

# DEVELOPER DISCUSSION PANEL

Summary Report: November 2014



Regional  
Transportation  
Authority



Urban Land  
Institute

# Introduction



Tinley Park Metra Station. Photo Credit: RTA

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has invested over \$4 million of its own funds and leveraged over \$6 million of local and Federal funds during the past 15 years to fund approximately 90 transit-oriented development (TOD) planning studies through the RTA's [Community Planning](#) 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. Additionally, since 2011, the RTA has offered

communities an opportunity to receive plan implementation technical assistance through the 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 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 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 development potential of specific sites in their communities.

A Developer Discussion Panel was held in Tinley Park on **October 14, 2014** and this report summarizes the discussion and the panel's recommendations and suggested strategies.



Public Plaza Along Oak Park Ave.. Photo Credit:

# Discussion Participants

## Urban Land Institute & Regional Transportation Authority

**Tony Manno**, Project Manager, RTA

**Mary Ellen Martin**, Senior Vice President, Morningside Group

**Matt Nix**, Principal, REVA Development Partners

**Greg Terwilliger**, Vice President, Business Development, Novak Construction

## Village of Tinley Park

**Amy Connolly**, Planning Director

**Gregory J. Hannon**, Trustee

**Donna Framke**, Marketing Director

**Michael Mertens**, Assistant Village Manager

**David Niemeyer**, Village Manager

**Ed Zabrocki**, Mayor



Public Square Along Oak Park Ave. Photo Credit: RTA



Mixed-Use Along Oak Park Ave. Photo Credit: RTA

# Background

In 1998, the Village of Tinley Park adopted the “[Tinley Park Transit Oriented Development Plans](#)” for the Oak Park Avenue and 80th Avenue Station Areas. The Plan provided recommendations for investment in the downtown area at the Oak Park Avenue Station. Since the plan’s adoption, the Village has worked with Metra to build a new Oak Park Avenue Station and adopted the H-1 Downtown Overlay Zoning District that supports and allows for transit-oriented development. The Village has also seen substantial investment in mixed-use development in both station areas.

By 2009, the Village wanted to utilize the market downtown to refocus planning efforts on the Downtown to create a specific, pedestrian-oriented plan and more transit-oriented, development-friendly zoning code. The goals of these efforts were to clearly express the Village’s vision for the downtown and create incentives for development proposals that met the spirit and intent of a shared long-term vision. In 2011 the Village adopted both the Legacy Plan and the Legacy Code, a hybrid form-based code.

The Legacy Plan is based on principles that are meant to guide efforts related to preservation, economic development, infrastructure and urban design in Downtown Tinley Park. Some of these principles are:

- Ensure that new development respects the historic scale and character
- Maximize the number of people living within walking distance of the train station
- Encourage building mass to peak at the downtown core
- Create a walkable downtown where pedestrians come first
- Create a connected roadway framework with small walkable blocks
- Position Downtown as a focal point of the regional bike path system

The Village has invested in several capital projects to implement the Legacy Plan, including:

- Roundabout at Oak Park Avenue and 183rd (matching CMAQ grant)
- 100% Plans for an expanded Zabrocki Plaza (funding sought)
- Oak Park Avenue Streetscape and bike/pedestrian pathway (grant received for phase I)
- New Bridge across Midlothian Creek (completed this summer)

Throughout the downturn several developments have failed to begin construction including the Boulevard at Central Station, a large mixed-use project. This project was entitled under the Legacy Code in August 2012 but has stalled due to lack of bank financing. There are also several properties in the downtown which have experienced neglect and are in need of redevelopment or demolition. Therefore the Village has requested guidance and advice on ways to refocus planning efforts and incentivize development in the Downtown area as the market continues to strengthen.

**The goal of the ULI panel was to gain feedback on the challenges of building development in the area, ideas for the highest and best uses of key available sites that can support transit service, and advice about how the Village may best encourage development.**

The results of the discussion are summarized in Short- and Long-Term recommendations that follow.



Bike Parking at Metra Station. Photo Credit: RTA



Mixed Use Along Oak Park Ave. Photo Credit: RTA

# Study Area



Village-Owned Properties  
(outlined in blue)

# Key Recommendations

## Short-Term Recommendations

- **Central Middle School Site**
  - Development of this site can potentially generate activity to attract development to both North and South Streets;
  - The Village should gauge interest by sending an RFQ/RFI to a select short list of potential developers outside of a formal RFP process
  - Townhomes/Rowhomes are appropriate on this site and could potentially carry-over onto a portion of the North Street Development site;



Central Middle School Site. Photo Credit: RTA

➤ **North Street Development**

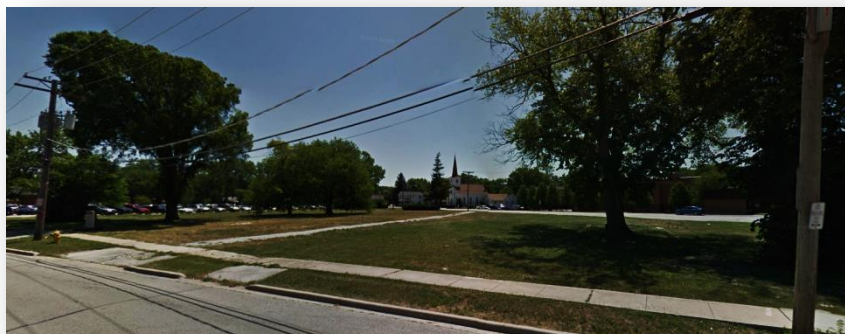
- Consider phasing this project to create smaller, multiple development opportunities;
- Development of the Central Middle School site could carry to a portion of the North Street Development site if a prospective developer is interested in a multi-phased project on both sites;
- Create a “development package” for this site including all zoning information, engineering, concept plans, etc.;
- Continue with plans to develop the Zabrocki Plaza but consider reducing the scope of the project by removing the proposed underground parking deck due to its cost;



North Street Development Site. Photo Credit: Google Earth

➤ **South Street Development**

- Consider an RFQ/RFI process on this site to gauge developer interest;
- Look to maximize the economic incentives the Village can offer to attract a developer to this site;
- Create a “development package” for this site including all zoning information, engineering, concept plans, etc.



South Street Development Site. Photo Credit: Google Earth



## Long-Term Recommendations

- **Mental Health Center Site—80<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station Area**
  - The Village should explore purchasing this site and pursue grants for clean-up; it is much more manageable and financially feasible to clean up smaller portions of the site as developments occur.
  - By subdividing the site into smaller developable parcels, some of the clean-up cost can be transferred to future developers.



Mental Health Center Site Development Site. Photo Credit: Google Earth