

November 19, 2013

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# Developer Panel Summary Report

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Villa Park, IL

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Prepared by:



## **Introduction**

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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**

Anastacia Fratto, Crown Community Development

Tony Manno, RTA

Mary Ellen Martin, Morningside Equities Group

Matt Nix, REVA Development Partners

Greg Terwilliger, McShane Construction Company

Art Zwemke, Robert Arthur Land Company

### **Village of Villa Park Participants**

Deborah Bullwinkel, Village President

Patrick Grill, AICP, Director of Community Development

Albert Bulthuis, Village Trustee

Robert Wagner, Village Trustee

Richard Keehner, Jr., Village Manager

Jan Fiola, Director of Economic Development

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## Background Information

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In Nov. 2006, the Village of Villa Park adopted the [Villa Park Station Area Plan](#), funded by the [RTA Community Planning Program](#). The Plan identifies TOD opportunities in the vicinity of the Metra station and in Chapter VI – ‘Plan Implementation Strategy’ recommends that “The Village’s Community Development Department should continue to promote the station area to developers.” The Implementation Matrix at the end of this chapter identifies this as a **“Priority Action.”** Another strategy identified in this chapter indicates that “Builders and developers may pursue development within the station area once the Plan is in place and the Village actively begins to market the “vision”. The Village needs assistance in marketing and soliciting developers to this area.

The Village of Villa Park has already taken several pro-active steps to marketing this area and furthering the goals of redevelopment in the TOD area, as identified in the study:

- In 2009-2010, the Village designed and constructed a regional stormwater detention facility in the TOD area, to free up more land for development;
- The Village purchased a vacant gas station/auto repair business, immediately north of the Metra train station, demolished the structure and prepared the property for a public open space use;
- The Village has set up an on-line database of available properties, with sale and lease information.
- In 2013 the Village adopted a new TOD Zoning ordinance, funded by the RTA through the Community Planning Program, which created clearly-defined, predictable form-based zoning regulations around the Metra station.

## Study Area

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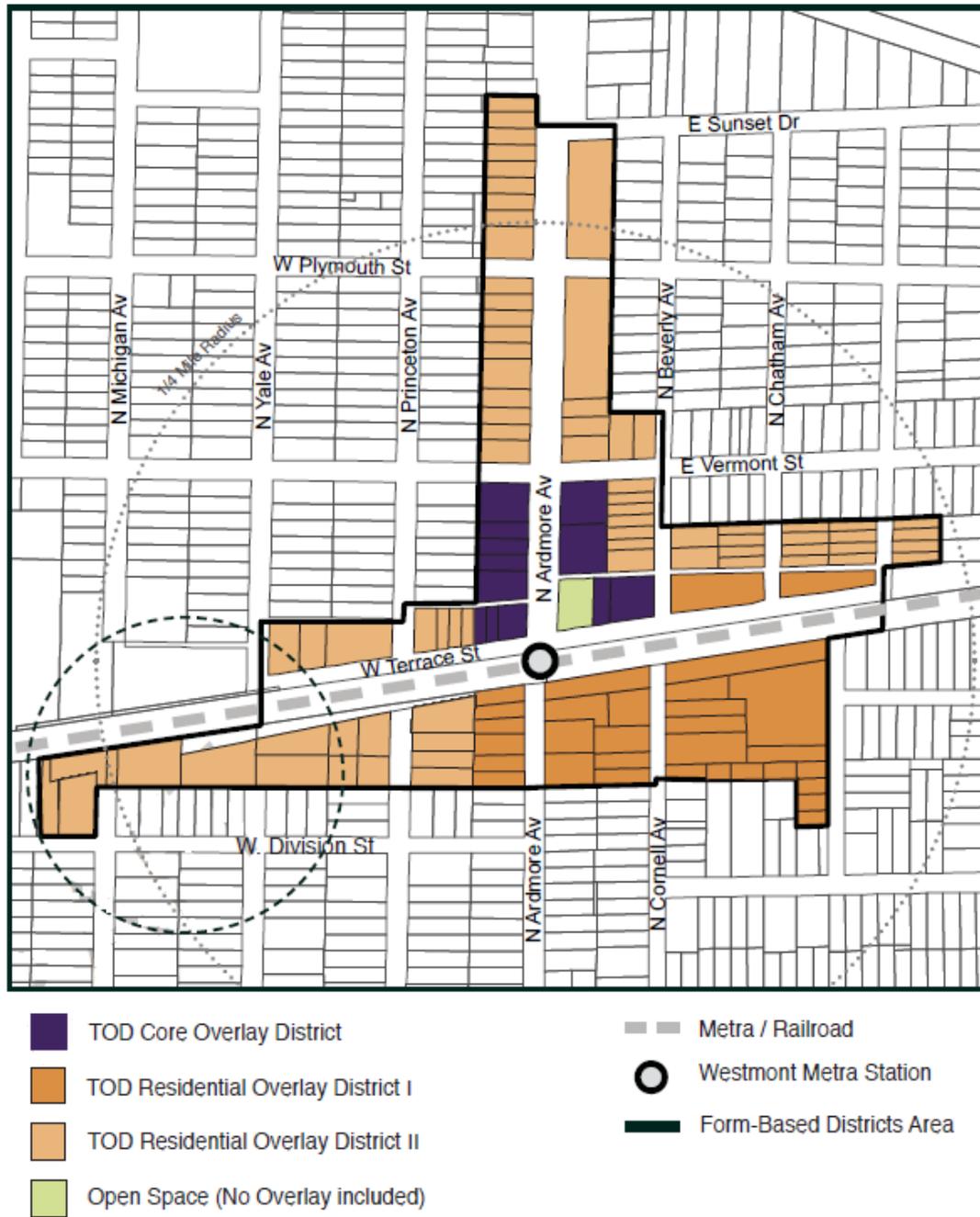


Figure 25.1B (3). Map of Villa Park TOD Overlay Districts.

## Summary of Key Recommendations from Discussion

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### **TOD Area**

- Consider a market study on the area to identify what types of retail/commercial uses are feasible in the current economy;
- Support the Garden Station developer and consider incentives to help make the project economically feasible;
- Consider offering façade improvement programs for the existing retail along Ardmore in the TOD area to enhance the look and character of the area;

### **Prairie Path/Ovaltine Area**

- Although much planning emphasis has been placed on the redevelopment of the TOD area, it is recommended that the Village consider ways to enhance and promote greater economic activity within the existing Villa Avenue business district to create a sense of community and a Village Center;
- Use Village marketing resources to create downtown brand awareness for Villa Park;
- Capitalize on the Prairie Path bike trail as an amenity by creating an entertainment destination;
- Explore improvements to area signage and streetscape;
- Consider offering a façade improvement program for the retail along Villa Avenue south of St. Charles Road;
- Extend and expand the Ovaltine TIF district to encompass the surrounding land uses so that businesses will be economically attracted to this area.