July 12, 2012

Developer Panel Summary Report

Wood Dale, 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 and Subregional Planning funding programs. These programs fund 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.

Many communities within the RTA region 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. 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

Anastacia Hennessy, Crown Community Development
Tony Manno, RTA
Cindy McSherry, ULI Chicago
Steve Park, Alter Group
Art Zwemke, Robert Arthur Land Company

City of Wood Dale Participants

John Forrest, Community Development Director, City of Wood Dale
Ross Klicker, Planning/Economic Development Coordinator, City of Wood Dale
Art Woods, Wood Dale Alderman (Ward 2)

Background Information

The Wood Dale Station Area Plan outlined the City of Wood Dale's desire to create a high-density, mixed-use transit-oriented development district focused around the existing access to the Metra Milwaukee District West (MD-W) line. Alternative options for a future realignment of Irving Park Road were proposed, but the City Council ultimately decided to go with a "no-build" alternative which will not adjust the intersection. This option, outlined in the Station Area Plan, will focus on safety improvements to the crossing.

Subject Site

The Subject Site for this discussion is a vacant parcel of land located at the NE corner of Wood Dale Road and Front Street, adjacent to the Metra tracks and walking distance to the Metra Station. The site is roughly 2 acres and is partially controlled by the City, with the balance of the site controlled by a private entity. The Wood Dale Station Area Plan recommends a mix of commercial and retail uses on this site.



Summary of Key Recommendations from Discussion

TOD AREA

- The City should look at subject site in context of entire TOD/Downtown area. Each parcel is the piece of the larger TOD puzzle. Uses on the subject site must compliment other uses in the TOD area.

- Identify ways to connect the TOD area to the Thorndale Corridor (Corporate Main Street) via Wood Dale Road.

- Consider market-rate rental developments in TOD area.

- Continue to focus City events in the TOD area to increase activity and awareness of the downtown amenities.
- Create Incentive Programs to attract development:
    - Façade improvement program for existing businesses in TOD area
    - Streamline approval process for development projects in the TOD area
    - Waive or lower certain development-related fees (permits, impact, etc

SITE AREA

- Work to control entire subject site (by either purchasing balance from the private land owner or controlling an option for future purchase/development).

- Get site market (and development) ready:
    - Soil testing to identify existing conditions
    - Relocation of ComEd box & poles
    - Stormwater Drainage Plan for site and area
    - Demolish the existing parking
    - Incentivize development by streamlining the approval process
    - Update retail market analysis
    - Subject site is not an appropriate location for residential uses in the near term.

- Potential uses for site:
    - Medical Office/Surgical Center
    - Library/Institutional (relocation of existing Wood Dale Library)
    - YMCA
    - Commercial/Retail Office (Destination retail as anchor with ancillary retail and service)