIF District in the area surrounding the Village Green to be used for façade improvements **(6-12 months)**.
- Focus activity by the Metra Station; consider relocating Village Hall to a vacant building closer to Metra Station area (such as the old Kreis Brothers Garage), and possibly expanding Police and Public Works uses within current Village Hall building or marketing the Village Hall building for commercial development **(6-12 months)**.
- Continue the pursuit of grants, especially to improve the immediate Metra station area **(ongoing)**.
- Parking is currently not an issue in the TOD area; short-term efforts do not need to focus on adding parking.

Long-Term

- Village may consider focusing on acquiring/controlling **contiguous** properties to assemble larger, phase-able parcels.
- Create a TIF District in the area surrounding the Village Green to be used for façade improvements and clean-up of potentially contaminated sites. This will attract business in the short-term and allow business retention in the long-term.
- Explore Senior Housing opportunities on the current Village Hall site by releasing an RFP if Village Hall is ultimately relocated.