



UNIVERSITY PARK SPECIAL FINANCING DISTRICT STUDY

Summary Report

MARCH 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the Village of University Park, IL (Village) have undertaken a Special Financing District Study for the study area defined in the Village's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan [Village of University Park TOD Plan](#). In February 2023, the Village adopted the TOD Plan which identifies potential development around the Metra Electric University Park train station. The Plan builds off the Village's 2002 TOD Plan recommendations and identifies economic opportunities associated with local real estate market trends, significant federal investment in the Metra Electric train station and parking upgrades.

To provide financing solutions to implement the TOD Plan, the Special Financing Study reviewed previous and current Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, ordinances and financial documents to develop an assessment of these districts past performance to offer insight regarding the utility and effectiveness of the existing TIF districts for future planning and development. In addition, infrastructure and utility needs were investigated and defined in an *Existing Conditions and Future Needs Report* (August 2024), see **Appendix A**.

Recommendations that analyze and compile a menu of financing tools and development incentives that are useful to the Village in financing infrastructure improvements and attracting a developer to the TOD site were then prepared. These recommendations were presented to the Steering Committee at a final workshop meeting.



University Park TOD Plan | Proposed TOD Plan

I. STEERING COMMITTEE, FOCUS GROUP, AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

A. Steering Committee

A Steering Committee with representatives from the Village was formed to oversee the study. The first Steering Committee was held on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at the Village Hall. The purpose of the discussion was to review the purpose and scope of the Special Financing District Study. In the presentation, the TOD Plan, study area, and existing conditions were defined. A review of the existing and past tax increment financing (TIF) districts was discussed. Assets and constraints for future development were also presented. An economic development toolbox provided information on the various forms of economic development incentives that the Village could select to encourage development on the TOD site. The meeting was concluded with the project schedule and the next steps to the study.

The second Steering Committee meeting was held on Thursday, February 27, 2025. The purpose of the meeting was to review the estimated infrastructure costs affiliated with the build out of each phase of the TOD Plan and the various financing tools that the Village could use to incentivize development of the site. Refer to **Appendix A** for the presentation slides and attendees.

The Steering Committee members are:

Elizabeth Scott	<i>Village Manager</i>
Janelle McFadden	<i>Village Trustee</i>
Gina Williams	<i>Village Trustee</i>
Karen Lewis	<i>Village Trustee</i>
Randal Stephens	<i>Antero Group, Village Engineer</i>
Jonathon Sherman	<i>Antero Group, Village Engineer</i>

B. Stakeholder Interviews

One on one interviews were held with various stakeholders. The purpose was to receive input on and assess the level of support for the various financing tools that are available to the Village for development within the TOD study area.

Stakeholder interviews were held with Crete-Monee School District 201U, Governors State University, Cushman & Wakefield Real Estate Brokers, Sweet Life, Pace Suburban Bus, Metra, and IL Department of Transportation (IDOT).

Pertinent comments include the following:

- Stakeholders are supportive of the proposed development.
- There is a need for quality housing stock.
- Home ownership is preferred over rental units.
- An influx of new families in the TOD study area would cause the Crete-Monee School District 201U to review capacity at their schools.
- Having more residential and retail options to support employees working at the Gateway Industrial Park would be beneficial.
- The TOD would support Governors State University students and employees as there is little retail and a lack of housing nearby.
- Pace bus service to the study area is challenging due to large lot industrial land uses, lack of roadway infrastructure, and low density.
- There is a challenge getting from the Metra station to the adjacent Gateway Industrial Park due to distance and lack of pedestrian infrastructure.
- The University Parkway/Governors Highway/CN Railroad intersection is under design by the IL Department of Transportation and will improve congestion and safety. A side path leading to the Metra station will be constructed as part of the project.

Results of the interviews can be found in **Appendix B**.

C. Focus Group

A Focus Group was formed to provide additional input to the study. The meeting of the Focus Group was held on Tuesday, August 6, 2024. A discussion about the various economic development tools was held and the following input was received.

- There is a definite need for more businesses and growth in the TOD.
- It is important to educate the Village Board about the benefits of TIF. There is a need for the Village Board to understand the importance of raising the tax levy so University Park can realize the tax benefits from the TIF.
- There is a need to provide a transit connection from the Metra station and other locations, including Governors State University to the Gateway Industrial Park.
- The condition of the Metra station needs to be addressed; the Village Manager responded that improvements to the station are under design

See **Appendix B** for a list of the focus group attendees, the presentation power point and the input received.

II. EXISTING AND FUTURE CONDITIONS

An *Existing Conditions and Future Needs Report* (August 2024) was prepared to review existing conditions and to understand future infrastructure needs in the study area. See **Appendix A**.

The Special Financing District Study focuses on the study area defined in the Village's 2023 TOD Plan and is shown in **Figure 1**. The 77-acre site identified for TOD development is just east of the Metra station. It is currently used as agricultural land and is for sale. Also within the study area is the Metra station, a portion of Governors State University to the southwest, and a portion the Gateway Industrial Park located to the west.

The TOD Plan envisions four phases with residential development occurring across all four phases and commercial space developed in the first three phases. Based on renderings in the TOD Plan, the consulting team estimated the number of residential units and amount of commercial space that could potentially be built across all four phases. Key to implementation of the TOD Plan will be acquiring two privately owned parcels, i.e. the 77-acre vacant site. The estimated cost to acquire both parcels is estimated to be \$2.47 million.

Figure 1: University Park TOD Study Area



In addition to acquisition costs, the TOD Site will require site preparation and basic infrastructure, including water and sewer lines, construction of roadways and sidewalks, electrical work and installation of lighting and traffic signals, and landscaping and erosion control systems. The estimated costs for construction and engineering for each phase are shown in **Table 1**.



Image Source: metra.com/train-lines/stations/university-park

A. Transit Services

a. Metra

University Park is served by the Metra Electric Line. The Metra station is an at-grade station with a center platform between the train tracks. The rail platform is accessed via pedestrian tunnels on both sides of Governors Highway. There are four parking lots adjacent to the station; three provide access to the west entrance along Governors Highway and the fourth lot provides access to the east entrance of the station off University Park. Metra operates relatively frequent service (i.e. every 20-30 minutes) between downtown Chicago and University Park (the end of the line station).

Metra is undergoing two station reconstruction projects. The first project consists of the rehabilitation of the canopies that extend on both sides of the tunnel; this project should be under construction in 2025. Also, part of this project is a new crew facility to be located along the tracks to replace the existing crew facility; this project is under design and is expected to be constructed in 2028. The second project consists of redoing the station doors, redesign of the pedestrian tunnels, platform work, and design of a water infiltration system. The project is currently under design. A construction timeline has not been set.

Table 1: Estimated Infrastructure Costs by Phase

Expenditure	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Phase 4 (\$)	Total
Acquisition	2,474,000				
Engineering	1,442,000	748,000	2,250,000	1,504,000	5,944,000
Construction	8,007,000	4,157,000	12,499,000	8,349,000	33,012,000
Total	11,923,000	4,905,000	14,749,000	9,853,000	41,430,000

Sources: University Park TOD Plan, TranSystems.



GSUXpress Shuttle, Image Source: <https://www.govst.edu/ShuttleSchedule/>



Pace Bus Route 367, Image Source: <https://guide.in.ua/>

b. Pace Suburban Bus and Campus Shuttle

There is one Pace bus route that serves the station, Route 367. The route provides weekday service between the Metra station and downtown Park Forest, IL to the north. Route 367 also stops at Governors State University. Service operates approximately hourly; the schedule is synched to the Metra Electric schedule to ensure that connections are as seamless as possible.

Governors State also provides a shuttle for students and faculty between the Metra station and the campus. The shuttle operates every ten minutes during peak times.

B. Infrastructure

a. Roadway

The study area is served directly by two roadways: Governors Highway and University Parkway. The opening of the nearby I-57/ Stuenkel Road Interchange in 2015 to the west of the study area created direct access to the Gateway Industria Park. As a result, the Gateway Industrial Park has attracted Amazon, Carvana and other businesses.

Within the study area, design is underway for the University Park/ Governors Highway/CN Railroad Crossing Improvement Project. The design includes a full reconstruction of the intersection and at-grade railroad crossing. This crossing has been identified as a safety concern. Proposed improvements include intersection modernization, lane reconfiguration, railroad crossing improvements, lighting improvements, stormwater drainage improvements, and the construction of a shared use path to be installed along the south side of University Parkway to connect Cicero Avenue (US-50) to the Metra station entrance. Construction is expected in 2028.

A future roadway network is conceptually planned for the development site within the study area. See **Figure 2**. The Village's TOD Plan provides a thorough analysis of how best to build out the local roadway infrastructure on the TOD site to support future development. Recommendations include "complete streets" allowing for pedestrian friendly design, reduced speed limits, narrow travel lane widths, and crosswalks.

Figure 2: Proposed Circulation Plan for TOD



b. Bike/Pedestrian

The study area is only served by one side path that is located on the south side of University Parkway, just east of the Metra entrance. The 10' wide path extends east to Crawford Avenue.

The 2023 TOD Plan recommends a network of multiuse paths, protected bikeways, and traffic-calmed streets. In addition, the Plan provides sidewalks on both sides of street. High-visibility crosswalks and raised crosswalks are also recommended as part of the "complete streets" design mentioned above. In addition, the University Park/Governors Highway/CN Railroad Crossing Improvement Project includes the construction of a shared use path to be installed along the south side of University Parkway to connect Cicero Avenue (US-50) to the Metra station entrance.

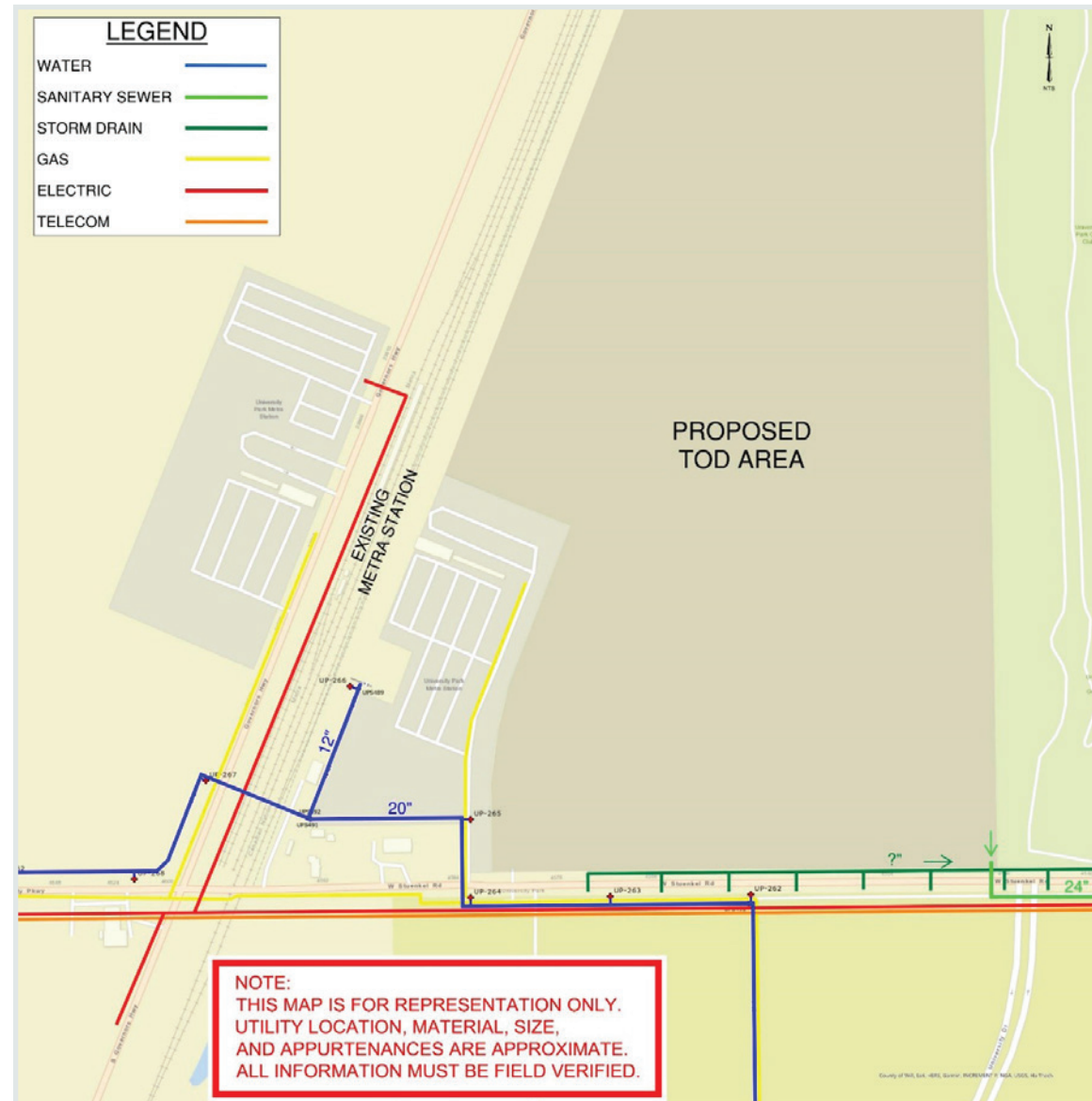
- 1 CONNECTION OF UNIVERSITY DRIVE**
The primary entrance to the site in the future will be at the intersection of University Drive and University Parkway. This capitalizes on existing infrastructure and provides convenient access to the station.
 - 2 MULTIPLE ACCESS POINTS TO THE STATION**
In addition to the main boulevard entrance, the plan is proposing smaller connections on University Parkway to facilitate access to the site.
 - 3 PEDESTRIAN AND MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS**
In addition to vehicular access, the plan will provide enhance pedestrian and multimodal access. One main connection will be via the existing bike trail to GSU's campus.
 - 4 PEDESTRIAN SCALE BLOCK STRUCTURE**
Another key factor to encouraging multimodal connections is providing smaller pedestrian scale blocks.
 - 5 NORTHERN CONNECTION TO CRAWFORD ROAD**
Lastly, to improve connectivity of the site and multiple access points to the station, the plan proposes a northern connection that would extend east to Crawford Avenue.
- M METRA STATION**

c. Utilities

The study area is served by water, sewer, gas and electric. The water main runs along the south side of University Parkway and traverses through the site towards Governors State University. The sanitary sewer extends to the site from the east along University Parkway. An underground storm drainage system runs along the length of the development parcels.

A natural gas main provided by Nicor runs along the south side of University Parkway, across from the site and then traverses the site leading to Governors State University. ComEd overhead electric lines run along the south side of University Parkway, providing power to the Metra station and other nearby businesses and residences. .

Figure 3: Existing Utilities in TOD Area



C. Land Use and Zoning

The land use around the Metra station is predominantly agricultural to the north and south. Offices and warehousing are located to the west, Governors State University is located to the southeast. The 77-acre vacant site with the study area is zoned B2 Community, and R4 Multifamily Residential. This zoning is particularly advantageous with the proposed TOD Plan. The TOD Plan proposes a mix of commercial and higher density residential land uses.

The following uses permitted in each zoning district are the following. Refer to the zoning map in **Figure 4**.

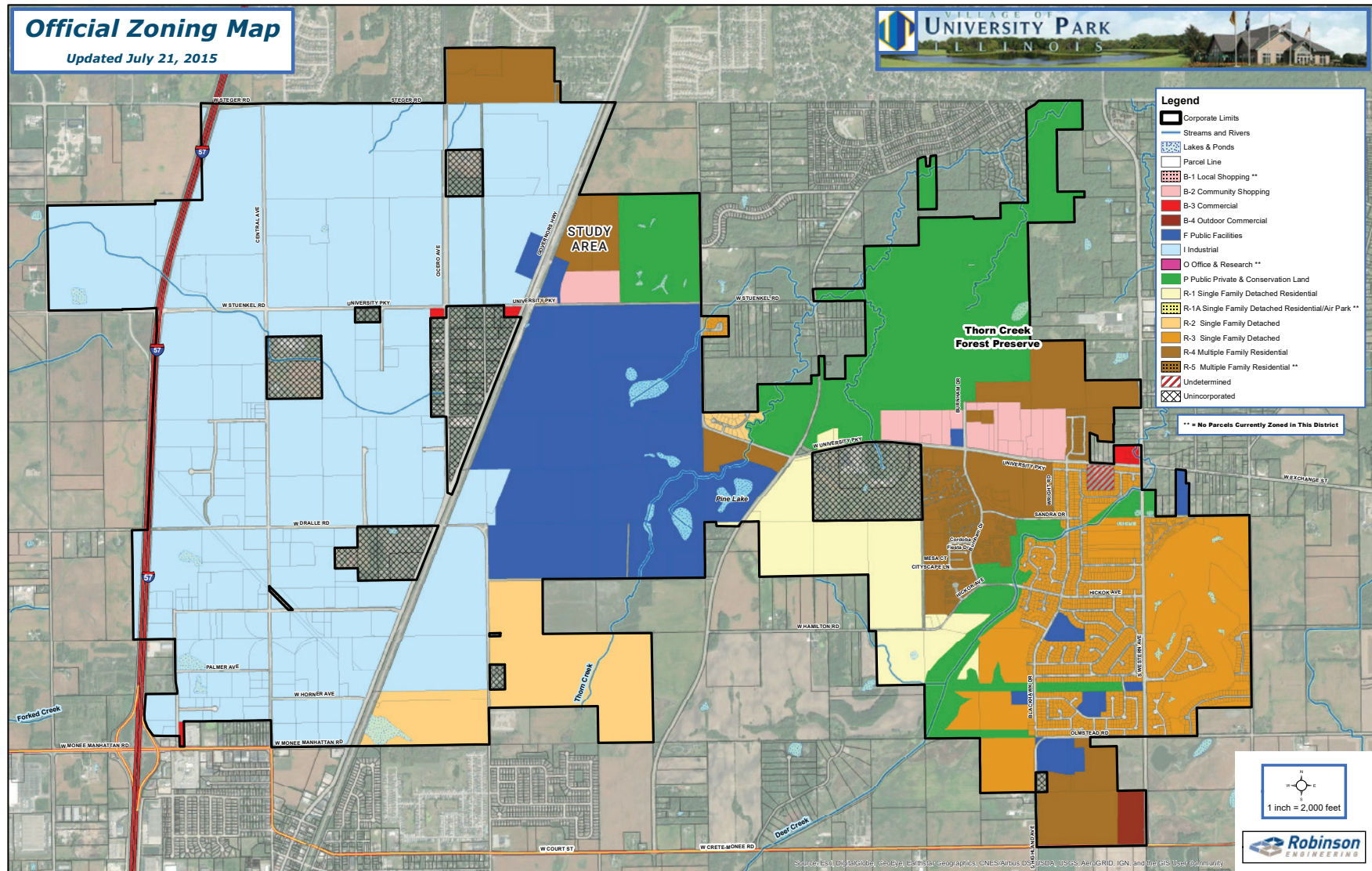
B2 Community - The B2 Community Shopping District is intended to accommodate the needs of a larger consumer population than is served by the Local Shopping District, thus a wider range of uses is permitted for both daily and occasional shopping. Numerous types of retail uses are permitted in this zoning category.

R4 Multifamily Residential - The R4 Multiple-Family Residence District is intended to provide regulations which will maintain the character and stability of single-family attached and semidetached (townhouses) and multifamily development. Permitted uses include single family, single family attached and semidetached dwellings, and multiple-family dwellings.

D. Floodplain

There is a floodplain in the northwest corner of the study area, classified as FEMA Zone A and FEMA Regulatory Flood Zone. However, the 77-acre TOD site is entirely outside of the floodplain.

Figure 4: University Park Zoning Map (2015)



III. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING AND PAST TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICTS

In August 2024, an *Assessment of Existing and Past Tax Increment Financing Districts in the Village of University Park* was prepared to provide an overview of existing and past tax increment financing (TIF) districts in the Village. See **Appendix C**. The objective was to review the effectiveness of the Village's TIF districts to determine if they can be a financing tool for future development in the TOD study area.

A. Existing and Past TIF Districts in University Park

A TIF district captures property tax revenue over a 23-year period that results from growth in equalized assessed value ("EAV") above a base or "frozen" level established when the TIF is created. Growth can result from redevelopment of existing buildings or from new development on vacant or underutilized land. Annual TIF revenue can be used for infrastructure improvements or to subsidize certain development costs of private developers to retain or attract new private investment in the district. After a TIF district ends, the incremental growth in EAV from the TIF is added to the tax base of overlapping taxing districts. Those taxing districts are given a one-time opportunity to increase their property tax extension to take advantage of the recovered TIF EAV without causing a general tax increase on current taxpayers.

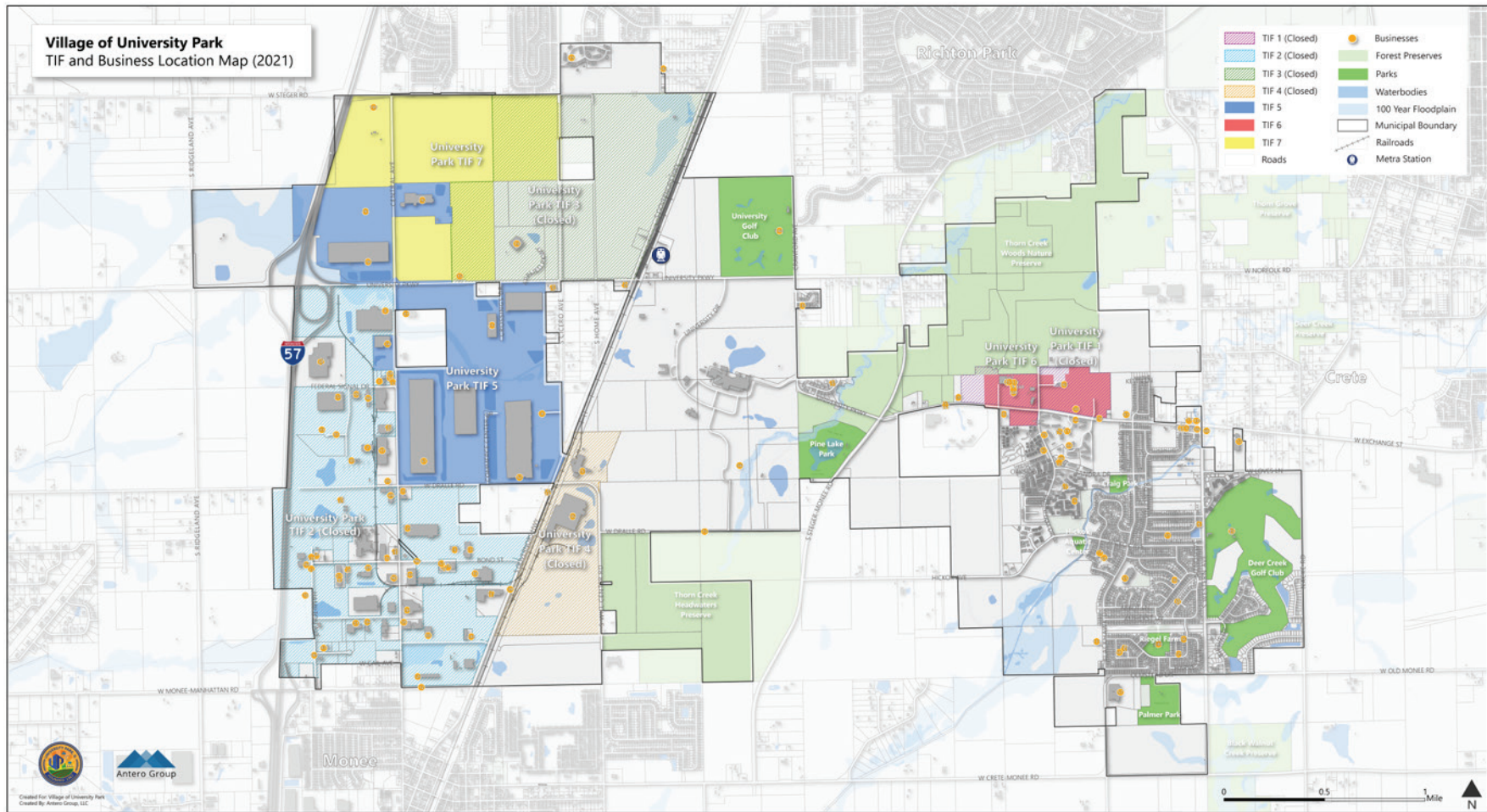
The Village has designated seven TIF districts since 1986 (see **Figure 5**), three of which are currently active as shown in **Table 2**. TIF #5 is set to end in 2025 while TIF #6 and TIF #7 are scheduled to end in calendar years 2037 and 2043, respectively.

Table 2: *Village of University Park Tax Increment Financing Districts*

TIF Name	Designation Year	Final Calendar Year	Base EAV (\$)	Incremental TIF EAV (\$)	Total EAV Growth (%)	Annualized Growth Rate (%)	Total Revenue
#1 Town Center	1986	2009	1,026,664	1,372,708	133.7	1.3	3,352,166
#2 Governors Gateway	1987	2010	2,214,674	35,975,565	1,624.4	12.9	38,329,480
#3 Cicero Industrial	1994	2018	218,242	5,209,248	2,386.9	14.1	13,267,841
#4 Governors East	1996	2020	671,436	9,101,159	1,355.5	11.5	25,659,897
#5 Dralle Governors	2001	2025	875,899	85,765,198	9,791.7	21.0	166,326,775
#6 Town Center	2013	2037	522,940	542,612	103.8	0.2	648,246
#7 Steger Central	2019	2043	1,588,408	1,267,009	79.8	(0.9)	275,786

Sources: Will County Clerk, Village of University Park

Figure 5: University Park TIF and Business Location Map (2021)



B. TIF as an Economic Development Tool

The Village has employed different strategies to leverage TIF as an economic development tool ranging from using TIF funds for infrastructure improvements to attract private investment to reimbursing private developers for certain project costs from future property taxes generated by the project. Instances where the Village has reimbursed developers for a portion of their development costs under the terms of a redevelopment agreement appear to have led to more growth in the TIF's tax base than funding infrastructure improvements alone.

The Village's use of TIF as an economic development tool has focused on supporting industrial and commercial development in different areas of the Village. Two current districts — TIF #5 Dralle Governors and TIF #7 Steger Central — are focused on supporting new industrial development on the west side of the Village. The current TIF #6 Town Center was created to help revitalize a retail center and improve infrastructure in and around the Village's municipal buildings to the benefit of nearby residents.

Overall, the effectiveness of past and current TIF districts in University Park is mixed. On one hand some TIF districts have been incredibly successful considering the amount EAV growth and TIF revenue they have generated. Notable among them is TIF #5, which will add a significant amount of EAV to the Village's tax base when it ends in 2025. Over 22 years, TIF #5 has generated \$166.3 million in incremental property tax revenue, which is more than double that of the combined total of \$80.6 million generated by the first four TIFs the Village created. However, based on inconsistencies of administration,

insufficient oversight and lack of transparency when it comes to TIF districts, improvements to the Village's financial practices involving the use of TIF funds and improving transparency around the use of TIF funds is required.

Using TIF to finance implementation of the TOD Plan would mark the first time the Village has used TIF to incentivize residential and mixed-use development. State law requires municipalities that subsidize residential development with TIF to set aside up to 40% of the incremental property taxes generated by the development to reimburse affected school districts for increased operating costs resulting from additional enrollment from students living in a TIF-supported residential development. Crete-Monee School District 201-U would need to demonstrate that the TOD residential development has contributed to increased enrollment at the end of each school year and make its claim for reimbursement to the Village between July 1 and September 30 each year or else it waives its claim for the prior school year. The Village can negotiate with District 201-U to provide less than the State mandated maximum and codify it in an intergovernmental agreement approved by both entities.

C. Implementing Best Practices

Tax increment financing can be an effective tool to induce private investment and spur economic growth in a redevelopment project area. Garnering broad support from various stakeholders is critical to initiating a successful redevelopment plan intended to harness 23 years of property tax growth. However, a lack of transparency can undermine the best laid plans.

Prior to adopting TIF to finance the TOD plan, the Village, residents, businesses, and overlapping taxing districts would be well served by implementing several best practices around the use of TIF.

These include but are not limited to:

1. Updating the Village's website to include all TIF plans (draft and final form), TIF ordinances, redevelopment agreements, intergovernmental agreements and Joint Review Board meeting minutes.
2. Updating the Village's website to include past and current financial information including Annual TIF Reports and Village Annual Financial Reports.
3. Completing all sections of the Annual TIF report including but not limited to section 3.2b and section 5 to demonstrate the degree to which TIF funds are subsidizing and leveraging private investment.
4. Negotiating and posting online, an intergovernmental agreement with Crete-Monee School District 201-U detailing the terms under which District 201-U can seek reimbursement for increased costs attributed to TIF supported residential development.

While not exhaustive, the practices outlined above lend themselves to increased transparency concerning the use of TIF and other municipal funds.

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING OPTIONS

The final steps in the development of the *University Park Special Financing District Study*, present a set of recommendations for financing the TOD Plan, including potential revenues generated by those recommendations, and lays out the steps necessary to implement the recommendations. If the Village of University Park wants to create the transit-oriented development, they must adopt special financing incentives in order to do so. See **Appendix D**.

Six potential options available to the Village to finance implementation of the TOD Plan are shown in **Table 3**. Authorization for utilizing the first four of these financing options rests with the Village, while others would require either state or federal approval.

Table 3: Economic Development Financing Options

Tool	Mechanism	Examples of Eligible Cots	Designation Authority	Estimated Revenue
Tax Increment Financing District	Value capture of property tax growth	Acquisition, demolition, site prep, renovation/rehab, and public infrastructure	Municipal	\$91 M - \$152 M
Special Service Area	Additional property tax levy	Maintenance/beautification, marketing, business attraction, special events & promotions, auto and bike transit, security, and façade improvements	Municipal	\$11.2 M
Business District	Additional sales/hotel tax	Similar to TIF	Municipal	\$3 M
Economic Incentive Agreement	Sales tax rebate	Site preparation, building rehab, tenant improvements, and public infrastructure	Municipal	TBD
Enterprise Zone	Tax exemptions (sales, real estate transfer, utilities)	Sales tax exemption on construction materials	State	N/A
Opportunity Zone	Federal capital gains tax credit for qualifying investments		US Treasury	N/A

Source: JRG

Each of the financing tools were presented to the Steering Committee on February 27th. These options are described below:

A. Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)

Tax increment financing in Illinois is structured to capture property tax growth in the district over 23 years, which can be used to pay for improvements within the district. Eligible costs include land acquisition, demolition, site preparation, environmental remediation, construction and reconstruction of public buildings, renovation and rehabilitation of existing privately-owned buildings, and public infrastructure. To create a TIF district, state law requires a study demonstrating that the area meets certain statutory criteria as well as a redevelopment plan that includes estimated project costs, revenue projections and anticipated term of any debt obligations. A TIF can be extended for an additional 12 years with approval from the state legislature and governor.

B. Business District

A Business District imposes an additional sales tax and/or hotel tax in 0.25% increments up to 1.00% for 23 years. Similar to TIF, eligible costs include land acquisition, demolition, site preparation, environmental remediation, construction and reconstruction of public buildings, renovation and rehabilitation of existing privately-owned buildings, and public infrastructure. Creation of the district requires a finding that the area meets certain statutory criteria to qualify and a redevelopment plan that includes estimated project costs, funding sources, tax rates and anticipated term of any debt obligations. Taxes are administered by the Illinois Department of Revenue and remitted to the municipality. A Business District can be used in conjunction with TIF.

C. Special Service Area (SSA)

A Special Service Area imposes an additional property tax within its boundaries to pay for eligible costs including but not limited to public way maintenance and beautification, marketing, business retention and attraction initiatives, special events and promotional activities, automobile and bike transit, security, façade improvements, and other commercial and economic development initiatives. A commission oversees the SSA and typically contracts with an administrator to manage operations. The commission works with the municipality to develop an annual budget and property tax levy that must be approved by the municipality's legislative body. SSA property tax billing and tax collections are administered by Will County.

D. Economic Incentive Agreement

An Economic Incentive Agreement is a negotiated agreement between a municipality and developer to rebate sales tax to a specified party for improvements of vacant buildings and parcels. Eligible costs include site preparation, building rehab, tenant improvements, and public infrastructure. The agreements can be used in conjunction with TIF and a Business District to make projects financially feasible.

E. Enterprise Zone

An Enterprise Zone provides for sales and use tax exemptions on building materials for projects in the zone. An Enterprise Zone can also include additional state sales tax exemptions on purchases of personal property used or consumed in the manufacturing process or in the operation of a pollution control facility; an exemption on state utility taxes for electricity and natural gas; an exemption on state telecommunication charges and on excise taxes. The program also provides an Enterprise Zone Construction Jobs Credit that allows eligible project owners to deduct allocated tax credits from their taxable income. Tax exemptions are available for companies that make minimum statutory investments that either create or retain a certain number of jobs. These exemptions require a business to make application to, and be certified by, the Illinois Department of Commerce. Creation of an Enterprise Zone requires state authorization.

F. Opportunity Zone

An Opportunity Zone is a federal program aimed at incentivizing private investments in economically distressed communities by providing capital gains tax credit on qualifying investment vehicles. A state's governor nominates a qualifying area, which must be certified by the US Treasury Secretary.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Among the six tools, a TIF District, a Business District, a Special Service Area, and Economic Incentive Agreements are options readily available to the Village that can be tailored to meet the challenges of implementing the TOD Plan. Moreover, they are designed to complement one another in ways that the Enterprise Zone and Opportunity Zone are not. The first three options are intended to generate new tax revenue that can be used to pay for costs related to acquisition, site preparation and infrastructure. They are also tools that can be modified by amendment to address issues that may arise over the course of implementing the TOD Plan. An Enterprise Zone and an Opportunity Zone, on the other hand, provide tax breaks to attract private investment to a broader area by reducing investment costs and deferral of capital gains taxes for private developers.

A. Create a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)

Creating a TIF district to capture the growth in EAV and property taxes from four-phased development of the TOD site can generate between \$91 million and \$152 million in incremental property tax revenue for the TOD Project. TIF revenues could be used to acquire land, prepare the TOD site for development, and help fund infrastructure improvements across all four phases. TIF revenues could also be used to pay debt service on alternative revenue bonds where the proceeds of the bonds are used to pay for land acquisition, site preparation and infrastructure improvements.

State law requires municipalities that subsidize residential development with TIF to set aside up to 40% of the incremental property taxes generated by the development to reimburse affected school districts for increased operating costs resulting from additional enrollment from students living in a TIF-supported residential development.

The TOD site lies within the attendance boundaries of Crete-Monee School District 201-U ("SD 201 U"), which is a unified school district with five elementary schools, one middle school and one high school as well as an early childhood learning center. SD 201-U would need to demonstrate at the end of each school year that the TOD residential development has contributed to increased enrollment. SD 201-U would need to make its claim for reimbursement to the Village between July 1 and September 30 each year or else it waives its claim for reimbursement for the prior school year. The Village can negotiate with SD 201-U to provide less than the state mandated maximum and codify it in an intergovernmental agreement. Unclaimed funds set aside for SD 201-U, would then be available to fund eligible project costs.

The Village will want to be strategic about timing the TIF district creation. First, the Village should consider acquiring the private properties within the TOD site prior to TIF designation, as long as the action does not undermine TIF eligibility of the area. This provides two advantages for the Village: i) better control of the site development and ii) sets the base EAV at its lowest level, thereby maximizing incremental tax revenue potential. Second, the designation of the TIF should coincide with a secured developer and financeable redevelopment plan to maximize the 23-year term of the TIF district. This may require time for pre-development activities that include issuing a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to find a Lead Developer to undertake implementation of the TOD Plan, concept plan development, phasing, and financial underwriting. For example, the Developer could “front fund” TIF eligible improvements and be reimbursed from future TIF revenue or the Village could issue alternate revenue bonds and use the proceeds to fund acquisition, site preparation and infrastructure improvements and repay the principal and interest due on those bonds with future TIF revenues. In all cases, the developer and development plan should be secured before public financing of any sort is issued.

Importantly, for these pre-development costs to be considered TIF eligible and reimbursed at a later date, the Village would need to adopt an inducement ordinance. This action recognizes that Village intervention via TIF is needed to induce development, and the intention of the Village is that these costs are reimbursable after TIF designation and revenues are available.

B. Create a Business District

In conjunction with a TIF district, the Village could create a Business District for the TOD site. The potential \$3.0 million in revenue generated by the Business District Sales Tax could supplement funding of improvements supported by TIF, including acquisition, site preparation, and building out infrastructure. The Business District Sales Tax would be in place for 23 years. The Village can establish a Business District Sales Tax rate in increments of 0.25%, up to a maximum rate of 1.00%. It can also amend the boundaries and the rate over the life of the district. The Business District Sales Tax, like the Village’s Home-Rule Retailer Occupation Tax, would apply to the sale of general merchandise but not the purchases of groceries, prescription drugs, and certain medical devices. As with other sales taxes imposed in the Village, the Business District Sales Tax would be administered by the Illinois Department of Revenue (“IDOR”).

Revenues from the Business District Sales Tax could be used to reimburse the TOD Developer for eligible costs, or the revenues could be used, in addition to TIF revenue, to support debt service payments on alternate revenue bonds.

Like the TIF, the Village will need to engage a consultant to prepare an eligibility study and a redevelopment plan that includes a proposed budget. The Village will need to consider the timing of implementing a Business District in relation to the costs that the Business District Sales Tax will cover. The district can be amended over its life to add and remove addresses, change the boundaries, and change the tax rate. The initial ordinance and any amending ordinances must be submitted to IDOR by April 1 for the tax or amendments to become effective by July 1, or by October 1 to become effective by January 1 for the following year.

C. Create a Special Service Area

An SSA could produce up to \$11.2 million in revenue, assuming it has the same boundaries as the TIF. Under state law, incremental property tax revenue generated by an SSA property tax extension in a TIF district can be used to fund eligible expenses of either the SSA or the TIF. To establish an SSA, the Village needs to adopt an ordinance authorizing the SSA. That ordinance needs to define the boundaries and services to be provided by the SSA, as well as an estimate of the costs to provide those services. The ordinance must also include the maximum duration of the SSA and the maximum property tax rate. The \$11.2 million estimate above, assumes a 22-year life and a maximum tax rate of 1.00%. The Village could adopt a higher or lower maximum rate, which can also be amended over the life of the SSA.

The Village would need to notify affected taxpayers by mail and in a newspaper of general circulation of the proposed SSA and hold at least one public hearing on the matter. The Village must wait at least 60 days after the final public hearing to before voting on the SSA ordinance. During the 60-day window, residents and taxpayers within the proposed boundaries are allowed to file petitions in opposition to the SSA. If petitions opposing the SSA include at least 51 percent of registered voters residing in the proposed boundaries and 51 percent of property owners, then the SSA is defeated and the process cannot be restarted for two years.

The SSA requires an annual budget and property tax levy that must be approved by the Village Board. The adopted ordinances must be sent to the Will County Clerk who determines final property tax extensions and rates applied to parcels on the TOD Site. The SSA could also extend past the life of the TIF and Business Districts to generate additional revenue.

D. Enter Into Economic Incentive Agreements

An Economic Incentive Agreement could be used to incentivize a particular retailer by rebating a portion of sales taxes generated by the retailer. The incentive could be used to attract or retain a sales-tax generating business. The Village could rebate some combination of the Village's Home-Rule Retailer Occupation Tax (1.00%) or the portion of the Municipal Retailers Occupation Tax (1.00%) that the Village receives from the State of Illinois. An Economic Incentive Agreement could also be used to incentivize re-tenanting of commercial spaces that become vacant over the life of the TIF District and Business District as well as after they end. The specific terms and amounts in an Economic Incentive Agreement would be negotiated between the Village and affected parties that may include the Developer and a potential retailer.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

The matrix in **Table 4** below incorporates the recommendations from above and outlines implementation steps for financing the TOD.

Table 4: Implementation Matrix

Phase	Process	Responsibility	Partners	Funding Mechanism
Site Assembly	Inducement ordinance(s)	Village	N/A	
	Create TOD TIF district	Village	TIF Consultant, General Public, Will County	TIF
	Acquire privately owned parcels	Village	Private Property Owners	TIF
Pre-Development	Issue request for proposal for a TOD site developer	Village	Developers	
	Concept Plan development	Village, Developer	General Public	
	Develop project budget	Developer	Village	
	Identify tenants for commercial/retail space	Developer	Village, General Public	
	Identify funding gap	Village	Developer, Village Consultant	TIF, SSA, BD
	Identify eligible costs by funding mechanism	Village / Consultant	Village Consultant	
	Determine funding sources & mechanisms	Village	Developer	
	Negotiate intergovernmental agreement	Village, SD 201-U	Developer	
	Negotiate redevelopment agreement	Village, Developer	Village Consultant	TIF, SSA, BD
	Permitting	Developer	Village	

Source: JRG

Phase	Process	Responsibility	Partners	Funding Mechanism
Site Development	Construct Phase 1 Multi-Family, Mixed Use, Free-standing Commercial	Developer	Village	
	Phase 1 Lease-up & Occupancy	Developer	Village	
	Create TOD Business District	Village	Consultant, IDOR	BD
	Create TOD Special Service Area	Village	Consultant, Will County	SSA
	Construct Phase 2 Multi-Family, Mixed-Use, Free-standing Commercial	Developer	Village	
	Phase 2 Lease-up & Occupancy	Developer	N/A	
	Construct Phase 3 Single Family, Multi-Family, Mixed Use, Free-standing Commercial	Developer	Village	
	Phase 3 Lease-up & Occupancy	Developer	N/A	
	Construct Phase 4 Single Family, Multi-Family	Developer	Village	
	Phase 4 Lease-up & Occupancy	Developer	N/A	
Stabilization	Determine school enrollment impacts	SD 201-U	Village	
	Project monitoring & compliance	Village	Village, Consultant, IDOR, Will County	
	Ongoing financing commitments	Village	Developer / Lenders	
	Determine annual SSA property tax levy	Village	Will County	

Source: JRG



UNIVERSITY PARK SPECIAL FINANCING DISTRICT STUDY

Summary Report

MARCH 2025

APPENDIX A



UNIVERSITY PARK SPECIAL FINANCING DISTRICT STUDY

Existing Conditions and Future Needs Report

AUGUST 2024

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I. BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS PLANS

The aim of the Village of University Park's special financing district study is to examine and explore potential special financing tools and strategies that enable the Village to implement the recommendations of the recently adopted [Transit Oriented Development \(TOD\) Plan \(February 2023\)](#).

The objectives for the special financing district study for the Village of University Park include:

- A. Identify the infrastructure needs and associated costs of preparing the TOD site development.
- B. Determine which financing mechanisms could be considered to use as tools.
- C. Develop a municipal financing strategy that will help Village staff and elected officials to implement the community driven TOD plan recommendations.

This site, adjacent to the University Park Metra station, has a long history as a potential location for transit-oriented development. The current TOD Plan builds off the Village's 2002 TOD Plan and the University Park Comprehensive Plan (April 2014). These plans created a vision for transportation, land use, housing, economic development, and the natural environment around the Metra station.

In addition to the TOD Plans and Comprehensive Plan, other relevant plans for this study include the One Village Strategic Plan (October 2020) and the One Village One Vision Capital Improvement Plan (2021-2026). Both plans lead to important background information for this study.

The One Village Strategic Plan highlights the following key takeaways that are pertinent to this study:

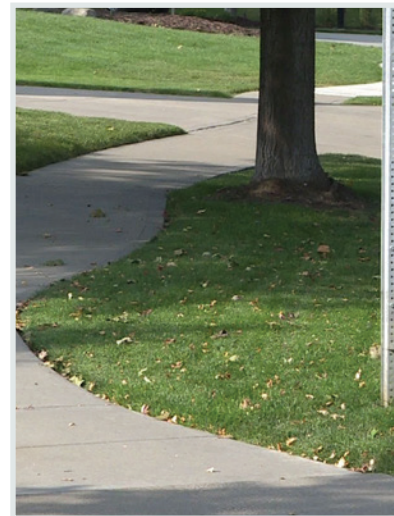
- Biggest opportunities are commercial development, employment growth and housing.
- Priorities include addressing water issues, creating jobs, and repairing roads.
- Priority development areas include the Gateway Industrial Park and the University Park Metra station area; the Village plans to create a walkable, mixed-use, and accessible TOD district in the area surrounding the Metra station.
- The Village is working to improve the sidewalk and bicycle network leading to the TOD area and the Metra station.
- The Village is exploring ways to address "last mile gaps" including Pace bus service into the industrial area and developing partnerships with mobility providers.
- The Village is exploring ways to integrate bike and micromobility facilities including bike lanes/sharrow markings with forthcoming roadway improvements and development projects.
- A broad mix of housing including a range of housing affordability options; this includes single family residential, condominiums, townhomes and apartment complexes as part of the strategic planning effort.

The One Village One Vision Capital Improvement Plan highlights the following information that is pertinent to this study:

- Gateway Industrial Park has very limited sidewalk connectivity.
- The Village's bike facilities do not form a connected network; high priority destinations for bikeways include Governors State University, the Gateway Industrial Park, and the Metra station.
- University Park's water and sewer systems are owned and maintained by Aqua Illinois. Water supply capacity is sufficient, but a lead advisory remains an ongoing problem and is currently being addressed by Aqua Illinois.
- Transportation goals include the following: create a safe and continuous network of sidewalks and shared-use paths; develop a connected network of bike and micromobility facilities; expand access to public transit and shared mobility services; and create a network of safe, and complete streets.



ONE VILLAGE ONE VISION



Images Source: <https://onevillageonevision.com/>

II. STUDY AREA

The Special Financing District Study focuses on the same study area as the Village's TOD Plan and is shown in **Figure 1**. The study area is a half-mile radius around the Metra station. The Metra station is located along Governors Highway just north of University Parkway. The Canadian National Railroad (CNRR) track is adjacent to the west-side of the Metra Electric District track. CNRR does not provide passenger rail service and continues south.

The focus of the study is the 77-acre vacant parcel identified for development. The site, located just east of the Metra station, is used as agricultural land. The study area also includes part of Governors State University southwest of the Metra station and the Gateway Industrial Park to the west.

Figure 1: University Park TOD Study Area



III. EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

The TOD site is currently served by both Metra and Pace Suburban Bus. See **Figure 2** for the location of transit services and an explanation of transit services below.

A. Metra

University Park is currently served by the Metra Electric line. The Metra station is an at-grade station, with a center platform between the train tracks. The rail platform is accessed via pedestrian tunnels on both sides of Governors Highway. There are four parking lots associated with the Metra station. Three of the parking lots provide access to the west entrance of the station along Governors Highway. One lot provides access to the east entrance of the station off of University Parkway. **Table 1** shows the number of spaces for each lot and the utilization rate.¹

Figure 2: University Park Transit Service



¹ Utilization count was taken during the week of April 8-12, 2024.

The Metra station has relatively frequent service (i.e., every 20-30 minutes) during peak times on weekdays. There are 27 inbound weekday trains and 26 outbound weekday trains. See **Table 2** for the Metra schedule. As the terminus of the Metra Electric line, the station is seen as a regionally important station, as it collects riders from throughout Will County and further south.

A mode of access study conducted in Spring 2019 by Metra indicates that 3% of riders walk, 81% drive alone, 8% carpool, 6% are dropped off, and 2% take the Pace bus.

Table 1: Metra Parking Lot Utilization

Parking Lot	Available Parking Spots	Peak Hour Parked Vehicles	% Utilization
1	228	175	76.75%
2	373	2	0.54%
3	64	10	15.6%
4	450	111	24.67%
TOTAL	1115	298	26.73%



Image Source: metra.com/train-lines/stations/university-park

Table 2: Weekday Inbound/Outbound Metra Schedule for University Park Station

Metra Weekday Inbound from University Park	Metra Weekday Outbound Arriving at University Park
4:15a	6:03a
5:15a	6:33a
5:45a	7:42a
6:15a	8:43a
6:35a	9:26a
6:55a	10:22a
7:10a	11:22a
7:27a	12:22p
7:45a	1:22p
8:30a	2:22p
9:00a	3:24p
9:55a	4:23p
10:55a	4:53p
11:55a	5:04p
12:55p	5:28p
1:55p	5:51p
2:55p	6:14p
3:55p	6:51p
4:37p	7:20p
5:52p	7:50p
6:30p	8:30p
6:52p	9:34p
7:52p	10:40p
8:50p	11:40p
9:50p	12:40a
10:50p	2:00a
11:50p	

The University Park Metra station has less frequent service on the weekends, especially on Sundays. On Saturdays, there are 21 trains that serve the University Park Metra station for both inbound and outbound. There are 13 trains that serve University Park on Sundays. The table below shows the University Park Metra station inbound/outbound schedule for weekends.

Table 3: Weekend Inbound/Outbound Metra Schedule for University Park Station

Metra Weekend Inbound from University Park	Metra Weekend Outbound Arriving at University Park
4:40a (Sat. only)	6:03a
5:40a	6:20a (Sat. only)
6:20a	7:20a
6:40a (Sat. only)	8:20a (Sat. only)
7:40a	9:20a
8:40a	10:20a (Sat. only)
9:40a	11:20a
10:40a (Sat. only)	12:24p (Sat. only)
11:40a	1:20p
12:40p (Sat. only)	2:24p (Sat. only)
1:40p	3:20p
2:40p (Sat. only)	4:24p (Sat. only)
3:40p	5:20p
4:40p (Sat. only)	6:24p
5:40p	7:20p
6:40p	8:20p (Sat. only)
7:40p	9:20p
8:40p (Sat. only)	10:20p (Sat. only)
9:40p	11:20p
10:40p (Sat. only)	12:20a (Sat. only)
11:40p	1:45a

a. University Park Metra Station Ridership

The most recent station level ridership survey by Metra was in 2018. At that time, the University Park Metra station had 808 weekday boardings and 777 weekday alightings. The Metra Electric Line suffered an approximately 50% decrease in ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so subsequently it is thought that the boardings and alightings would be approximately half of what they were in 2018.

B. Pace Bus

There is one Pace bus route that serves the University Park Metra station, Route 367. This route provides weekday service between the University Park Metra station and downtown Park Forest. Route 367 also stops at Governors State University, Thornwood House, Burnham/Sandra, Olmstead/Blackhawk, and Western/Exchange. Route 367 also operates on Saturdays, but it does not serve the University Park Metra station.

The weekday northbound service runs approximately hourly. The schedule is synched to the Metra Electric Schedule to ensure that connections are as seamless as possible. **Table 4** shows the schedule.

In 2024, average weekday ridership was 64 riders. In 2019, average weekday ridership was almost double, at 119 riders. There are two Pace bus stops in the study area on Route 367. See **Figure 3**. The University Park Metra bus stop is to the east of the University Park Metra Station and serves as a transfer location between the two modes. An average of 23 weekday riders board at this stop. The Governor State University bus stop is on the campus of the university opposite the main entrance. Eight weekday riders board there. About 10 percent of all weekday southbound ridership on Route 367 and about 50

percent of the northbound ridership are at these stops. A total of 40 rides originated or ended at these stops in 2019; subsequently the 31 riders riding in 2023 represents a 22% reduction in ridership in 4 years.

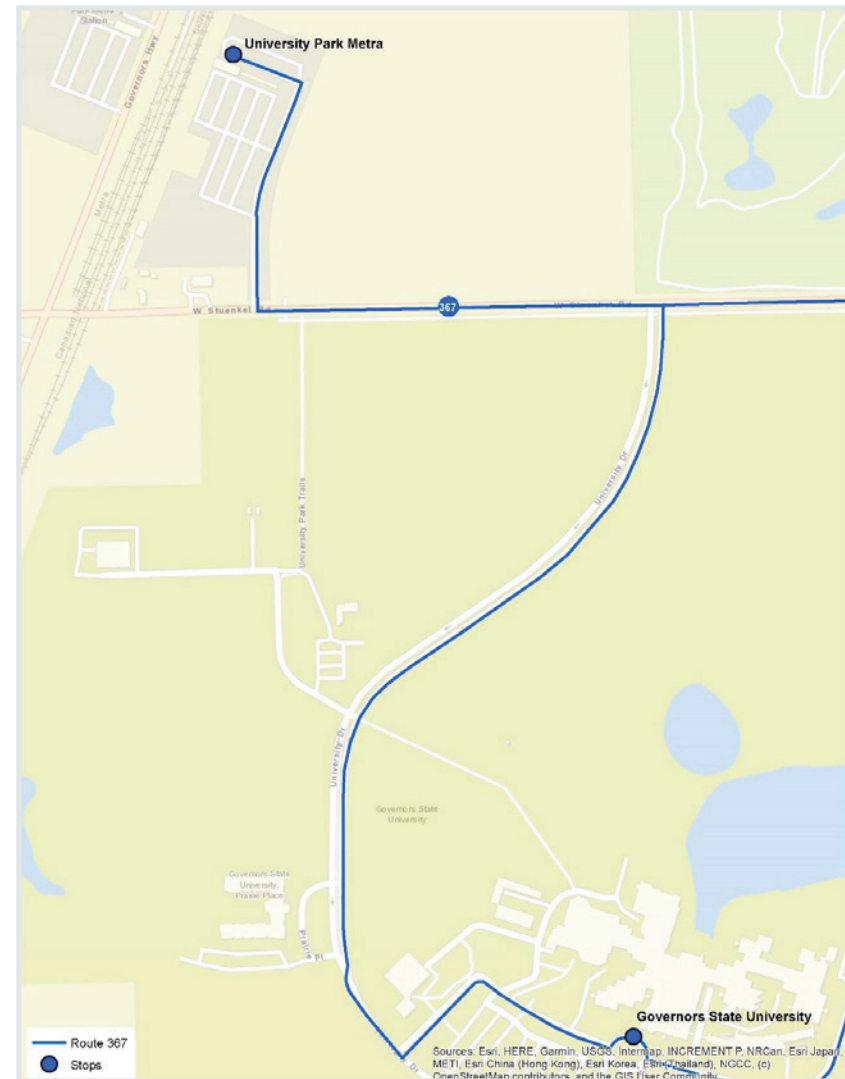
Table 4: Pace Route 367 University Park Weekday Schedule

Pace Route 367 Weekday Northbound	Pace Route 367 Weekday Southbound
5:35a	5:32a
6:32a	6:28a
7:05a	7:02a
7:46a	7:40a
8:20a	8:12a
8:58a	8:47a
9:43a	9:31a
10:39a	10:31a
11:36a	11:31a
12:35p	12:30p
1:35p	1:29p
2:37p	2:31p
3:38p	3:30p
4:31p	4:28p
5:32p	5:29p
6:03p	6:00p
6:37	6:34p
7:25	6:58p

a. Governors State University Shuttle Service

Governors State University runs their own shuttle service for students and faculty. This shuttle runs approximately every ten minutes during the peak times in coordination with the Metra schedule.

Figure 3: University Park Study Area Transit Stops



IV. EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

A. Vehicular

The study area is serviced directly by two roadways, Governors Highway and University Parkway. In 2023, the AADT for Governors Highway was 6,200 and the AADT for University Parkway was 9,800. Governors Highway is a state route, controlled by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

The Metra station is accessed via three driveways off of Governors Highway providing access to the western parking lots and one driveway off of University Parkway to allow for access to the eastern parking lot.

The opening of the I-57/Stuenkel Road Interchange in 2015 created direct access to Chicagoland and the Gateway Industrial Park. The location of the Gateway Industrial Park in University Park/Will County offers lower tax rates compared to neighboring Cook County. As a result, the Gateway Industrial Park has attracted companies like Amazon and Carvana who are building large distribution facilities and transforming the Industrial Park into a regional distribution and transportation hub. A portion of the industrial park is located in the study area.

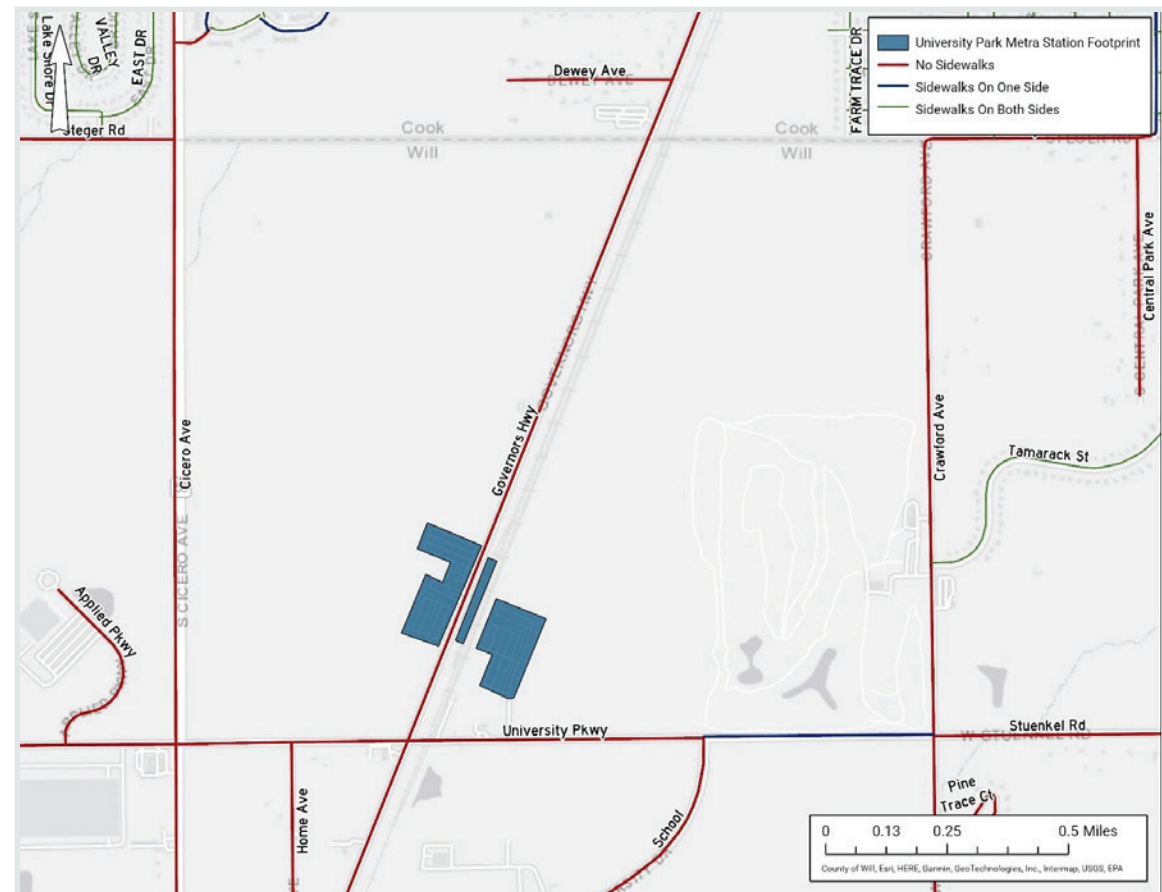
University Park has a *Roadway Improvement Program* that provides for the ongoing assessment, maintenance, and improvement of their primary arterial routes. As part of the Village's roadway improvement program, the University Parkway/Governors Highway Intersection/CN Railroad Crossing Improvement Project crossing has been identified as a safety concern. Proposed improvements by IDOT are described in Chapter VII. The Village had previously secured funding through the Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund to implement interim improvements for this crossing. These interim improvements consisted of resurfacing University Parkway from Governors Highway to just before the Metra station entrance. An escape lane was added to the west side of the tracks for those vehicles who are stopped on the tracks when a train is approaching.

B. Bike and Pedestrian

There is only one side path that is located on the south side of University Parkway, just east of the Metra entrance in the study area. This 10' wide side path extends east to Crawford Avenue. Other than the one side path, the study area is not served by pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure.

See **Figure 4** for the location of the side path.

Figure 4: *University Park Station Sidewalk Locations*



C. Utilities

a. Water and Sewer

University Park's water and sewer systems are owned and maintained by Aqua Illinois, a subsidiary of Aqua America, Inc. This is a private entity, and the Village of University Park does not have complete information from Aqua Illinois to fully understand its future needs. Field observations and customer reports reveal that much of the Village's water and sewer infrastructure systems have fallen into disrepair due to deferred maintenance and lack of sufficient investment by Aqua. The Village has also been under a lead advisory since June 2019. The Village has a goal to bring the water system up to a state of good repair. Moving forward, the Village will continue to work with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), and the Governor's Office, to find a suitable resolution to the ongoing challenges resulting from Aqua Illinois negligence and mismanagement.

Water

There is an existing 20-inch diameter water main running along the south side of University Parkway, across from the development parcels. At about the mid-point of the development area, the water main turns south through agricultural land towards Governors State University. The water main traverses through the south side of the Metra station property before crossing the railroad tracks to the west. The water main serves at least seven fire hydrants in the vicinity of the development site and also provides water service to the Metra station.

Sanitary Sewer

An existing 24-inch diameter sanitary sewer main extends to the development parcels from the east along the south side of University Parkway. The sewer main crosses to the north side of University Parkway and appears to end at the southeast corner of the development site. This collection system flows to the east towards Thorn Creek and appears to drain to the Thorn Creek Basin Sanitary District Wastewater Treatment Plant in Chicago Heights. The provided sanitary sewer mapping from Aqua does not show any evidence that the system extends to the Metra station or the residences on University Parkway south of the Metra station. It is possible that these properties drain to their own septic systems. Aqua sanitary sewer mapping shows that properties on the west side of the railroad tracks drain to a separate system draining to the west.

See **Figure 5** for location of water and sanitary sewer near the development site.

b. Storm Drain

The storm drain systems are owned and maintained by the Village of University Park. There is an existing underground storm drain system for University Parkway running the length of and fronting the development parcels. There are a series of curb inlets along the road and area drains in the grassy areas on both sides of University Parkway. This system flows to the east and likely eventually drains into Thorn Creek about one mile east of the development site. The size of the drainage pipes was not known for this report. There are some storm drain inlets draining the parking lot of the Metra station but without as-built drawings, it is not known whether they drain to the University Parkway street system or into a nearby ditch which may drain elsewhere. The development site appears to drain via overland

flow to a ponding area at about the center of the site, but area topography shows general drainage is from west to east and southwest to northeast. See **Figure 5** for location of storm drain systems near the development site.

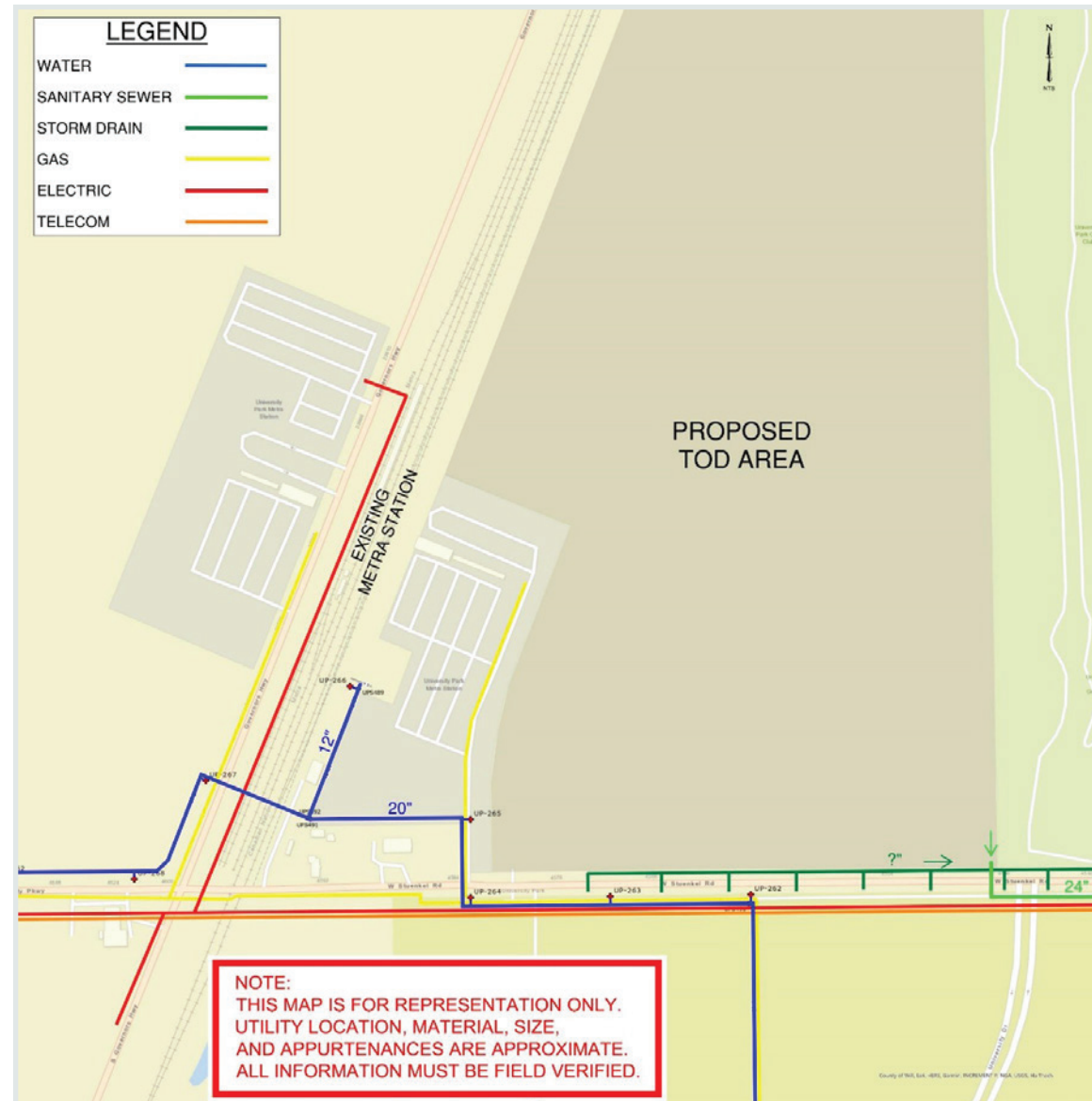
c. Gas

Natural gas for the area is provided by Nicor. The gas main runs along the south side of University Parkway, across from the TOD parcels. At about the mid-point of the development area, the gas main turns south through agricultural land towards Governors State University. The gas main crosses the railroad tracks to the west and provides gas service to the Metra station on both sides of the railroad tracks. See **Figure 5** for location of natural gas facilities near the development site.

d. Electric

Electricity for the area is provided by ComEd. High-voltage overhead electric lines run along the south side of University Parkway for the length of the development site. This system provides power to the Metra station and other local businesses and residences. The voltage of this system is unknown. See **Figure 5** for location of high-voltage electric facilities near the development site.

Figure 5: Existing Utility Map



e. Communications

Telecommunications for the area is provided by Xfinity or Comcast. Telecommunications cables hang from the same pole system that carries the high-voltage electric lines and therefore runs along the south of side of University Parkway for the length of the development site. It is assumed that this system serves the local community. See **Figure 5** for location of telecommunications facilities near the development site

D. Land Use

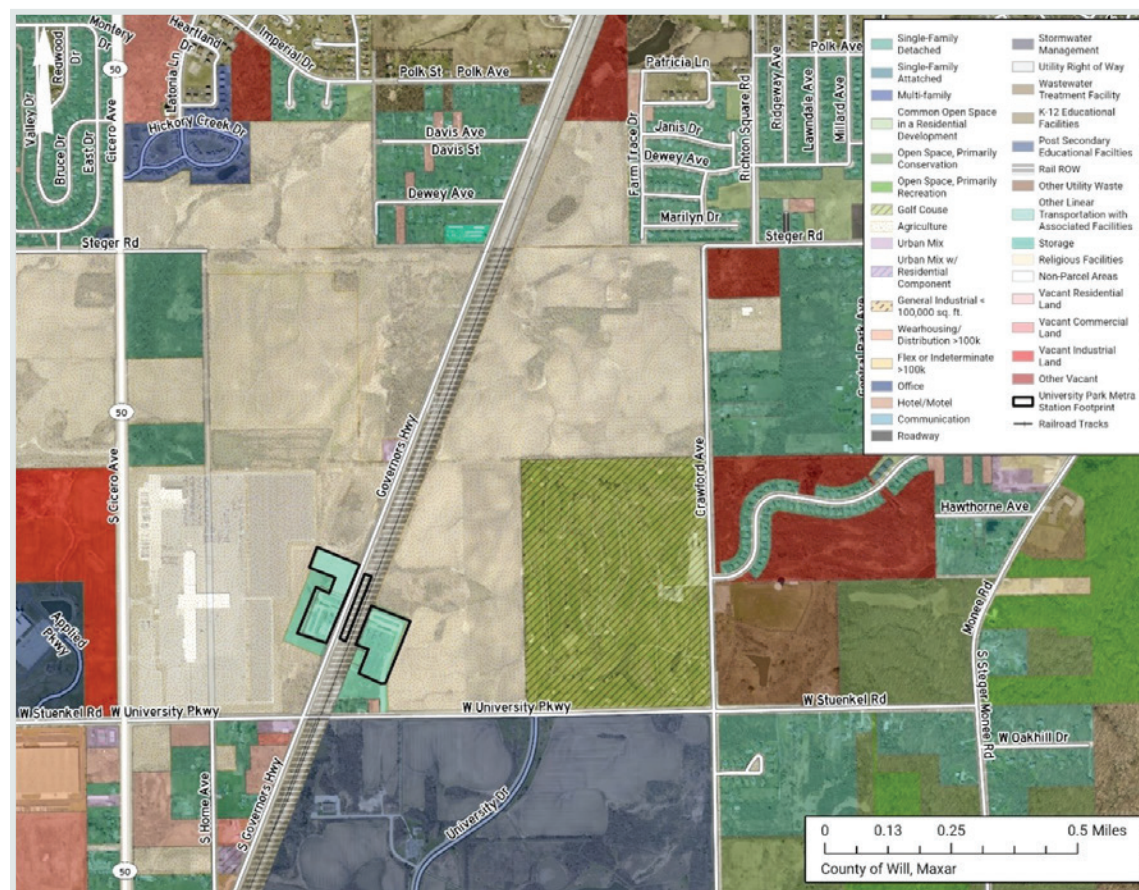
a. Land Use and Zoning

Currently, the land use around the University Park Metra station is predominantly agricultural, see **Figure 6**. Offices and warehousing for Carvana, an online used car retailer is located to the west; Governors State University is located to the southeast.

The 77-acre vacant site within the TOD is currently zoned for B-2 Community Shopping, B-3 Commercial, and R4 Multifamily Residential, see **Figure 7**.

R4 Multifamily Residential zoning consists of single family attached and semidetached dwellings and multiple family dwellings. Base density is 4 units per acre, but this increases to 8-10 units per acre when the site is within one-half miles of a mass transit commuter train station and the development follows three other bonus density standards.

Figure 6: University Park Metra Station Zoning

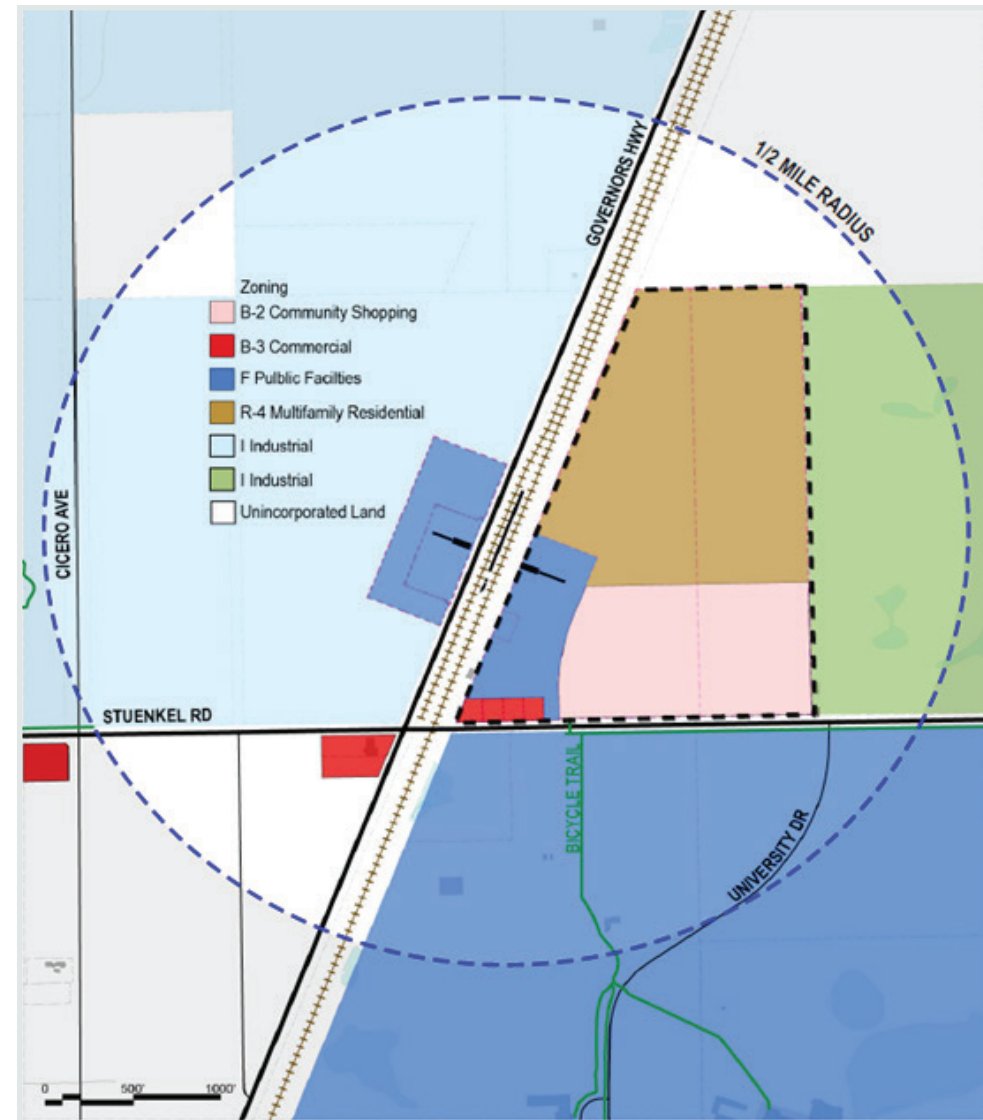


There are no height limitations for multifamily development. Setbacks may be varied for planned unit developments. The minimum spacing between buildings is 24 feet for a building of three stores or less but increases 10 feet per each additional story. R4 zoning can support mixed-use development; special uses consist of business uses provided it is a planned until development.

The B-2 zoning is intended to accommodate larger-scale commercial development, with a wide range of uses for both daily and occasional shopping. It also allows multi-family residential as one of the special uses.

B-3 zoning is intended to accommodate a wide range of specialized commercial and business uses, including highway-oriented service and commercial recreation types of establishments, to serve a trade area embracing the Village and inter-community traffic through the Village.

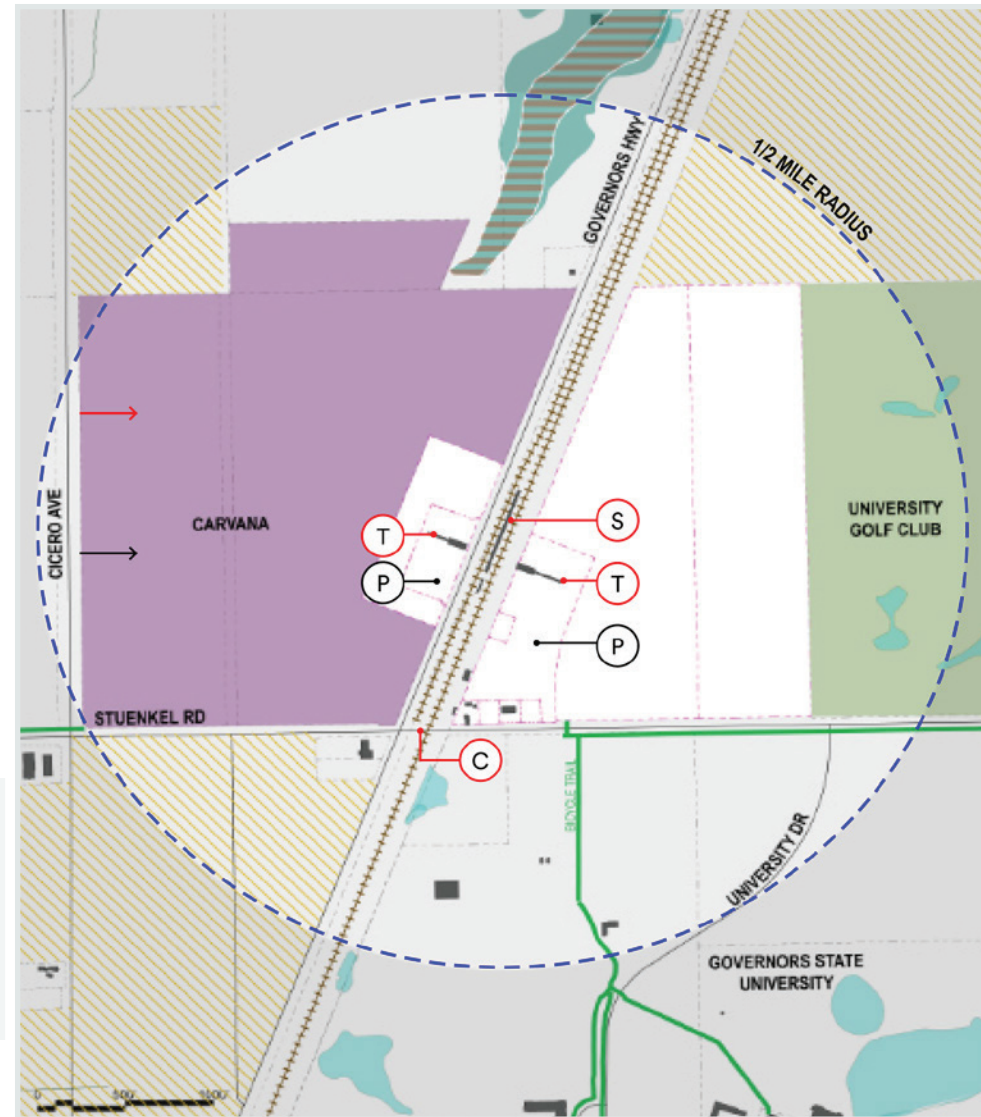
Figure 7: University Park TOD Existing Land Use



b. Natural Resources

In the northwest corner of the TOD study area is a floodplain; it is classified as FEMA Zone A and FEMA Regulatory Flood Zone, see **Figure 8**. The floodplain does not touch the 77-acre proposed development area.

Figure 8: University Park Site Conditions



E. Future Conditions

a. Roadway Infrastructure

The University Parkway/Governors Highway / CN Railroad Crossing Improvement Project includes a full reconstruction of the intersection and at-grade railroad crossing. This crossing has been identified as a safety concern and improvements are required by court order through the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). The ICC has provided funding to IDOT for the improvements.

Proposed improvements include intersection modernization, lane reconfiguration, railroad crossing improvements, lighting improvements, stormwater drainage improvements, and the construction of a shared use path. The geometry was updated at this location based on CMAP's estimated 2050 traffic volumes. Subsequently, any future traffic generated by development within the TOD can be accommodated. The geometry updates include widening the existing four-lane stop controlled intersection to a signalized intersection with five lanes on Governors Highway and three lanes on University Parkway.

Included in the design is a 10-foot shared-use path to be installed along University Parkway to connect Cicero (US-50) to the Metra entrance. The path will be located on the south side of University Parkway, east of Governors Highway, to avoid impacts from the existing buildings and overhead electrical lines.

IDOT is in the process of the Phase I design which is expected to be completed by the end of 2024. Phase II will begin immediately after Phase I completion and is expected to take three years. Construction is expected to begin in 2028.

b. TOD Plan - Vehicular Connectivity

The 2023 TOD Plan provides a thorough analysis of how best to build out the local roadway infrastructure on the TOD site in order to support future development. The TOD Plan provides recommendations for “complete streets” allowing for pedestrian friendly design, reduced speed limits, narrow travel lane widths, and crosswalks. It also recommends the realignment of the existing driveway accessing the Metra station from University Parkway for better connectivity to the TOD area.

c. Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths

The 2023 TOD Plan recommends a network of multiuse paths, protected bikeways, and traffic-calmed streets. In addition, the Plan provides sidewalks on both sides of street. High-visibility crosswalks and raised crosswalks are also recommended.

The Village's Bike and Pedestrian Network Improvement program provides for the ongoing assessment, maintenance, and improvement for University Park's existing and proposed sidewalks, side paths, and trails. Included in the program are two projects related to the TOD site. The first is the University Parkway side path (West). This project would extend the University Parkway side path from where it currently ends just east of the Metra station driveway entrance, west to Cicero Avenue. This side path will create a multimodal connection between the University Park Metra station and the I-57 Industrial Corridor. This side path is being constructed as part of the Phase I improvements for the University Parkway/Governors Highway / CN Railroad Crossing Improvement Project as described above.

The second project is the University Parkway side path (Central). This project would connect the existing side path where it ends near the Metra station driveway described above east to the Town Center. This side path segment is just starting Phase I Engineering. It is anticipated to have the Phase I completed within the next year pending approval from IDOT. After Phase I, the side path will need to go through Phase II design and then out to bid for construction.

d. Metra

The Metra Station Reconstruction Project consists of two phases as described below:

- The initial project phase is overseen by Metra and will consist of the rehabilitation of the canopies that extend on both sides of the tunnel and a new crew facility to be located along the tracks to replace the existing crew facility. The canopy project design plans are in Metra Procurement ready to go to bid; it is expected that a contractor will be selected third quarter 2024. The crew facility is under design and anticipated to be constructed in 2028.
- The second project phase is being overseen by the Village and consists of redoing the station doors, redesign of the pedestrian tunnels, platform work, and design of a water infiltration system. This project is under Phase I design.

Metra has recently completed emergency repairs related to a collapsed staircase in the station.

There are no plans to rehabilitate the Metra parking lots. Metra is willing to discuss the reconfiguration of the lots to best accommodate the TOD plans.

e. Pace

Pace does not have any plans to introduce additional service to University Park. Route 367 is one of Pace's lower performing routes with low weekday ridership. Neither Pace nor Metra were aware of any requests for more frequent weekday or weekend service. Pace also indicated that the proposed TOD area and Gateway Industrial Park is a challenging area to serve due to the lower density land uses, large lot sizes, and lack of roadway infrastructure. Pace has not had a lot of success serving industrial parks due to the impact on the schedule compared to the ridership gain and expects that this would be true for the Gateway Industrial Park. The CN tracks also have safety concerns given their proximity to Governors Highway, a lack of a signalized intersection at University Parkway and Governors Highway, and the difficulty with the bus safely crossing the track and not getting stuck on the tracks. If the bus route was revised to serve these areas, it would need to travel several miles to turnaround, and/or layover, given the lack of roadway infrastructure in the area.

f. Utilities

Water

Given the size of the existing 20-inch diameter water main running along the south side of University Parkway, across from the development parcels, there is a chance that it has sufficient capacity to provide future water service to at least early phases or potentially full buildout of the TOD site.

An engineering study is required to determine whether the appropriate water capacity exists. This typically begins with a flow and pressure test conducted from a fire hydrant nearest to the development. A civil engineer would need to perform calculations to determine peak hourly demands from users that will include housing units and commercial space. These calculations should be performed for full site buildout and at least the first phase of the development. Calculations must include the worst-case fire demand which depends on the building construction, use and size. To determine water capacity, typically a hydraulic model is created to determine if peak flow and fire demand can be provided at a point in the new water system farthest from the water source at a minimum pressure. At some point, usually after a developer has been selected, discussions must be initiated with an Aqua new service representative to discuss the project and water demand requirements.

The water system for the community will consist of a new looped network of underground piping. This network will likely connect to the existing 20-inch water main at two locations, one possibly at the end of the Metra station 12-inch diameter lateral, to create a loop which provides redundancy. The size of the pipe network will likely consist of a 12-inch diameter main loop with 8-inch diameter network piping beneath or adjacent to site

roadways and fire hydrants strategically placed at maximum intervals as required by the local fire district/department. Piping material will likely be ductile iron pipe to meet local requirements. Each distinct address will require a separate meter for water usage billing purposes.

Sanitary Sewer

Existing conditions shows that an existing 24-inch diameter sanitary sewer main extends to the development parcels from the east along the south side of University Parkway. A 24-inch sewer pipe is a significantly sized pipe and almost certainly would have capacity to drain the full buildout of the development, at least in the upstream portion of the collection system. However, the Village and other communities flow into this system downstream and a civil engineer will need to perform hydraulic calculations to verify the capacity of the collection system, possibly as far as the wastewater treatment plant. In addition, the capacity of the Monee Road lift station and plant itself would need to be verified on whether they have capacity to accept additional sewer loading from the new development. Sanitary sewer loading demand is calculated in a similar manner to water loading (see above). The capacity study would need to be done in coordination with Aqua, the owner of the collection system, and Thorn Creek Sanitary District, the owner of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Monee Road Lift Station.

The sanitary sewer collection system for the community will consist of a new branched network of underground piping connecting to the existing 24-inch sewer main at the southeast corner of the development site. The sizes of the pipe network will likely consist of a 12-inch diameter main with 8-inch diameter branch piping beneath or adjacent to site roadways. Sanitary sewer manholes are typically placed at maximum intervals of 300 feet, as required by Aqua, and at all main pipe junctions, and at changes in pipe slope and size. Piping material will likely be either vitrified clay pipe or PVC to meet local requirements. The size of the connecting main suggests that it is deep and the collection system can likely drain to it via gravity.

Storm Drain

There is an existing underground storm drain system for University Parkway, owned and maintained by the Village, running the length of, and fronting the development parcels. Main storm drainpipes are typically sized for future drainage area build out, so the development site will likely be allowed to connect and drain into this system at one or more locations but may be required to detain stormwater onsite within a basin and release a limited peak flow to the system. In addition, the development will be required to comply with Will County's stormwater management ordinance which is often accomplished by treating stormwater onsite via bioswales or other biofiltration facilities.

Based on historical rainfall data and site development plans, a civil engineer will perform hydrology and hydraulic calculations to determine peak stormwater flows from the site to select appropriately sized underground drainage pipes. In addition,

separate calculations are made to determine appropriately sized biofiltration facilities. It typically makes better sense to provide biofiltration facilities at multiple upstream locations around a new development site rather than one larger facility near the downstream end, so space for biofiltration facilities will need to be provided into the site concept. Once a developer has been selected and site design has begun, a civil engineer will contact the Village Engineer and a Will County stormwater representative to determine exact site and storm drain system connection requirements.

An underground storm drain collection system will typically consist of a series of curb inlets and area drains, junction manholes and reinforced concrete and/or high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe, per Village requirements. The underground pipe sizes for this site would range from 12-inch diameter draining small upstream drainage areas to as much as 60-inch diameter for downstream main pipes draining to a detention basin.

Gas

A Nicor gas main runs along the south side of University Parkway, across from the development parcels. Assuming the gas main is a high-pressure pipe and sized for future development, it should have capacity to provide service to the development site. Once a developer has been selected and site design has begun, a mechanical engineer will determine the natural gas needs for the new community. The developer or designer will contact a Nicor new service representative to discuss the project and natural gas demand requirements. Nicor will typically design their own natural gas distribution facilities to service a new customer or community and require a fee to do so. Each distinct address will require a separate gas meter for gas usage billing purposes. New communities will typically have gas, electric and telecommunications installed within single 'joint' trenches.

Electric

High-voltage overhead electric lines owned by ComEd run along the south of side of University Parkway for the length of the development site. Once a developer has been selected and site design has begun, the developer or designer will contact a ComEd new service representative to discuss the project and electrical demand requirements. ComEd will typically design their own electrical distribution facilities to service a new customer or community and require a fee to do so. New communities will typically design and construct an underground distribution system, as opposed to a pole mounted system, which consists of a duct bank network interconnected by a series of subterranean vaults. Each distinct address will require a separate electric meter for electric usage billing purposes. New communities will typically have gas, electric and telecommunications installed within single 'joint' trenches.

Communications

Telecommunications cables owned by Xfinity/Comcast hang from the same pole system that carries the high-voltage electric lines and therefore runs along the south of side of University Parkway for the length of the development site. Once a developer has been selected and site design has begun, the developer or designer will contact a Comcast new service representative to discuss the project and communications demand requirements. Comcast will typically design their own communications distribution facilities to service a new customer or community and require a fee to do so. New communities will typically design and construct an underground distribution system, as opposed to a pole mounted system, which consists of a duct bank network interconnected by a series of subterranean vaults. New communities will typically have gas, electric and telecommunications installed within single 'joint' trenches.



UNIVERSITY PARK SPECIAL FINANCING DISTRICT STUDY

Summary Report

MARCH 2025

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B: STEERING COMMITTEE, STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The University Park Special Financing District Study was overseen by a Steering Committee and received input from various stakeholders as well as a Focus Group.

I. STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee with representatives from the Village was formed to oversee the study. Representatives included the Village manager, Village trustees, and the Village engineer.

The first Steering Committee was held on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at the Village Hall. The purpose of the discussion was to review the purpose and scope of the Special Financing District Study. In the presentation, the 2023 Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan, study area, and existing conditions were defined. A review of the existing and past tax increment financing (TIF) districts was discussed. Assets and constraints for future development were also presented. An economic development toolbox provided information on the various forms of economic development incentives that the Village could select to encourage development on the TOD site. The meeting was concluded with the project schedule and the next steps to the study. See Appendix A for the attendees and the presentation power point.

The following input was received:

- RTA stated that the economic development toolbox provides ways that the Village can finance necessary infrastructure to support development in the TOD area.
- A suggested list of stakeholders was discussed.
- TIF No. 5 is closing.
- There is not enough of Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds to improve roads in the Village.
- The Village is looking to upgrade the lighting to current LED levels; some roads do not have any lighting.
- The Metra station needs rehabilitation and is undergoing a Phase I study. The station recently experienced flooding causing a lot of issues, including the stairs to it collapsed. The station has been neglected. The Village wants more heaters on the platform and security cameras. There also has been discussion about extending the platforms to allow for two more rail cars on the Metra Electric trains to accommodate increased ridership.
- IDOT is working on a plan to improve the Governors Highway/University Parkway/CN intersection and will accommodate a side path with these improvements.

- The private landowner of the property adjacent to the Metra station to the east is interested in selling their land; it is currently agricultural use. Pepsi Co. also owns part of the vacant parcel.
- A shared use path is planned from Cicero to Governors Highway along University Parkway to connect to the Metra station.
- A shared use path is planned along University Parkway from Crawford to the Town Center to connect the Town Center to Governors State University.
- Pace Route 367 does not stop at Amazon. There are no shuttle services between Metra train station and the Governors Gateway Industrial Park for the “last mile” connection. The Steering Committee feels that the Pace route should serve the industrial park.

A second Steering Committee meeting was held virtually on February 27, 2025. The purpose of the meeting was to review the acquisition and infrastructure costs to implement the 2023 Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan and the special financing tools that the Village could potentially utilize to implement the Plan.

The following input was received:

- There is a concern about future parking for Metra commuters; ridership forecasts indicate that the current parking will not be sufficient, particularly with surrounding proposed development. The amount of parking on the west Metra lot may be reduced for a potential commercial development. Trustees would like to see 800-900 parking spaces for the Metra station.
- The consultant team responded that the TOD Plan would not impact the Metra parking lots. Ideally nearby residents in the new developments would walk to the Metra station.
- The roads surrounding the Metra station have become increasingly congested. There is a concern about additional congestion caused by new development.
- The Village engineer reviewed the plans for the University Park/Governors Highway/CN Railroad intersection which will alleviate a lot of the congestion issue near the Metra station. The intersection will be signalized and there is a planned side use paths that will be extended to the Metra station entrance.
- One trustee stated that there is a need for a right turn lane into the Metra east parking lot. Traffic backs up on University Parkway for cars entering the lot.
- There are now food trucks stationed during warmer weather on a lot just west of the Metra entrance on University Parkway. Cars park on the University Parkway shoulder to visit the food trucks causing congestion issues.
- The Steering Committee is concerned with safety issues to what should be walkable destinations due to lack of pedestrian infrastructure, traffic congestion, and dangerous roadway crossings.

See **Appendix B** for the attendees and the presentation power point.

II. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

One on one interviews were held with various stakeholders. The purpose was to receive input and support on the various types of financing tools that are available to the Village for development within the TOD study area.

Similar questions were asked to each stakeholder and are available in Appendix B.

A. Crete-Monee School District 201U (June 13, 2024)

An interview was held with the Jason Okrasinski, Interim Director of Operations/CSBO, Crete-Monee School District 201U. The following input was received:

- The school district includes elementary, middle, and high school. The district boundaries serve University Park, Monee, Crete, and Park Forest.
- Their facilities consist of 5 traditional grammar schools (K-5th grade): 1 in Monee, 1 in University Park, 1 in Park Forest and 2 in Crete; one middle school and one high school in Park Forest.
- They have a preschool in the administration offices in Crete.
- The elementary schools are at capacity due to a recent influx of migrant students.
- The district had wanted to expand by building two new grade centers (Pre-K to 2nd, and 3-5th grade), but the funding referendum was voted down by the public in 2019.
- The district had to borrow money to correct life safety issues in their buildings in 2013; they maxed out their debt with this loan.
- They are looking to bond against the recovered equalized assessed value of TIF No. 5 when it closes; they expect to receive \$5 million for improvements to their University Park school.
- The district receives “evident based funding” from the Illinois Now program for their K-5th grade schools.
- With regard to the TOD Plan, an influx of new families would cause the district to look at capacity at their schools and identify which schools the students would need to attend.
- In terms of the economic development tools, the stakeholder would support the following tools in this order. Note that he commented that this represented his opinion and not that of the school district:
 1. *Enterprise Zone*
 2. *Opportunity Zone*
 3. *TIF*
 4. *Business District*
 5. *Special Services Area*

- Initially hesitant to support TIF, the stakeholder expressed support for TIF after learning that District 201 would be entitled to reimbursement for costs due to additional enrollment from the residential part of the TOD project.
- The stakeholder did not support the Economic Incentive Agreement. He felt that there is no benefit to the taxpayers.
- The stakeholder supports home ownership rather than rental apartments in the proposed TOD development.

B. Governors State University (June 25, 2024)

An interview was held with Maureen Kelly, Executive Director of Government and Community Relations, and Corey Bradford, Vice President for Administration at Governors State University. The following input was received:

- The University is a valuable economic engine for the Village of University Park.
- Governors State University participated in the TOD Plan.
- The University is very supportive of development, especially for university students and employees.
- The University has 1,200 employees and 5,000 students: very few live in University Park. They have 4,000 to 5,000 vehicles/day visiting their campus. Salaries range from \$50,000/annual for staff to \$100,000/annual for professors.
- The University has a Center for Performing Arts which brings in visitors.
- University Park has had little growth in housing stock over the last 20-30 years; there is a need for higher quality housing stock. There also needs to be a broader range of housing type from starter homes to higher end homes.
- Important that the Village develops more housing; they need to strategize on how best to get new development, even offering incentives for developers. The University supports any type of housing in the TOD study area.
- The University has started a housing assistance program for their employees; the home has to be within a 5-mile radius of the campus. Besides a housing bonus, the employee also receives \$1,000 to \$2,000 in moving expenses.
- The University has a high demand for student housing. Students have a hard time renting apartments near the University because they have no proof of income. The University has developed some housing on campus, i.e., Prairie Place Residence Hall that was built in 2014 and accommodates 300 students. They have no married couples housing. They are creating more housing with a 200-bed dorm opening by Fall 2027; it is a joint venture with a developer.
- There are few retail options near the campus. They feel commercial uses would follow new housing developments.
- A lot of their students take Metra to the campus and a lot of students drive; they do not have data on travel mode choices. The University has a shuttle that meets the train; typically, there are 12-15 students/employees on each shuttle.
- With regard to the economic development tools, they support property tax rebates at the high end and sales tax rebates at the low end.

C. Cushman & Wakefield Real Estate Brokers (June 28, 2024)

An interview was held with David Stefanic of Cushman Wakefield Real Estate Brokers, and Stephen Miller, the attorney representing the property owner. The following input was received:

- Cushman Wakefield is the real estate broker representing the property owner of the vacant parcel east of the Metra Station. The 41.4-acre property (the western half of the 77-acre parcel) is owned by the Manilow family. It is thought that the remaining part of the 77-acre parcel to the east was recently sold.
- The Manilow family is a big supporter of University Park and bought land in the area in the 1960's. They developed a sculpture garden that is part of Governors State University campus. They sold 130 acres to Carvana which was recently developed. They are now interested in selling this property as soon as possible.
- Cushman & Wakefield are under the direction to dispose of this property via "buy rights" .
- Cushman & Wakefield recently received an offer for industrial use for the property. The property is zoned R4 (multifamily residential) and B2 (commercial) along the tracks. University Park did not agree to the zoning change to industrial use.
- It is not thought that the owner would be opposed to the proposed TOD development. Cushman & Wakefield feels that a developer would be more appropriate than themselves to follow the TOD proposal. They are just interested in selling the land.
- In terms of the economic development tools, the stakeholders would support the following tools in this order:
 - *TIF*
 - *Business District*
 - *Economic Incentive Agreements*
 - *Special Service Areas*

D. Pace and Metra (July 11, 2024)

An interview was held with Lucas Reigstad, Pace, and Metra representatives David Kralik and Daniel Thomas. The following input was received:

a. Pace

- Pace Route 367 services the Metra Station. The route has remained relatively the same since its inception. It is one of Pace's lower performing routes; average weekday is 73boardings which is lower than pre-Covid of 104.
- It serves the station every 45 to 60 minutes approximately.
- It is a complicated route operationally; it provides a connection to Route 366 in Park Forest and then a transfer connection to Route 352 in Chicago Heights.
- Its major generators in University Park are the Metra Station and Governors State University. The University operates a shuttle for their employees/students between the station and the university also.
- It does not serve the station on Saturday's; the route only operates to Thornwood House senior apartments. If the route was extended it would provide a complication to Pace's operations as they would need to add additional buses and drivers and based on Saturday ridership potential it most likely isn't warranted.
- The last transfer data available (2019) showed 20 people getting off the train to transfer to the bus and 30 people getting off the bus to transfer to Metra.
- Neither Pace nor Metra were not aware of requests for additional service.
- The proposed TOD area and Gateway Industrial Park is a challenging area to serve. Pace has not had a lot of success in pulling thru industrial parks. In addition, the disparate land uses in the area are difficult to serve. The CN tracks also have safety concerns given their proximity to Governors Highway, a lack of a signalized interchange at University Parkway and Governors Highway, and the difficulty with the bus safely crossing the track and not getting stopped on the tracks. If the bus route was revised to serve these areas, it would need to travel several miles to turnaround, and/or layover, given the lack of roadway infrastructure in the area.

b. Metra

- Metra has recently completed emergency repairs related to a collapsed staircase in the station.
- The Metra Station Reconstruction Project consists of two parts as described below:
 - *Part I is overseen by Metra and will consist of the rehabilitation of the canopies that extend on both sides of the tunnel and a new crew facility to be located along the tracks to replace the existing crew facility. The canopy project design plans are in Metra Procurement ready to go to bid; it is expected that a contractor will be selected third quarter 2024. The crew facility is under design and anticipated to be constructed in 2028.*
 - *Part II is overseen by the Village and consists of redoing the station doors and design a water infiltration system. This project is expected to be under Phase I design in 2025.*
- Pace asked if the crew facility could accommodate bathrooms for the Pace drivers. This will be discussed between Pace and Metra.
- There are no plans to rehabilitate the Metra parking lots; the amount of parking is required due to ridership levels and given that the University Park Station is at the end of the line and is a regional station. However, Metra is willing to discuss the reconfiguration of the lots to best accommodate the TOD plans.
- Metra is interested in quality access to their stations but typically rely on the local municipality to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections. Their plans do not include extending the side path along University Parkway to the station entrance.

E. IL Department of Transportation (IDOT) (July 12, 2024)

An interview was held with Steve Schilke, Brenda Alicea and Anna Katryn from IDOT District One. The following input was received:

- IDOT is in the middle of Phase I design of the University Parkway/Governors Highway Intersection/CN Railroad Crossing Improvement Project. This project is under ICC court order due to safety concerns at the at-grade crossing. The ICC provided IDOT funding to improve the crossing.
- IDOT is updating preliminary plans from a Phase I design in 2011.
- IDOT reviewed the scope of services and provided the Phase I plans.
- The scope includes widening out the intersection to provide turning lanes and channelization. A side path that currently terminates east of the Metra station along University Park will be extended to the Metra Station as part of the design.
- The plans include a traffic signal at University Parkway and Governors Highway.
- Phase I will conclude this year; Phase II will begin immediately after and take approximately three years. Construction is expected in 2028.

- Land acquisition for the improvements, including the side path, is required.
- Current traffic volumes on Governors Highway are low. The intersection is being designed for 2050 so the proposed TOD plan build out will be accommodated in terms of anticipated traffic levels.

F. Sweet Life (July 12, 2024)

An interview was held with Matty Dyer, Sweet Life who was joined by Meghan Terpstra Sweet Life Controller and Justine Kroner, terminal manager. The following input was received:

- Sweet Life representatives were not familiar with the TOD study or plan.
- The facility is a five-minute drive from the Metra station.
- Sweet Life employees commute from Indiana and south side of Chicago; most employees commute on their own, some might take Metra, but the company does not know how many currently take Metra; the challenge/issue is getting from station to the facility which would require walking.
- Sweet Life is expanding with a new refinery project.
- Having more residential option and retail options could potentially help them with recruiting new employees.
- Currently four fast food restaurants nearby, only meal options.
- Currently run two shifts: depending on job first shift is 7AM to 3:30 PM or 8AM to 4:30 PM, second shift is 4:30 PM to 12:30 AM.
- Not currently in or benefiting from TIF.
- Would likely not be opposed to being pulled into a TIF or Enterprise Zone if they would benefit from tax breaks.

III. FOCUS GROUP

A focus group was formed to provide additional input to the study. The first meeting of the Focus Group was held on Tuesday, August 6, 2024. See Appendix C for a list of the focus group attendees and the presentation power point.

A discussion about the various economic development tools was held. The following input was received:

- An Enterprise Zone has been used before in Will County and may provide a good incentive for development. This financing tool provides a 5-10% sales tax rebate to the builder on building materials and typically promotes both commercial and industrial development.

- There is a definite need for more businesses and growth in the TOD area.
- There is some support from the Focus Group for the Economic Incentive Agreements.
- One of the most powerful is Tax Increment Financing (TIF); University Park was the first community in Illinois to use TIF. The community however does not appear to support additional TIF districts.
- We need to educate the Village Board about the benefits of TIF. They will see the benefits of
- TiF#5 once it is retired. There is a need for the Village Board to understand the need to raise the tax levy so they can achieve the tax benefits from the TIF. This does not mean taxes will increase; there is a misunderstanding with this by many of the Board and community members.
- There was a proposal to extend TIF #7 but the Board did not concur.
- It would be very beneficial if a Board workshop was conducted by the RTA consultant team in order to educate the Board about the different economic development tools.

After this discussion, a review of the results of the stakeholder interviews was provided. The following input was received:

- It's a disappointment to hear that Pace is not willing to serve the Gateway Industrial Park; there is a need to provide a transit connection to the area, including for Governors State University students who may get a job at one of the companies or need a connection to the fast-food restaurants in the area.
- The RTA can be the Village's advocate with Pace to see if something can be done to improve service in the future.
- The Metra Station is in deplorable condition and has been that way for a long time. This really needs to be addressed. In response to this comment, the Village Manager noted that she is in frequent communication with Metra, has a plan in place for the improvements and is on track. The Village is currently in Phase 2 design for major improvements to the station, including redesign the pedestrian tunnel, improving the drainage system, making platform improvements, adjustments related to warming shelters, and the potential for commercial opportunities in the parking lots.

In terms of engaging the public in this study, the Village stated that there is not a lot of public involvement at Board meetings. It may be more appropriate to develop a fact sheet with a survey available via a QR code or a tear off sheet that can be put in the community newsletter related to the study.

**RTA TOD Special Financing Study – Steering Committee
April 11, 2024**

Elizabeth Scott, Village Manager

Gina Williams, Village Trustee

Janelle McFadden, Village Trustee

Randal Stephens, Antero, Village Engineer Consultant

Robert Morris, RTA

Gina Trimarco, TranSystems

Ann Moroney, Johnson Research Group

David Miller, Johnson Research Group

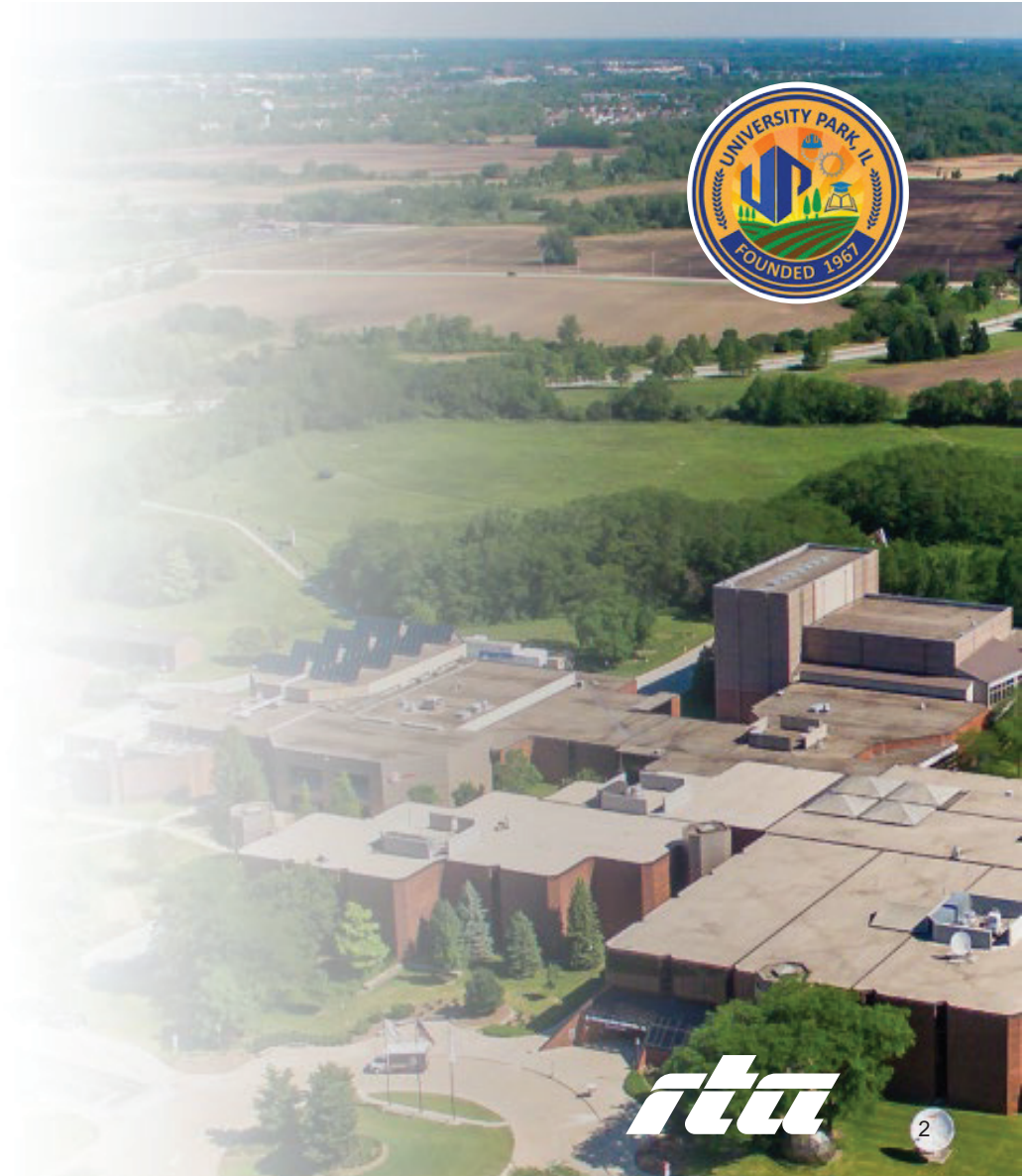
University Park Special Financing District Study

Steering Committee Meeting No. 1
Thursday, April 11, 2024



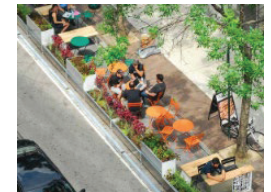
Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Review of Transit Oriented Development Plan
- TOD Vision
- Scope of Work
- Assessment of Existing and Past Tax Increment Financing Districts
- The Economic Development Tool Box
- Assets and Constraints
- Project Schedule
- Next Steps/Questions/Discussion

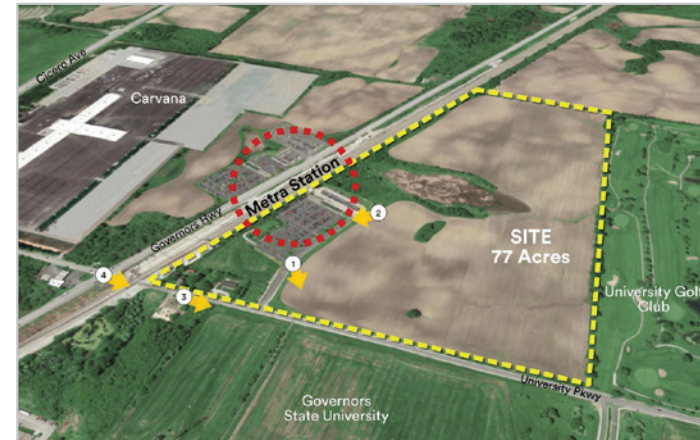


Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan (February 2023)

- **Transit Oriented Development is the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around high-quality transit systems.**
- February 2023 TOD Plan builds off the 2002 TOD Plan and the 2024 Comprehensive Plan
- TOD study area is half mile around the Metra Station, i.e., a 10-minute walk.
- TOD area encompasses part of Governors State University and the Gateway Industrial Park
- TOD Plan proposes development on the 77-acre vacant parcels east of the Metra Station
- Southern edge of land along Stuenkel Road provides an opportunity for commercial development



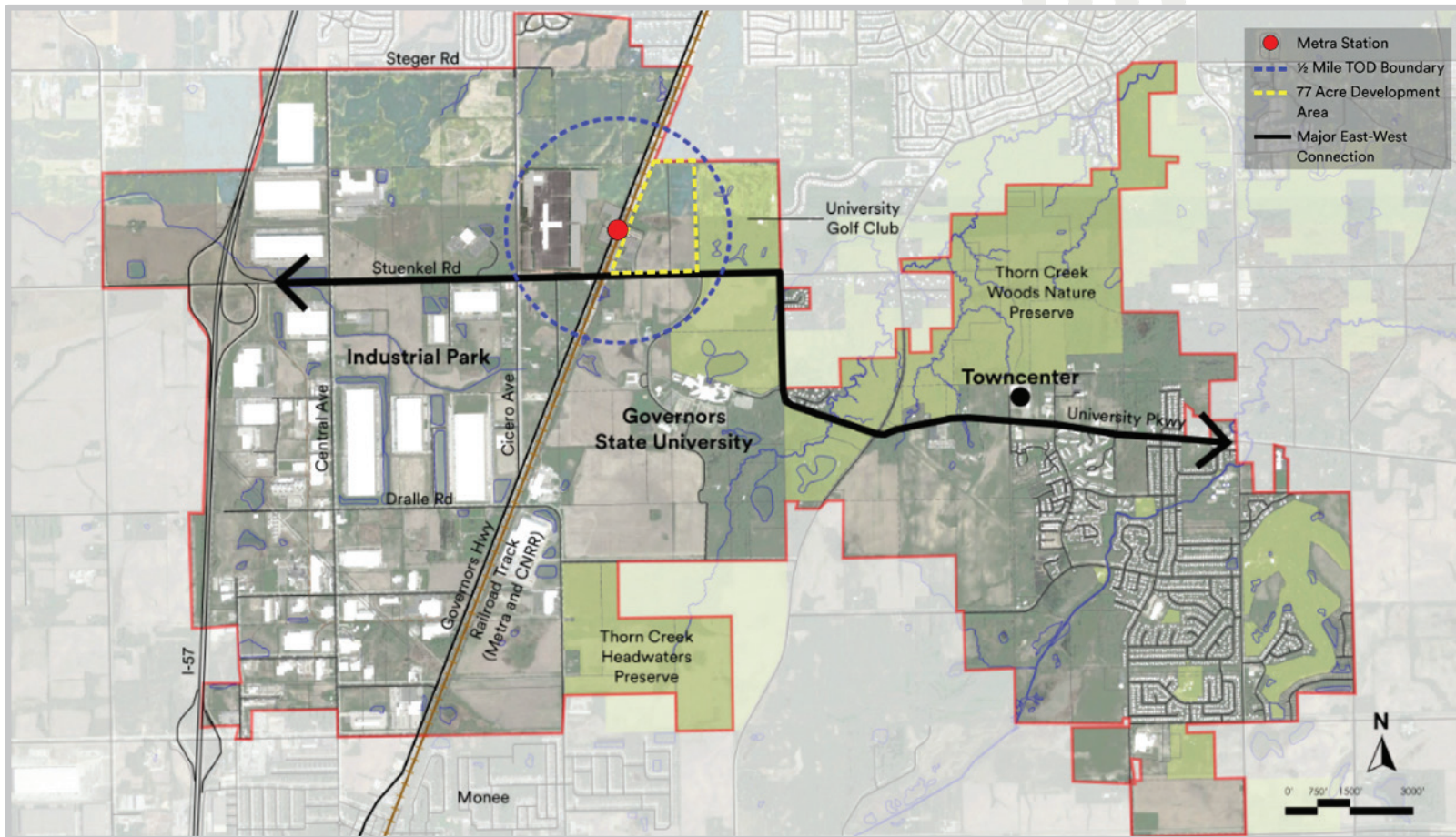
Study Area



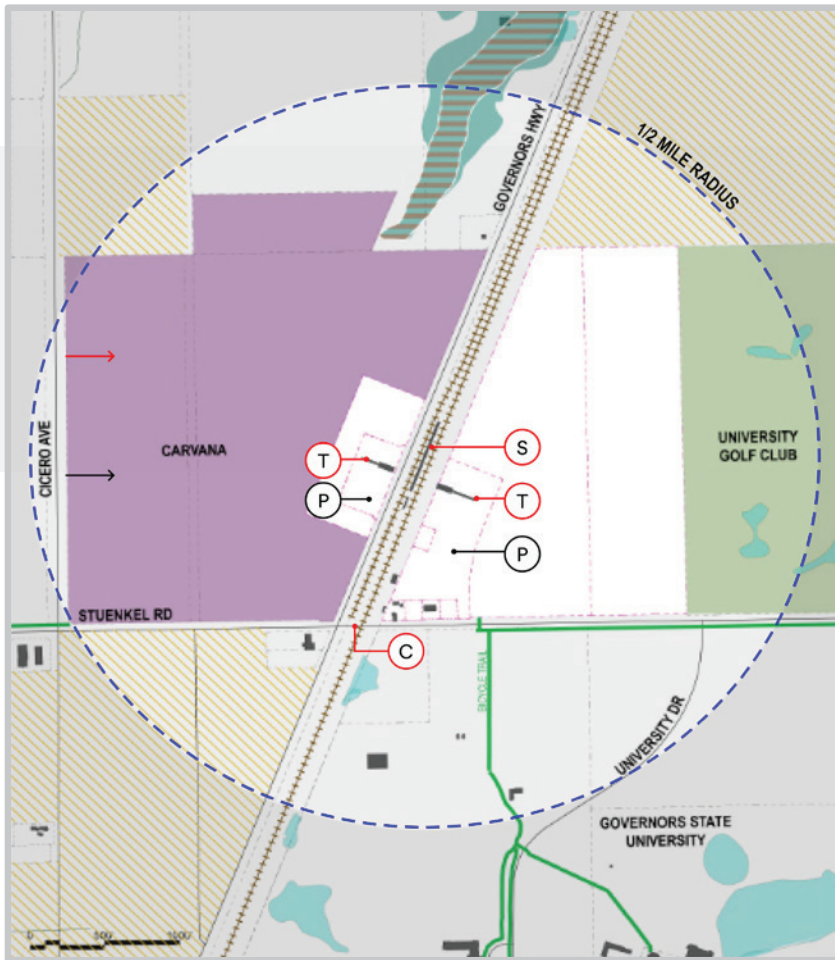
The station is located on the east side of Governors Highway, near Stuenkel Road. It is an at-grade station, with a center platform between the train tracks. The rail platform is accessed via pedestrian tunnels from parking lots on both sides of Governors Highway. In addition, Canadian National Rail Road (CNRR) track is adjacent to the west-side of the Metra track. CNRR does not provide passenger rail service and continues south.



TOD Plan – Surrounding Area Map



TOD Plan- Site Conditions



- (C) At grade railroad crossing
- Trails and Bikeways
- (P) Parking
- (T) Tunnel
- Unincorporated parcels
- Station 1/2 mile radius
- FEMA Zone A
- FEMA Regulatory Flood Zone
- Carvana
- Truck Access
- Car Access
- (S) Station



rta

Scope of Work for Special Financing District Study

- Steering Committee Engagement
- Existing Conditions and Future Needs
 - *Utilities, Infrastructure*
- Assessment of Existing and Past Financial Districts
- Stakeholder Interviews/Focus Groups
 - *Interviews, Public Survey on Village Website*
- Fiscal Impact Analysis
- Draft Recommendations and Implementation Guide for Financing Strategy
- Final Report and Implementation Guide



Assessment of Existing and Past Tax Increment Financing Districts

- Define Goals and Objectives
- Solicit Input and Guidance On:
 - *Downtown financing needs*
 - *District types*
 - *District boundaries*
 - *Preferred redevelopment projects*
 - *Other related...*
- Review University Park's Previous and Current TIF Ordinances, Annual Reports.
- Coordinate with Village and RTA Staff to Obtain Additional Information on Existing TIF Districts.
- Review Historical EAV Data from the County Clerk to assess the performance of the Village's TIF Districts.
- Identify accomplishments achieved through the use of TIF, such as
 - *New or rehabilitated private buildings*
 - *Public Infrastructure*
 - *Capital Improvements*

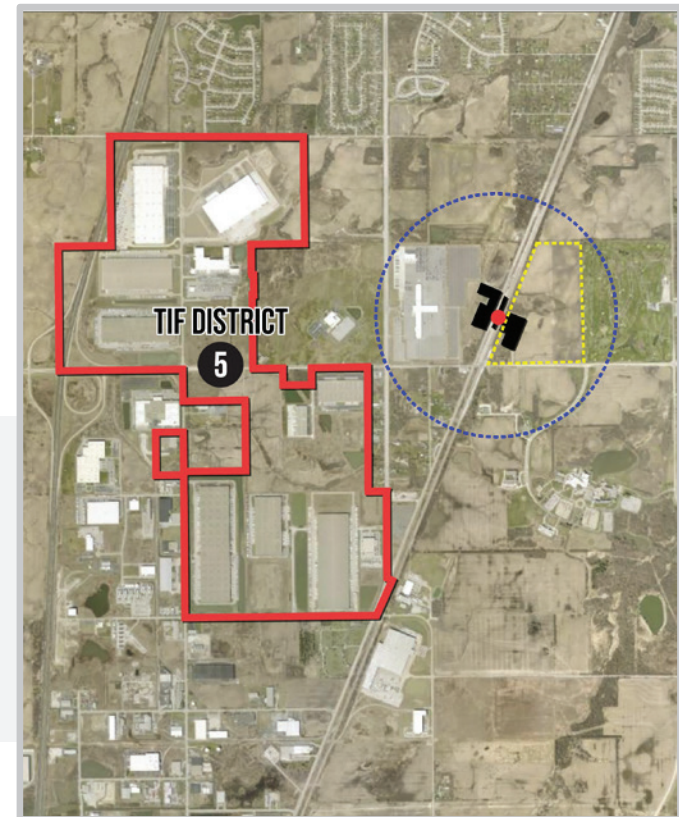
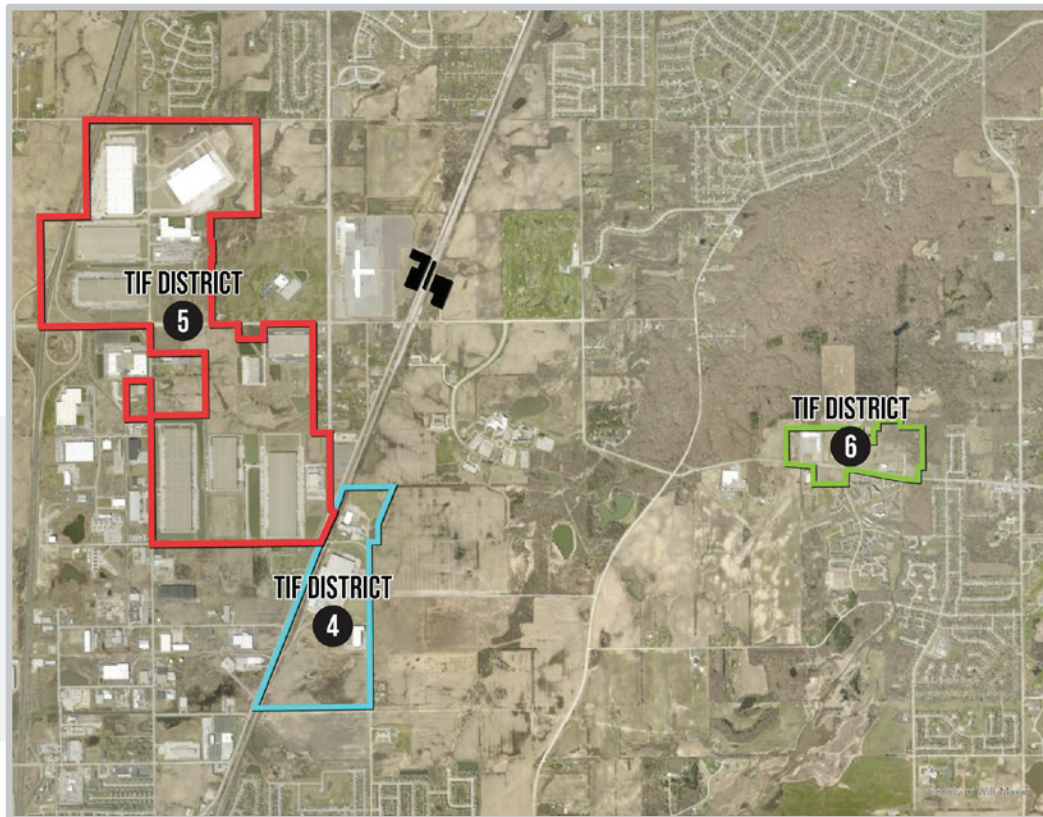


Assessment of Existing and Past Tax Increment Financing Districts

TIF Name	Status	Designation Year	Final Year
1. Town Center	Expired	1986	2009
2. Industrial Park	Expired	1987	2010
3. Cicero Industrial	Terminated	1994	2018
4. Governors East	Terminated	1996	2020
5. Dralle Industrial	Active	2001	2025
6. Town Center	Active	2013	2037
7. Steger Central	Active	2019	2043



The Site Is Near the Village's #5 Dralle Industrial TIF



The Economic Development “Tool Box”

Tool	Mechanism	Designation Authority
Tax Increment Financing	Value Capture of Property Tax Growth	Municipal
Business District	Add'l Sales/Hotel Tax	Municipal
Economic Incentive Agreement	Sales Tax Rebate	Municipal
Special Service Area	Add'l Property Tax Levy	Municipal
Enterprise Zone	Tax Exemptions (Sales, Real Estate Transfer, Utilities)	State
Opportunity Zone	Federal Capital Gains Tax Credit for Qualifying Investments	US Treasury



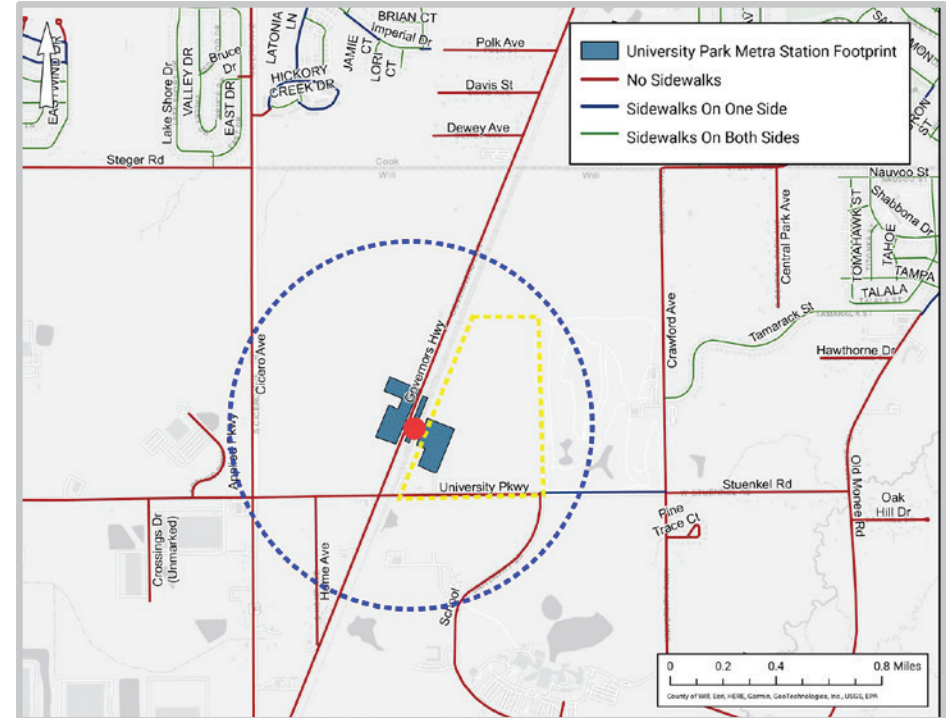
Assets and Constraints for Future Development

Assets:

- *Metra Station and Pace Route 367*
- *I-57/Stuenkel Road Interchange in 2016*
- *Governors State University (6,000 students, 1,000 employees)*
- *Gateway Industrial Park*
- *Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve*
- *Pine Lake Park*
- *University Golf Club*
- *Will County-Lower Taxes*

Constraints:

- Roadway Infrastructure
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Connections
- Vehicular/Pedestrian Crossings on Governors Highway
- Utilities - Private Water/Sewer/Power
- Property Ownership - Privately Owned Agricultural Site
- Floodplain/Wetlands



Sidewalks with TOD Area



Project Schedule

Village of University Park		2024												2025		
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Task 1	Steering Committee Engagement and Project Kickoff															
Task 2	Existing Conditions and Future Needs Report															
Task 3	Assessment of Existing and Past Financial Districts															
Task 4	Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups															
Task 5	Fiscal Impact Analysis															
Task 6	Draft Recommendations and Implementation Guide															
Task 7	Final Report and Implementation Guide															



Next Steps/Discussion

- Collect Additional Data - Infrastructure Data/Utilities
- Identify Stakeholders and Focus Group Participants
- Hold Future Steering Committee Meetings

TOD Plan Vision:

“A next generation station that fosters growth and creates a place for the University Park community to gather. It leverages job growth and transit investments to attract people and build a vibrant TOD District.”



APPENDIX



The Economic Development “Tool Box”

- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – Value capture of property tax growth over 23 years to be used to pay for improvements within the district. Eligible costs include acquisition, demolition, site prep, construction/reconstruction of public buildings, renovation/rehab of existing privately-owned buildings, and public infrastructure. Requires a study demonstrating that the area meets certain statutory criteria as well as a redevelopment plan that includes estimated project costs, revenue projections and anticipated term of any debt obligations. A TIF can be extended for an additional 12 years with approval from the state legislature and governor.
- **Business District (BD)** – Imposes an additional sales and/or hotel tax in 0.25% increments up to 1.00% for 23 years. Requires a finding that the area meets certain statutory criteria to qualify and a redevelopment plan that includes estimated project costs, funding sources, tax rates and anticipated term of any debt obligations. Eligible costs include acquisition, demolition, site prep, construction/reconstruction of public buildings, renovation/rehab of existing privately owned buildings, and public infrastructure. Taxes are administered by the Illinois Department of Revenue and remitted to the municipality. Can be used in conjunction with TIF.
- **Economic Incentive Agreement** – Negotiated agreement to rebate sales tax to a specified party for improvements of vacant buildings and parcels. Eligible costs include site preparation, building rehab, tenant improvements, and public infrastructure. Can be used in conjunction with TIF and BD to make projects financially feasible.



The Economic Development “Tool Box”

- **Special Service Area (SSA)** – Imposes an additional property tax within the boundaries to pay for eligible costs including but not limited to public way maintenance/beautification, district marketing, business retention/attraction, special events and promotional activities, auto and bike transit, security, façade improvements, and other commercial and economic development initiatives. A commission oversees the SSA and typically contracts with an administrator to manage operations. The commission works with the municipality to develop an annual budget and a property tax levy that must be approved by the municipality’s legislative body.
- **Enterprise Zone (EZ)** – Provides for: sales/use tax exemption on building materials for projects in the Zone; expanded state sales tax exemptions on purchases of personal property used or consumed in the manufacturing process or in the operation of a pollution control facility; an exemption on state utility taxes for electricity and natural gas; an exemption on state telecommunication charges and excise tax. Also provides an Enterprise Zone Construction Jobs Credit that allows eligible project owners to deduct received tax credits from their taxable income. Tax exemptions are available for companies that make minimum statutory investments that either create or retain a certain number of jobs. These exemptions require a business to make application to, and be certified by, the Illinois Department of Commerce.
- **Opportunity Zone** – Federal program aimed at incentivizing private investments in economically distressed communities by providing capital gains tax credit on qualifying investment vehicles. A state’s governor nominates a qualifying area, which must be certified by the US Treasury Secretary.



RTA TOD Special Financing Study – Steering Committee

February 27, 2025

Elizabeth Scott, Village Manager

Gina Williams, Village Trustee

Karen Lewis, Village Trustee

Mike Sneed, Antero, Village Engineer Consultant

Jonathon Sherman, Antero, Village Engineer Consultant

Robert Morris, RTA

Gina Trimarco, TranSystems

David Miller, Johnson Research Group

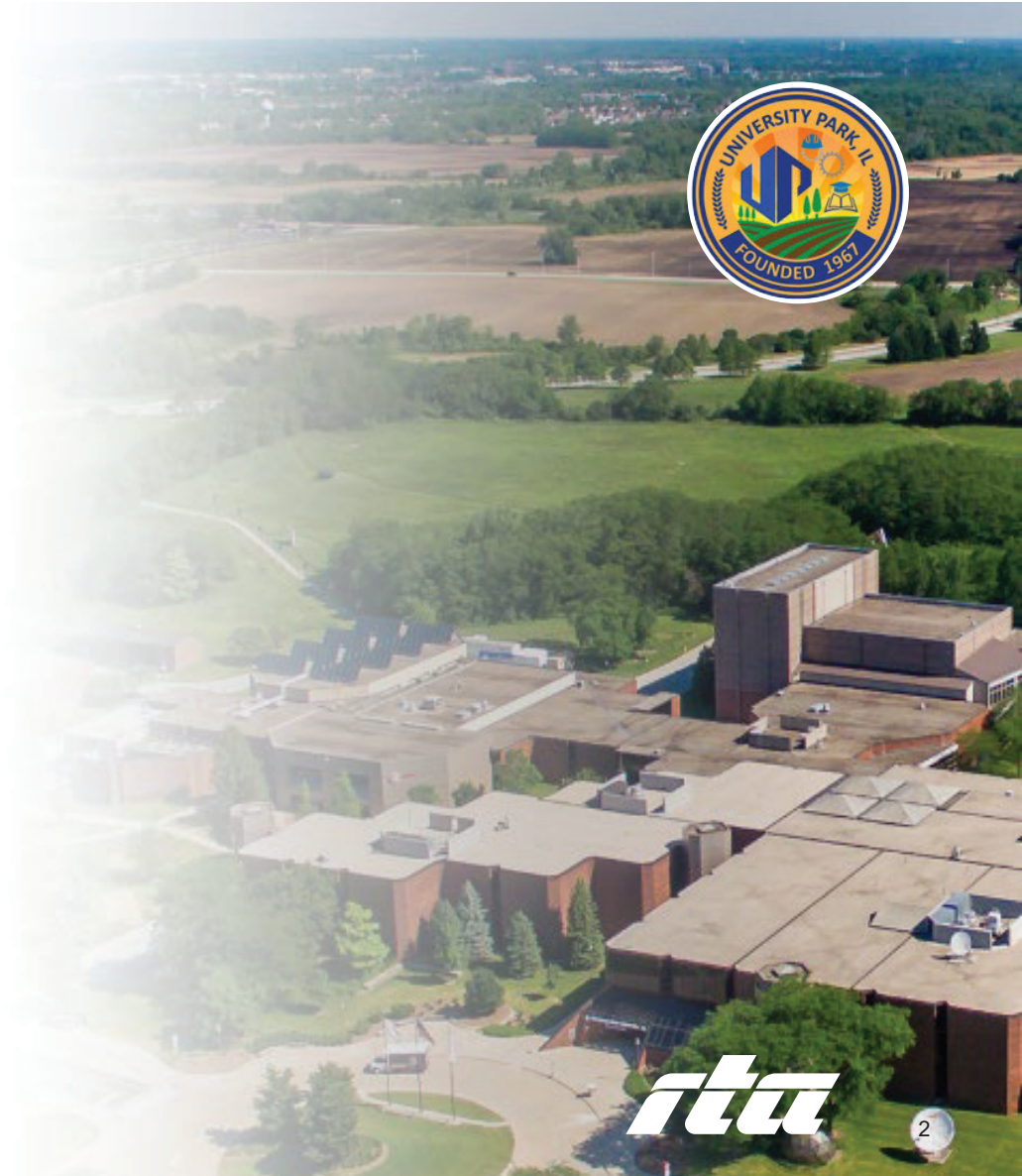
University Park Special Financing District Study

Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 27, 2025



Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Review of Scope of Work
- Discussion of Special Financing Tools
- Project Schedule
- Next Steps/Questions/Discussion



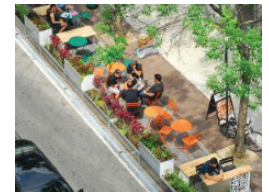
Scope of Work for Special Financing District Study

- Steering Committee Engagement
- Existing Conditions and Future Needs
 - *Utilities, Infrastructure*
- Assessment of Existing and Past Financial Districts
- Stakeholder Interviews/Focus Groups
 - *Interviews, Public Survey on Village Website*
- Fiscal Impact Analysis
- Draft Recommendations and Implementation Guide for Financing Strategy
- Final Report and Implementation Guide



Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan (February 2023)

- **Transit Oriented Development is the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around high-quality transit systems.**
- February 2023 TOD Plan builds off the 2002 TOD Plan and the 2024 Comprehensive Plan
- TOD study area is half mile around the Metra Station, i.e., a 10-minute walk.
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- TOD Plan proposes development on the 77-acre vacant parcels east of the Metra Station
- Southern edge of land along Stuenkel Road provides an opportunity for commercial development



Phase 1



Development Type	Phase 1
Multi-Family Apartments (units)	200
Townhomes (units)	0
Single Family Detached (units)	0
Total Residential Units	200
Mixed-use Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	3,000
Free-standing Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	5,600
Total Commercial / Retail Sq. Ft.	8,600



Phase 2



Development Type	Phase 2
Multi-Family Apartments (units)	280
Townhomes (units)	0
Single Family Detached (units)	0
Total Residential Units	280
Mixed-use Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	13,600
Free-standing Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	16,800
Total Commercial / Retail Sq. Ft.	30,400



Phase 3



Development Type	Phase 3
Multi-Family Apartments (units)	450
Townhomes (units)	19
Single Family Detached (units)	11
Total Residential Units	480
Mixed-use Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	7,200
Free-standing Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	31,200
Total Commercial / Retail Sq. Ft.	38,400



Phase 4



Development Type	Phase 4
Multi-Family Apartments (units)	140
Townhomes (units)	57
Single Family Detached (units)	23
Total Residential Units	220
Mixed-use Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	0
Free-standing Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	0
Total Commercial / Retail Sq. Ft.	0



TOD Residential and Commercial / Retail Quantities

Development Type	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Total
Multi-Family Apartments (units)	200	280	450	140	1,070
Townhomes (units)	0	0	19	57	76
Single Family Detached (units)	0	0	11	23	34
Total Residential Units	200	280	480	220	1,180
Mixed-use Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	3,000	13,600	7,200	0	23,800
Free-standing Commercial / Retail (sq. ft.)	5,600	16,800	31,200	0	53,600
Total Commercial / Retail Sq. Ft.	8,600	30,400	38,400	0	77,400



TOD Estimated Infrastructure Costs

Project Component	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Total
Acquisition	\$2,474,000				
Engineering	\$1,442,000	\$748,000	\$2,250,000	\$1,504,000	\$5,944,000
Construction	\$8,007,000	\$4,157,000	\$12,499,000	\$8,349,000	\$33,012,000
Total	\$11,923,000	\$4,905,000	\$14,749,000	\$9,853,000	\$41,430,000



The Economic Development “Tool Box”

Tool	Mechanism	Examples of Eligible Costs	Designation Authority
Tax Increment Financing	Value Capture of Property Tax Growth	Acquisition, demolition, site prep, renovation/rehab, and public infrastructure	Municipal
Special Service Area	Add'l Property Tax Levy	Maintenance/beautification, marketing, business attraction, special events & promotions, auto and bike transit, security, and façade improvements	Municipal
Business District	Add'l Sales/Hotel Tax	Similar to TIF	Municipal
Economic Incentive Agreement	Sales Tax Rebate	Site preparation, building rehab, tenant improvements, and public infrastructure	Municipal
Enterprise Zone	Tax Exemptions (Sales, Real Estate Transfer, Utilities)	Sales tax exemption on construction materials	State
Opportunity Zone	Federal Capital Gains Tax Credit for Qualifying Investments		US Treasury



Recommendations for TOD Implementation & Potential Revenue by Phase

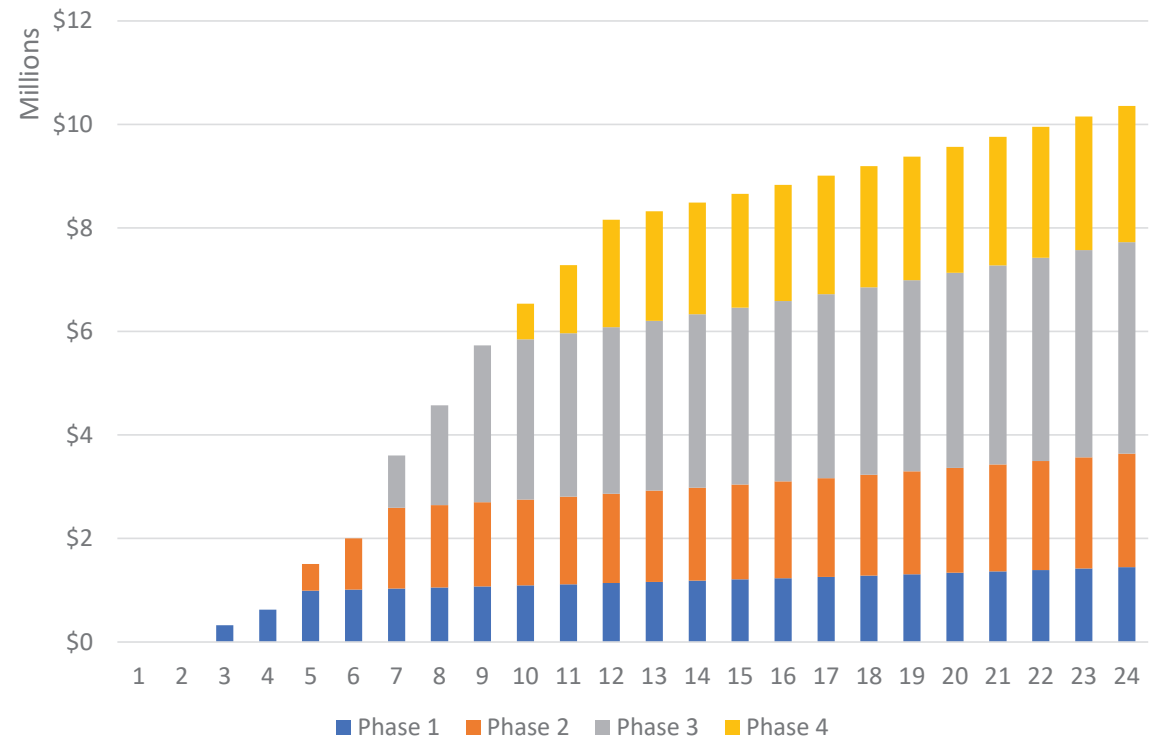
Tool	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Tax Increment Financing	\$0.99 M – \$1.45 M	\$1.56 M – \$2.19 M	\$3.03 M – \$4.08 M	\$2.07 M – \$2.63 M
Special Service Area	\$73 K – \$107 K	\$115 – \$162 K	\$223 K – \$301 K	\$153 K – \$194 K
Business District Sales Tax	\$14 K – \$20 K	\$51 K – \$73 K	\$67 K – \$93 K	N/A
Economic Incentive Agreement	TBD	TBD	TBD	N/A



TIF Example

- Designate a TIF District
- Support land acquisition and infrastructure development across each phase
- Incremental EAV grows over live of the TIF
- Revenue grows over 23 years – projected \$152M across all phases

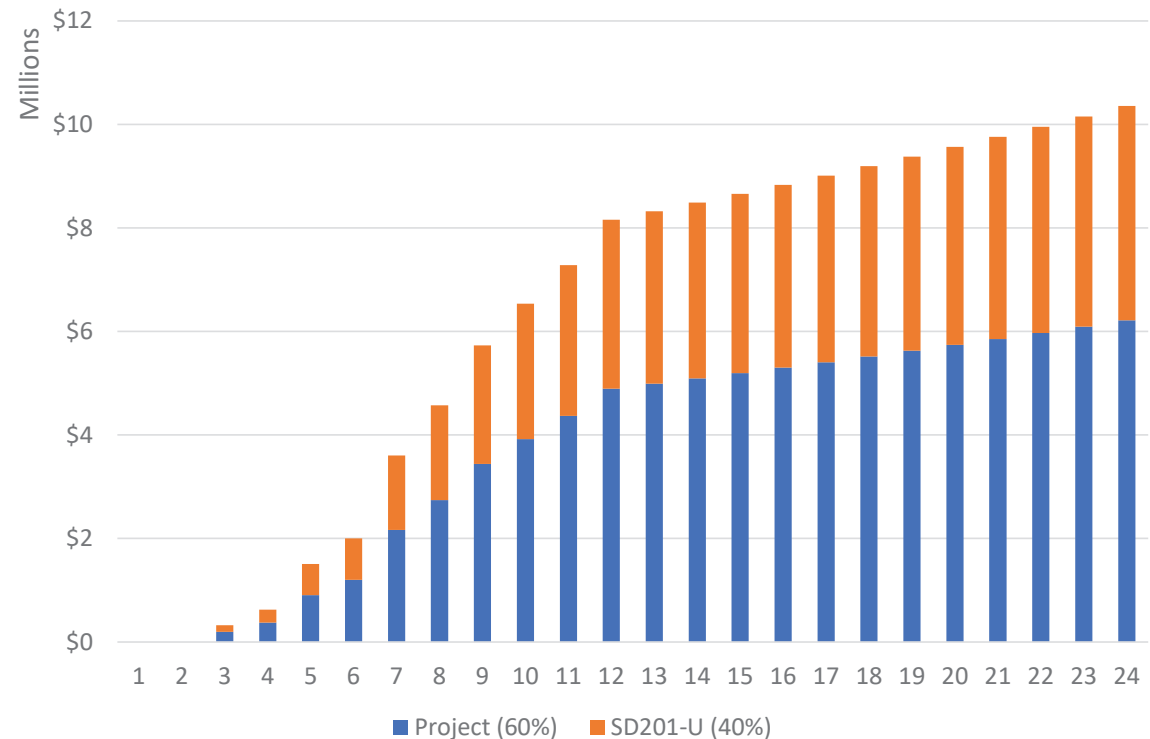
TOD TIF Revenue by Phase



TIF Example

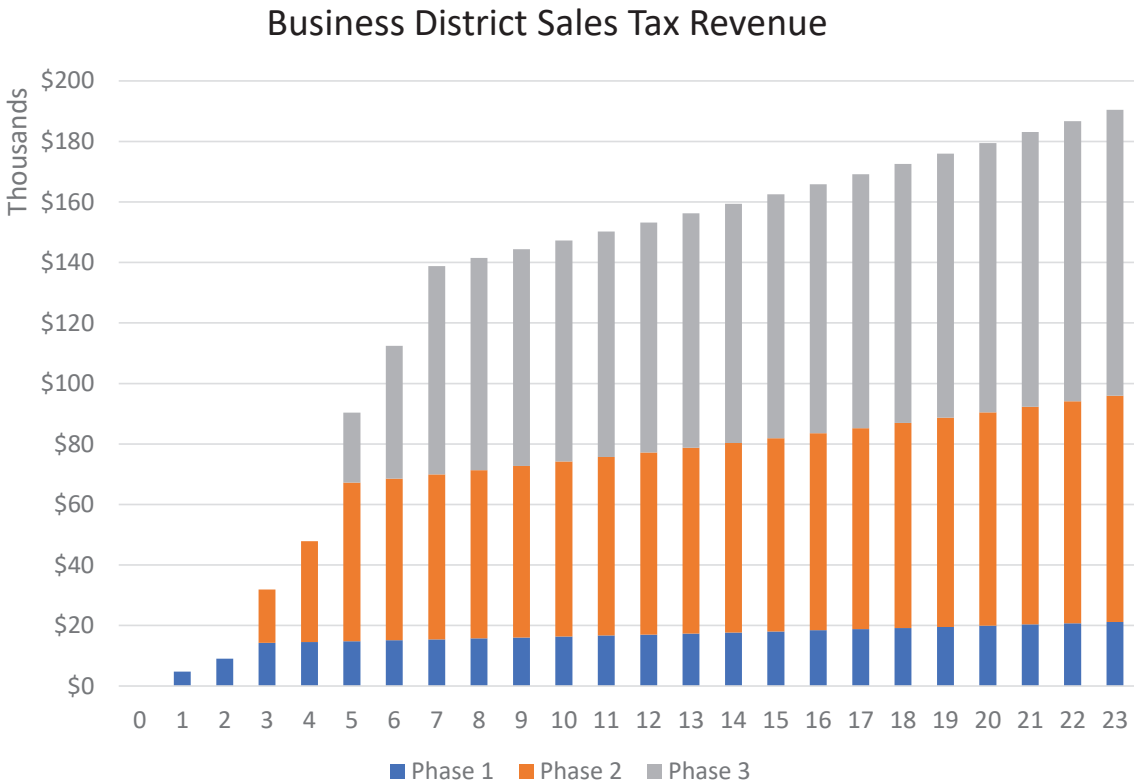
- Up to 40% of annual TIF revenue reserved to reimburse Crete-Monee SD 201-U for additional costs from new enrollment generated by TOD residential units
- SD 201-U must show that TOD residential development has increased enrollment
- SD 201-U must submit a claim for reimbursement between July 1 and September 30 each year or its claim is waived
- Village and SD 201-U can agree to a reimbursement amount that is less than what statute requires

TOD TIF Revenue Allocation



Business District Example

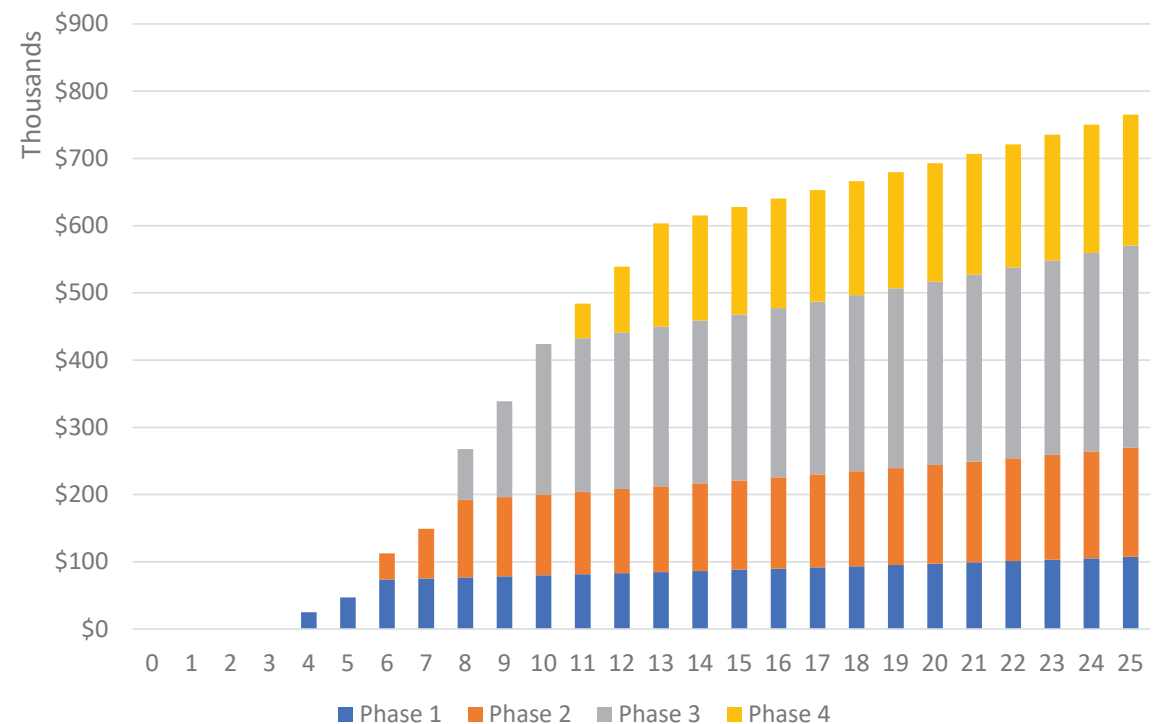
- Designate a Business District
- Impose an additional sales tax of 1.00%
- Facilitate development using incremental sales taxes from retail development
- Assumes 50% of commercial spaces are sales tax generating



Special Service Area Example

- Create SSA after Phase 1 completion and expand following completion of subsequent phases
- Impose a property tax of 1.00%
- Village Board approves annual levy
- Revenue can be used for infrastructure funding
- Can extend beyond the life of the TIF

Special Service Area Tax Revenue



Project Schedule

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Next Steps/Discussion

- Final Study Report and Implementation Guide



APPENDIX



Overview of Existing and Past Tax Increment Financing Districts

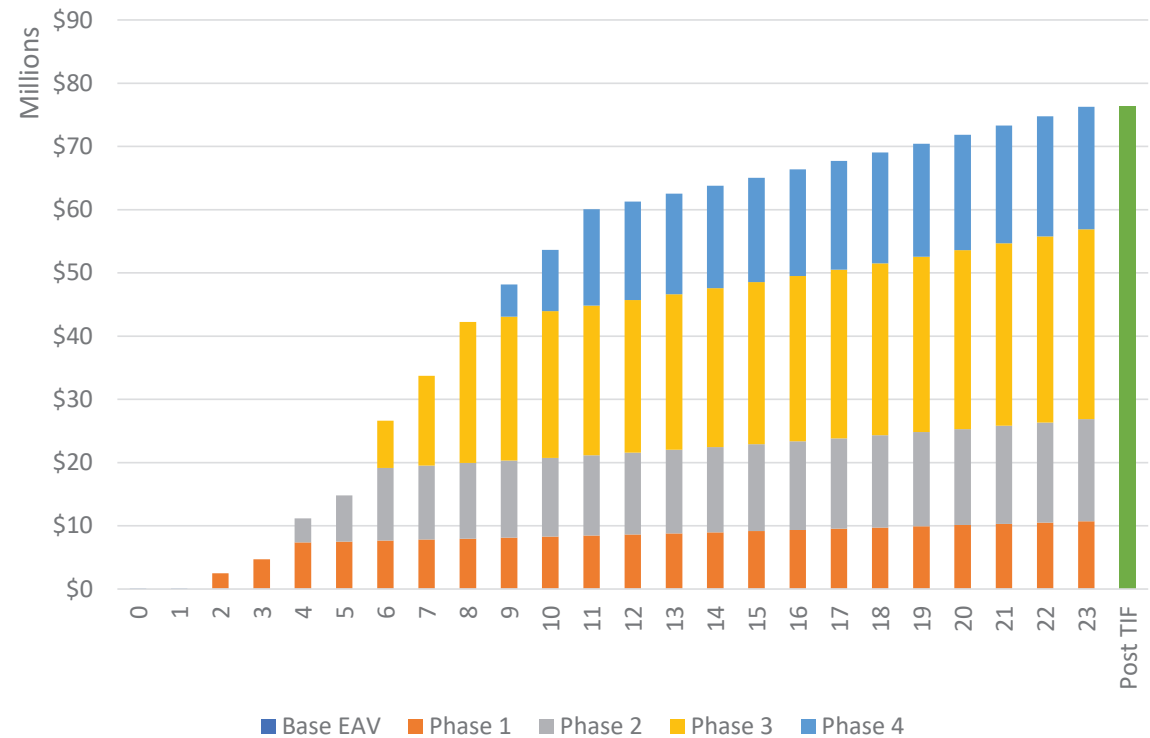
TIF Name	Designation Year	Final Calendar Year	Base EAV	TIF EAV	Total EAV Growth	Annualized Growth Rate
1. Town Center	1986	2009	\$ 1,026,664	\$ 1,372,708	133.7 %	1.3 %
2. Industrial Park	1987	2010	\$ 2,214,674	\$ 35,975,565	1,624.4 %	12.9 %
3. Cicero Industrial	1994	2018	\$ 218,242	\$ 5,209,248	2,386.9 %	14.1 %
4. Governors East	1996	2020	\$ 671,436	\$ 9,101,159	1,355.5 %	11.5 %
5. Dralle Industrial	2001	2025	\$ 875,899	\$ 85,765,198	9,791.7 %	21.0 %
6. Town Center	2013	2037	\$ 522,940	\$ 542,612	103.8 %	0.2 %
7. Steger Central	2019	2043	\$ 1,588,408	\$ 1,267,009	79.8 %	(0.9) %



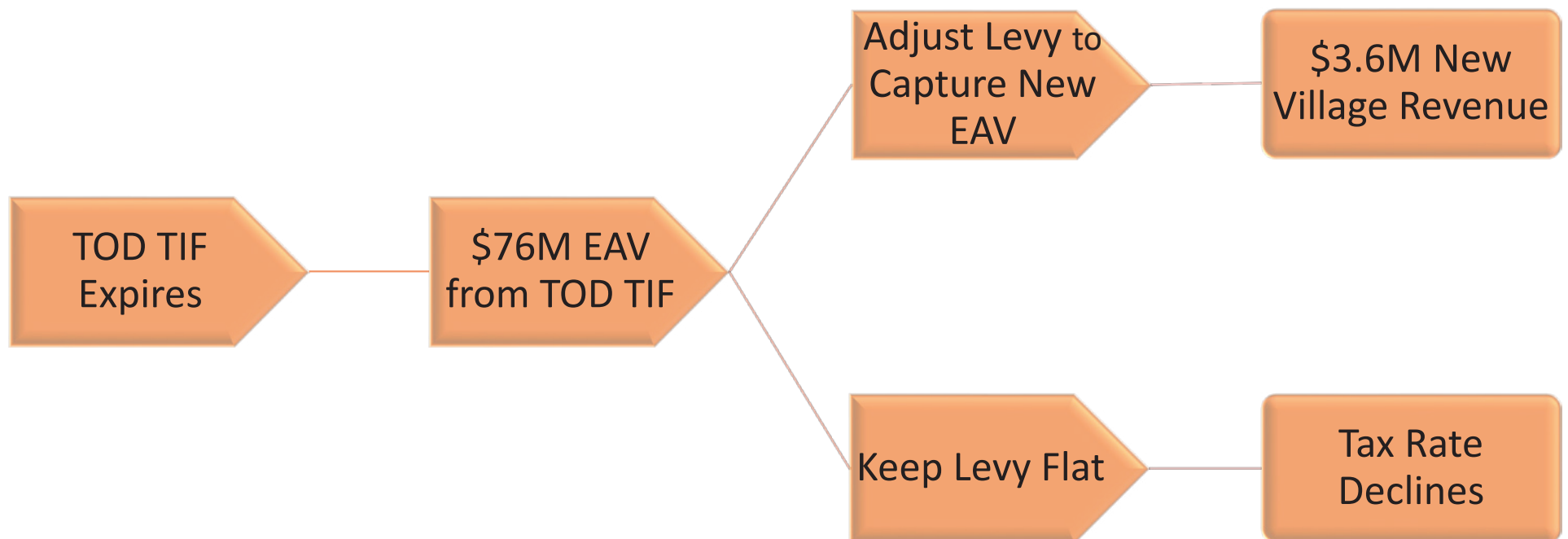
TIF Example

- Incremental EAV grows over life of the TIF (23 years)
- TIF EAV is available to overlapping taxing bodies after the TIF ends
- Projected \$76 million of new EAV at end of TOD TIF

Incremental Equalized Assessed Value



Realizing the Benefits following TIF Expiration



Adjust Levy to Recovered EAV from Expired TOD TIF

Taxing District	2023 Tax Rate	Proportion	Projected New Revenue from TOD TIF
Village of University Park	4.1951 %	30.9 %	\$3,195,762
Village of University Park Road & Bridge	0.1354 %	1.0 %	\$103,146
Village of University Park Public Library	0.4341 %	3.2 %	\$330,691
Monee-Crete School District 201-U	7.3527 %	54.1 %	\$5,601,173
Community College District 515	0.3979 %	2.9 %	\$303,114
Will County	0.5495 %	4.0 %	\$418,601
Forest Preserve	0.1164 %	0.9 %	\$88,672
Community Mental Health Board	0.0362 %	0.3 %	\$27,577
Monee Township Town Funds	0.2095 %	1.5 %	\$159,594
Monee Township Road Funds	0.1711 %	1.3 %	\$130,341
Totals	13.5979 %	100.0 %	\$10,358,669

23

Keeping Levies Flat Results in Lower Tax Rates

Taxing District	2023 Tax Rate	Proportion	Estimated New Tax Rate
Village of University Park	4.1951 %	30.9 %	2.8314 %
Village of University Park Road & Bridge	0.1354 %	1.0 %	0.0884 %
Village of University Park Public Library	0.4341 %	3.2 %	0.2910 %
Monee-Crete School District 201-U	7.3527 %	54.1 %	6.7359 %
Community College District 515	0.3979 %	2.9 %	0.3728 %
Will County	0.5495 %	4.0 %	0.5480 %
Forest Preserve	0.1164 %	0.9 %	0.1161 %
Community Mental Health Board	0.0362 %	0.3 %	0.0361 %
Monee Township Town Funds	0.2095 %	1.5 %	0.1763 %
Monee Township Road Funds	0.1711 %	1.3 %	0.1679 %
Totals	13.5979 %	100.0 %	11.3639 %

24

Levying to Recovered TIF EAV after TIF Expiration

$$\text{Limiting rate} = \frac{A \times (1 + I)}{\text{CEAV} - \text{NP} - \text{AX} - \text{TIF} + \text{DIS}}$$

Where:

- A = aggregate extension base (prior year total taxes billed for funds subject to the PTELL)
- I = inflationary increase (CPI or 5 percent, whichever is less; or other amount approved by voters for the levy year)
- CEAV = current EAV of district used in setting preliminary rates
- NP = new property
- AX = current EAV of any annexations
- TIF = recovered tax increment value (after the TIF expires)
- DIS = current EAV of any disconnections



University Park Special Financing District Study
Stakeholder Interview Questions

Question 1: Are you familiar with Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan the Village of University Park adopted in 2023? ([Click here for the TOD website and Plan](#))

The TOD Plan includes the development of commercial and residential space across four phases, as follows:

1. Phase 1: mixed use buildings with 200 multifamily rental units
2. Phase 2: additional multifamily, mixed-use buildings
3. Phase 3: mixed-use and townhomes
4. Phase 4: townhomes, single family units, and multi-family apartment buildings.

Question 2: What are your thoughts regarding the TOD Plan in general and the amount of proposed commercial and residential development?

We have identified six (6) economic development tools that could help finance implementation of the TOD Plan. Of the six (6), four (4) can be implemented by the Village. Some tools can also be used in conjunction with one another. The tools are:

Economic Development Tool	Mechanism	Designation Authority
1. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Value Capture of Property Tax Growth	Municipal
2. Business District	Add'l Sales / Hotel Tax	Municipal
3. Economic Incentive Agreement(s)	Sales Tax Rebate	Municipal
4. Special Service Areas	Add'l Property Tax Levy	Municipal
5. Enterprise Zone	Tax Exemptions (Sales, Real Estate Transfer, Utilities)	State
6. Opportunity Zone	Federal Capital Gains Tax Credit for Qualifying Investments	US Treasury

Question 6: If you were to rank the six tools in order of preference, with the first being strongly preferred and the last being least preferred, how would you rank them and why?

Question 7: To what extent do you think one or more of the tools could be used to fund implementation of the TOD Plan?

**RTA TOD Special Financing Study – Focus Group
August 6, 2024**

Elizabeth Scott, Village Manager

Gina Williams, Village Trustee

Nia Jenkins, Village Communications Director

Gwen Varnsdale, Code Enforcement

Randal Stephens, Antero, Village Engineer Consultant

Robert Morris, RTA

Gina Trimarco, TranSystems

Ann Moroney, Johnson Research Group

David Miller, Johnson Research Group

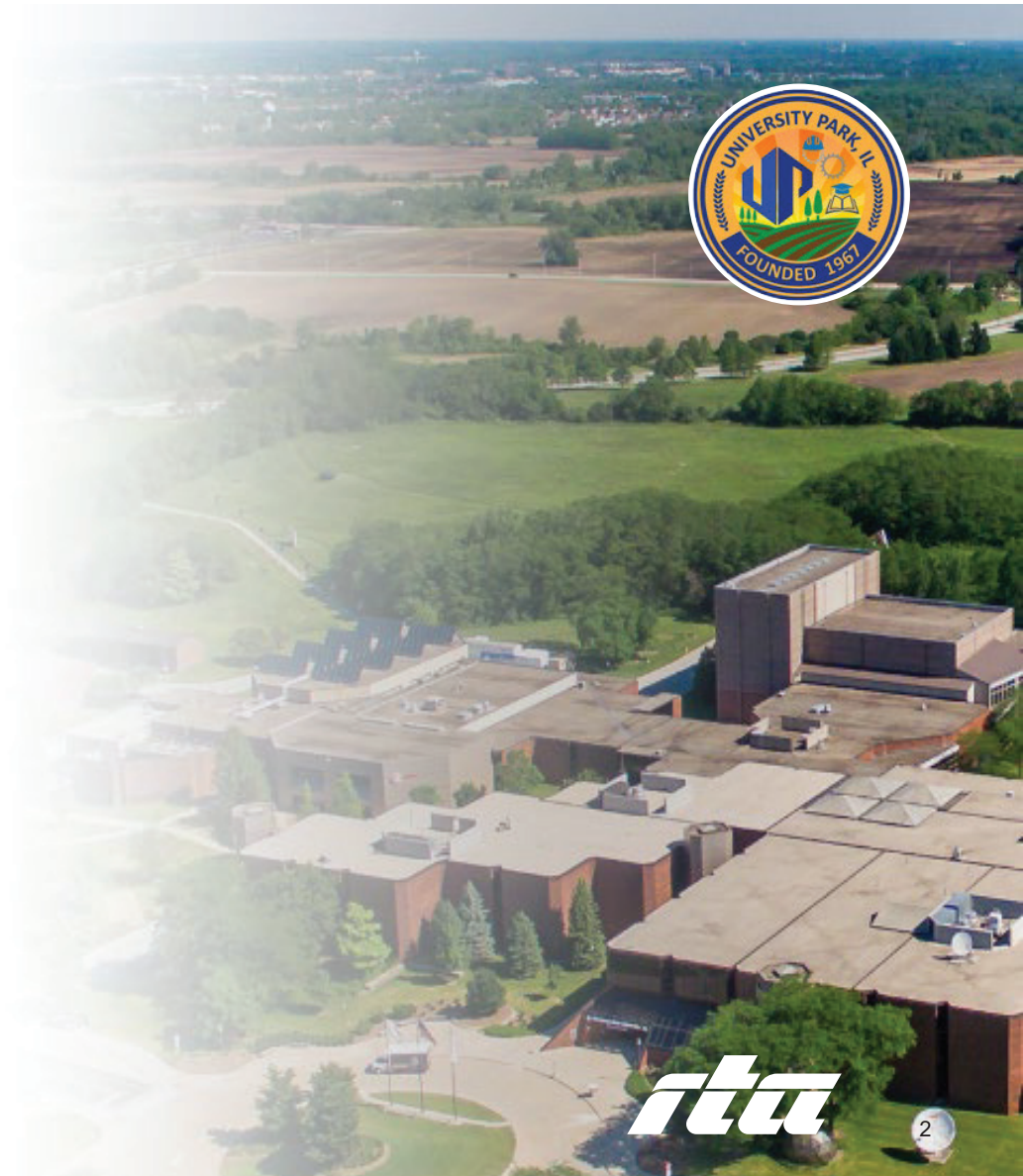
University Park Special Financing District Study

Focus Group Meeting No. 1
Tuesday, August 6, 2024



Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Review of Scope of Work
- Overview of TIF Districts
- Discussion of Special Financing Ideas
- Review of Stakeholder Input
- Project Schedule
- Next Steps



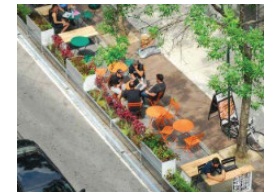
Scope of Work for Special Financing District Study

- Steering Committee Engagement
- Existing Conditions and Future Needs
 - *Status: Report to be sent to Village staff for review*
- Assessment of Existing and Past Financial Districts
 - *Status: Report to be sent to Village staff for review*
- Stakeholder Interviews/Focus Groups
 - *Status: Stakeholder Interviews Completed*
- Draft /Final Recommendations and Implementation Guide for Financing Strategy



Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan (February 2023)

- **Transit Oriented Development is the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around high-quality transit systems.**
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Enterprise Zone	Tax Exemptions (Sales, Real Estate Transfer, Utilities)	State
Opportunity Zone	Federal Capital Gains Tax Credit for Qualifying Investments	US Treasury



Discussion of Special Financing District Tools

If you were to rank the 6 tools in order of preference, with the first being strongly preferred and the last being least preferred, how would you rank them and why?

1. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
2. Business District
3. Economic Incentive Agreement(s)
4. Special Service Areas
5. Enterprise Zone
6. Opportunity Zone



Stakeholder Discussions

Crete-Monee School District 201U (June 13, 2024)

- Supportive of the TOD Plan; would need to anticipate number of new students
- Supports in order of preference: Enterprise Zone, Opportunity Zone, TIF, Business District, Special Services; Does not support Economic Incentive Agreement



Governors State University (June 25, 2024)

- University is a valuable economic engine for the Village
- Supportive of the TOD Plan; high demand for student and employee housing
- Support increase in property taxes at the high end of economic tools and sales tax at the low end



Cushman & Wakefield Real Estate Brokers (June 28, 2024)

- Represent property owner of vacant 41-acre parcel (west half of parcel)
- Need to sell the property asap via "buy rights"
- Village did not support a proposal for industrial use
- Support in order of preference: TIF, Business District, Economic Incentive Agreements, Special Service Areas



Stakeholder Discussions

Pace (July 11, 2024)

- Route 367 serves Metra Station, Monday-Fridays every 45-60 minutes
- No plans on adjusting the schedule or operating to Metra Station on Saturdays due to low ridership, complicated schedule, budget
- Little success in serving industrial parks directly; the lack of roadway infrastructure would cause the bus to travel several miles out of its way



Metra (July 11, 2024)

- Discussed status of station reconstruction project
- Would be amenable to discuss station integration with TOD planning



IDOT (July 12, 2024)

- Discussed status of University Parkway/Governors Highway/CN Railroad Crossing Improvement Project
- Side path that currently terminates east of Metra Station along University Parkway will be extend to the Metra Station as part of the intersection project
- New traffic signal at University Parkway/Governors Highway intersection
- Construction expected in 2028



Illinois Department
of Transportation



Stakeholder Discussions

Sweet Life (July 12, 2024)

- Sweet Life representatives were not familiar with the TOD study or final plan
- Most Sweet Life employees commute on their own from the south side of Chicago or northwest Indiana
- Sweet Life is expanding and having more residential options nearby could help them with recruiting
- Sweet Life employees currently have four fast food options nearby so they would welcome more options even with a Business District Sales Tax



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Next Steps/Discussion

- Community Outreach- Survey on Village Website?
- Focus Group No. 2
- Draft/Final Recommendations and Implementation Guide for Financing Strategy



APPENDIX



The Economic Development “Tool Box”

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Assessment of Existing and Past Tax Increment Financing Districts in the Village of University Park

Prepared for
Regional Transportation Authority Transystems

By
Johnson Research Group, Inc.

August 29, 2024

APPENDIX C

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

The Regional Transportation Authority (“RTA”) engaged Transystems and its subcontractor Johnson Research Group, Inc. (“JRG”) to prepare an overview of existing and past tax increment financing (“TIF”) districts in the Village of University Park (“Village”). Information in this report has been compiled from publicly available sources maintained by the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, the Illinois Department of Revenue, the Will County Clerk, and the Village of University Park. The ability to provide a comprehensive overview of each of the Village’s TIF districts is limited by several factors including but not limited to the following: older TIF districts predate current state reporting requirements, statutorily required annual TIF reports are missing or not currently available to the public, publicly available reports with inconsistent or insufficient data, and record retention practices which vary by agency.

B. University Park Tax Increment Financing Districts

The Village of University Park has designated seven tax increment financing (“TIF”) districts since 1986, three of which are currently active (see below). TIF #5 is set to end in 2025 while TIF #6 and TIF #7 are scheduled to end in calendar years 2037 and 2043 respectively.

Village of University Park Tax Increment Financing Districts

TIF Name	Designation Year	Final Calendar Year	Base EAV (\$)	Incremental TIF EAV (\$)	Total EAV Growth (%)	Annualized Growth Rate (%)
#1 Town Center	1986	2009	1,026,664	1,372,708	133.7	1.3
#2 Governors Gateway	1987	2010	2,214,674	35,975,565	1,624.4	12.9
#3 Cicero Industrial	1994	2018	218,242	5,209,248	2,386.9	14.1
#4 Governors East	1996	2020	671,436	9,101,159	1,355.5	11.5
#5 Dralle Governors	2001	2025	875,899	85,765,198	9,791.7	21.0
#6 Town Center	2013	2037	522,940	542,612	103.8	0.2
#7 Steger Central	2019	2043	1,588,408	1,267,009	79.8	(0.9)

Sources: Will County Clerk, Village of University Park

C. Impact

The effectiveness of University Park's seven TIF districts have been mixed. The Village has employed different strategies to leverage TIF as an economic development tool ranging from using TIF funds for infrastructure improvements to attract private investment to reimbursing private developers for certain project costs from future property taxes generated by the project. Instances where the Village has reimbursed developers for a portion of their development costs under the terms of a redevelopment agreement appear to have led to more growth in the TIF's tax base than funding infrastructure improvements alone. What success the Village has seen in its TIF districts is overshadowed by a lack of transparency, including problematic accounting practices that have resulted in at least one lawsuit against the Village.

II. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICTS IN THE VILLAGE OF UNIVERSITY PARK

A. Introduction

The Regional Transportation Authority ("RTA") engaged Transystems and its subcontractor Johnson Research Group, Inc. ("JRG") to prepare an overview of existing and past tax increment financing ("TIF") districts in the Village of University Park ("Village") with an eye towards how TIF could be used to implement the Village's Transit Oriented Development ("TOD") Plan adopted in February 2023. This report endeavors to gauge the effectiveness of the Village's TIF districts as an economic development tool in attracting private investment and expanding the Village's property tax base using publicly available information. The ability to provide a comprehensive overview of the Village's TIF districts is limited by several factors including but not limited to the following: older TIF districts predate current state reporting requirements, statutorily required annual TIF reports are missing or not currently available to the public, publicly available reports with inconsistent or insufficient data, and record retention practices which vary by agency.

B. Methodology

Information in this report has been compiled from publicly available sources maintained by the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, the Illinois Department of Revenue, the Will County Clerk, and the Village of University Park.

Starting in 1999, the State of Illinois required municipalities to report on TIF district activity and finances in a stand-alone annual report often referred to as an Annual TIF Report ("ATR"). Each municipality is required to file an ATR with the Illinois Comptroller for each active TIF district within 180 days of the fiscal-year end or as soon as the required audited financial statements are available. In addition to audited financial statements, the reports are to include information on the types of expenditures allowed under the State's TIF law as well as the names of entities receiving payments totaling \$10,000 or more during the fiscal year. The reports should also include a list of all redevelopment projects undertaken in the TIF district including

redevelopment agreements with private developers as well as intergovernmental agreements with public agencies. Annual TIF Reports for the Village are currently available for fiscal years 2005 through 2015 from the State Comptroller's website. The Village is working towards making additional fiscal years available.

The Village is also required to file an Annual Financial Report ("AFR") detailing all Village finances with the Illinois Comptroller. Publicly available annual audits are available for fiscal years 2011 through 2020. The AFR includes basic financial information on the Village's TIF funds but does not report the level of detail that is required in the Annual TIF Report. The Village is working towards completing and making Annual Financial Report available for recent fiscal years.

In addition to posting property tax reports for municipalities on its website, the Will County Clerk posts reports on TIF districts showing the amount of incremental EAV in each TIF, the current tax rate(s), and the amount of incremental property tax revenue generated in the TIF.

These reports are available on the Clerk's website for tax years 2005 through 2023. In Will County, property taxes are billed and collected a year in arrears. The term "tax year" refers to the year that taxes were levied, not the year they are billed, collected and remitted to taxing districts.

The Illinois Department of Revenue, which tracks a variety of property tax statistics including information on TIF districts, posts reports dating back to 1976 on its website. However, the report for 2001 appears to be missing or non-existent. To the extent possible the analysis herein makes use of publicly available information from these various sources.

C. Existing and Past TIF Districts in University Park

A TIF district captures property tax revenue over a 23-year period that results from growth in equalized assessed value ("EAV") above a base or "frozen" level established when the TIF is created. Growth can result from redevelopment of existing buildings or from new development on vacant or underutilized land. Annual TIF revenue can be used for infrastructure improvements or to subsidize certain development costs of private developers to retain or attract new private investment in the district. After a TIF district ends, the incremental growth in EAV from the TIF is added to the tax base of overlapping taxing districts. Those taxing districts are given a one-time opportunity to increase their property tax extension to take advantage of the recovered TIF EAV without causing a general tax increase on current taxpayers.

The Village of University Park has designated seven tax increment financing ("TIF") districts since 1986, three of which are currently active (see **Table 1**): TIF #5 Dralle Governors is set to end in 2025 while TIF #6 Town Center and TIF #7 Steger Central are scheduled to end in 2037 and 2043 respectively.

The base or "frozen" EAV, most recent incremental EAV, and the percentage change of incremental EAV above the base is presented **Table 1** for each of the Village's seven TIF districts. For TIFs #1 through #4, the figures shown are for the last year the TIF was last active. For TIFs #5 through #7, the incremental EAV and TIF revenue figures shown are for tax year 2023, which is the most recent year available.

Table 1: University Park TIF Districts

TIF Name	Designation Year	Final Calendar Year	Base EAV (\$)	Incremental TIF EAV (\$)	Total EAV Growth (%)	Annualized Growth Rate (%)
#1 Town Center	1986	2009	1,026,664	1,372,708	133.7	1.3
#2 Governors Gateway	1987	2010	2,214,674	35,975,565	1,624.4	12.9
#3 Cicero Industrial	1994	2018	218,242	5,209,248	2,386.9	14.1
#4 Governors East	1996	2020	671,436	9,101,159	1,355.5	11.5
#5 Dralle Governors	2001	2025	875,899	85,765,198	9,791.7	21.0
#6 Town Center	2013	2037	522,940	542,612	103.8	0.2
#7 Steger Central	2019	2043	1,588,408	1,267,009	79.8	(0.9)

Sources: Will County Clerk, Village of University Park

Below is a summary of each TIF district based on available documentation. Ordinances, including the redevelopment plan, for TIF #1 and TIF #2 were not available, so little is known about their stated goals and objectives. Initially, the Village referred to each TIF by number only with some that included informal monikers indicating the major intersections or boundaries. More recent TIF districts have specific names in addition to the number indicating the order in which it was designated.

a. TIF #1 Town Center

The Village's first TIF, referred to only as TIF #1 was designated in 1986 to help revitalize the area including and surrounding the Town Center retail center in the central part of the Village. Sometimes referred to as the "Downtown" or "Town Center" TIF, expenditures appear to have been front funded in part by borrowing through a line of credit to be repaid with future TIF revenues. It is unclear exactly what the funds were used for based on available information. The TIF ended with a deficit of \$117,181. Incremental EAV grew at an average annual rate of 1.3% and was 133.7% greater when the TIF ended.

b. TIF #2 Governors Gateway Industrial Park

Created in 1987, this was the Village's second TIF and the first focusing on industrial development on the western edge of the Village. In 1994, the Village issued a TIF bond to be repaid from incremental revenue in TIF #2. The proceeds appear to have been used to fund infrastructure improvements. The Village also made payments to several developers in the closing years of the TIF. It ended with a positive fund balance of \$432,170. Incremental EAV grew at an average annual rate of 12.9% and was 1,624.4% greater when the TIF ended.

c. TIF #3 Cicero Industrial

Created in 1994 to help attract industrial development to the northwest corner of the Village, the TIF was generally bounded by the Village boundary on the west and north ends, Governor's Highway on the east and Stuenkel Road on the south. At the time of adoption, the TIF plan contemplated annexation of land to the north and west of the site. The redevelopment project area ("RPA") included a vacant airfield and drive-in theater as well as vacant land, some of which was used for agriculture.

The RPA qualified as an Industrial Park Conservation Area under the Industrial Jobs Recovery Law. The Village appears to have entered into at least two redevelopment agreements with developers. The TIF ended with a positive fund balance of \$2,413,439. However, the Village continues to show expenditures in this fund for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2020, despite the TIF ending on December 31, 2018. Incremental EAV grew at an average annual rate of 6.1% and was 414.2% greater when the TIF ended.

d. TIF #4 Will County Business Park (a.k.a. Governors East)

Designated in 1996 as the *Will County Business Park Redevelopment Project Area No. 4* in the southwest part of the Village, the RPA was in the vicinity of Cicero Avenue and Governor's Highway. It bordered Dralle Road to the north and Village boundary to the south. Like TIF #3 before it, the RPA qualified as an Industrial Park Conservation Area under the Industrial Jobs Recovery Law. The Village appears to have entered into at least two redevelopment agreements with developers in the RPA. The TIF ended with a positive fund balance of \$8,863,135. Incremental EAV grew at an average annual rate of 11.5% and was 1,355.5% greater when the TIF ended.

e. TIF #5 Dralle-Governors Business Park

Designated in 2001 as the *Dralle-Governors Business Park Redevelopment Project Area No. 5*, the RPA sits in the southwestern part of the Village bordered by Cicero Avenue and Governor's Highway to the east, Central Avenue to the west, Stuenkel Road to the north and Dralle Road to the South. Consisting primarily of vacant land utilized for agricultural purposes, the RPA qualified as an Industrial Park Conservation

Area under the Industrial Jobs Recovery Law. Today, Dot Foods, Solo Cup and Clorox Co. Distribution Center are located within TIF #5 boundaries. The Village AFR for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2020 (the most recent available), shows the TIF fund ended the year with a positive balance of \$29,217,111.

f. TIF #6 Town Center

Designated in 2013, this RPA appears to be the second iteration of TIF #1 focusing on revitalizing the area in and around the Town Center retail center. The RPA is generally bounded by West University Parkway on the south, South Steger Monee Road on the west, South Western Avenue on the east. Situated within this TIF is University Park Town Center, the police and fire department buildings. The Village AFR for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2020 (the most recent available), shows the TIF fund ended the year with a deficit of \$26,192.

g. TIF #7 Steger Road and Central Avenue

Designated in 2019 the RPA is generally bounded by Steger Road on the north, Stuenkel Road and University Parkway on the South, Cicero Avenue on east and Interstate-57 on the west. Seven of the eight parcels in the RPA were previously included in either TIF #3 or TIF #5. The goal of the TIF district is to support industrial development. The Amazon Fulfilment Center and Central Steel & Wire properties are among the larger properties located within TIF #7. The Village AFR for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2020 (the most recent available) shows the TIF fund ended the year with a deficit of \$25,892.

D. TIF as an Economic Development Tool

The Village's use of TIF as an economic development tool has focused on supporting industrial and commercial development in different areas of the Village. Two current districts — TIF #5 Dralle Governors and TIF #7 Steger Central — are focused on supporting new industrial development on the west side of the Village where businesses benefit from the proximity of Interstate-57. The current TIF #6 Town Center on the other hand was created to help revitalize a retail center and improve infrastructure in and around the Village's municipal buildings to the benefit of nearby residents.

The Village also appears to have employed different strategies in deploying TIF funds to attract private investment with mixed results. In some instances, the Village used TIF funds to build out infrastructure to attract businesses to certain areas. In other instances, the Village, in addition to building infrastructure, provided subsidies to private developers in the form of tax rebates from future TIF revenues generated by those private developments.

E. Fund Transfers In/Out of TIF Districts

State law allows a municipality to transfer funds between TIF districts provided that the districts are separate by no more than a public right of way. A review of Annual TIF Reports and Village Annual Financial Reports shows that the Village has employed this practice through fiscal year 2020.

Transfers may occur for several reasons. For example, funds from an older and adjacent TIF may be used to front-fund costs in a newer TIF that does not generate enough revenue to cover the expenses on its own. Those funds, in turn, may be repaid to the older TIF once there are sufficient revenues in the newer TIF, or not.

The Village does track “due to” and “due from” transfers in its Annual Financial Report but it is unclear from available information the extent to which the transfers are intended to help cover costs versus a reimbursement of a prior transfer. The Village of University Park maintains a General Fund, which is the main fund it uses for government operations pursuant to its annual budget. Over the years the Village has borrowed cash from multiple TIF funds to maintain liquidity in its General Fund instead of using short-term borrowing funds to cover costs in anticipation of revenues, such as property tax revenue that is collected a year in arrears. According to the Village's AFR for fiscal year 2020, the Village's General Fund has a negative fund balance of \$17.5 million and owes \$21.8 million to TIF #5 and \$1.6 million to TIF #3.

III. MEASURING TIF DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

A. Growth of Incremental Equalized Assessed Value

One measure of a TIF district's effectiveness is the amount of growth in the TIF's EAV over time and the degree to which the growth is sustained. **Table 2** shows the incremental EAV above the base or "TIF EAV" by tax year for each of the seven TIF districts from tax year 1986 through 2023. Among the seven districts, TIF #5 Dralle Governors has experienced the largest amount of EAV growth in terms of total dollars as well as percentage change having added \$85.8 million in EAV to a base EAV of \$875,899 that marks 9,792% increase over the base.

Table 2: TIF Incremental EAV by TIF District and Tax Year

Tax Year	TIF #1	TIF #2	TIF #3	TIF #4	TIF #5	TIF #6	TIF #7	Total
1986	13,537	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,537
1987	111,864	51,951	-	-	-	-	-	163,815
1988	581,793	235,866	-	-	-	-	-	817,659
1989	1,952,608	273,484	-	-	-	-	-	2,226,092
1990	2,907,340	221,925	-	-	-	-	-	3,129,265
1991	1,961,517	4,121,294	-	-	-	-	-	6,082,811
1992	2,045,605	5,288,973	-	-	-	-	-	7,334,578
1993	1,241,347	7,973,276	-	-	-	-	-	9,214,623
1994	1,338,421	9,362,742	197,081	-	-	-	-	10,898,244
1995	731,756	10,513,858	585,828	-	-	-	-	11,831,442
1996	1,185,288	11,398,618	1,084,290	1,056,945	-	-	-	14,725,141
1997	1,219,383	12,335,543	1,130,248	7,702,079	-	-	-	22,387,253
1998	1,154,733	13,211,553	3,493,072	8,087,108	-	-	-	25,946,466
1999	1,118,921	14,650,698	3,824,001	8,240,027	-	-	-	27,833,647
2000	1,176,027	15,379,570	3,901,451	8,253,203	-	-	-	28,710,251
2001*	1,217,699	17,434,160	4,037,041	8,367,440	-	-	-	31,056,340
2002	1,259,371	19,488,750	4,172,631	8,481,677	69,391	-	-	33,471,820
2003	1,258,796	19,061,313	4,076,839	8,481,308	7,322,291	-	-	40,200,547

Tax Year	TIF #1	TIF #2	TIF #3	TIF #4	TIF #5	TIF #6	TIF #7	Total
2004	1,258,612	20,097,341	4,096,243	8,481,308	7,331,015	-	-	41,264,519
2005	1,328,914	24,370,630	4,197,439	7,907,150	9,623,179	-	-	47,427,312
2006	1,313,141	28,555,001	4,196,594	7,902,150	24,881,015	-	-	66,847,901
2007	1,372,838	30,404,053	5,824,751	7,959,372	33,219,826	-	-	78,780,840
2008	1,372,708	31,108,169	5,811,758	8,493,273	34,607,176	-	-	81,393,084
2009	-	35,975,565	5,811,808	8,001,192	42,169,851	-	-	91,958,416
2010	-	-	5,809,384	8,001,192	44,584,270	-	-	58,394,846
2011	-	-	5,811,009	8,001,192	45,394,039	-	-	59,206,240
2012	-	-	5,802,652	8,001,192	59,813,132	-	-	73,616,976
2013	-	-	5,750,628	8,001,192	59,494,189	102	-	73,246,111
2014	-	-	5,710,524	8,001,444	65,931,765	370,792	-	80,014,525
2015	-	-	5,309,437	8,002,173	72,547,545	370,936	-	86,230,091
2016	-	-	5,331,066	8,003,208	70,998,353	371,140	-	84,703,767
2017	-	-	5,209,248	10,832,945	69,077,470	371,366	-	85,491,029
2018	-	-	-	9,098,732	83,737,396	371,613	-	93,207,741
2019	-	-	-	9,101,159	79,692,523	444,714	125,162	89,363,558
2020	-	-	-	-	79,677,980	409,300	136,004	80,223,284
2021	-	-	-	-	79,680,580	414,965	143,924	80,239,469
2022	-	-	-	-	79,683,790	486,125	293,901	80,463,816
2023	-	-	-	-	85,765,198	542,612	1,267,009	87,574,819

Sources: Illinois Department of Revenue, Will County Clerk, JRG

*Estimated for all active TIFs in that year.

B. TIF District Tax Extensions

The term property tax extension refers to the amount of property taxes a taxing district can “extend” on a taxable parcel and differs from that district’s property tax levy although the two terms are often used interchangeably. The levy is the amount of property taxes a district has approved and requested but the actual amount extended may be less because of a state law that limits the annual growth in property tax extensions to the lesser of inflation or 3.0% for certain taxing districts like school districts and non-home rule municipalities among others. The extension amount is what is printed on a property tax bill. Actual revenues may be less due to “collection loss” that results from delinquent payments or successful appeal or prior year(s) property taxes.

The Village of University Park is a home-rule municipality and therefore not subject to the Illinois Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (“PTELL”), which limits the annual growth in property tax extensions to the lesser of inflation or 3.0%. As a result, the Village’s tax extension and levy amounts typically match.

Correlated with changes in EAV over time is the amount of incremental property tax revenue generated in a TIF district. Because aggregate property tax rates can vary from year to year it does not always follow that the same percentage increase in TIF EAV results in the same percentage increase in revenue.

Over 22 years, TIF #5 has generated \$166.3 million, which is more than double that of the combined total of \$80.6 million generated by the first four TIFs the Village created. TIF #5 extension also accounts for 67% of total TIF extensions (\$247.9 million) since 1986. Following its expiration, approximately 98% of the municipality’s current TIF EAV will be available to taxing districts, and the annual TIF revenues from the remaining TIF districts will be less than \$250k.

Table 3: TIF Tax Extensions by TIF District and Tax Year

Tax Year	TIF #1	TIF #2	TIF #3	TIF #4	TIF #5	TIF #6	TIF #7	Total
1986	1,296		-	-	-	-	-	1,296
1987	11,162	5,030	-	-	-	-	-	16,192
1988	61,746	20,028	-	-	-	-	-	81,774
1989	211,928	25,745	-	-	-	-	-	237,673
1990	328,910	24,532	-	-	-	-	-	353,442
1991	220,932	462,665	-	-	-	-	-	683,597
1992	226,183	581,661	-	-	-	-	-	807,844
1993	142,744	913,373	-	-	-	-	-	1,056,117
1994	150,800	1,051,281	21,036	-	-	-	-	1,223,117
1995	88,039	1,261,643	66,871	-	-	-	-	1,416,553
1996	140,055	1,343,062	128,114	124,890	-	-	-	1,736,121
1997	135,708	1,368,871	125,778	857,180	-	-	-	2,487,537
1998	138,034	1,573,798	417,542	966,717	-	-	-	3,096,091
1999	131,845	1,720,650	450,575	970,939	-	-	-	3,274,009
2000	135,438	1,765,615	449,304	950,488	-	-	-	3,300,845
2001*	146,077	2,092,138	484,268	1,002,970	-	-	-	3,725,453
2002	156,715	2,418,661	519,231	1,055,451	8,635	-	-	4,158,693
2003	155,299	2,345,755	502,960	1,046,347	903,358	-	-	4,953,719
2004	152,576	2,430,653	496,570	1,028,155	888,710	-	-	4,996,664
2005	164,716	3,015,136	520,264	980,075	1,192,774	-	-	5,872,965
2006	157,882	3,427,570	504,565	950,091	2,991,494	-	-	8,031,602
2007	147,297	3,250,648	624,961	853,993	3,564,288	-	-	8,441,187
2008	146,784	3,315,048	621,451	908,186	3,700,545	-	-	8,692,014
2009	-	3,915,917	634,248	873,178	4,602,038	-	-	10,025,381

Tax Year	TIF #1	TIF #2	TIF #3	TIF #4	TIF #5	TIF #6	TIF #7	Total
2010	-	-	663,467	913,784	5,091,791	-	-	6,669,042
2011	-	-	722,815	995,252	5,646,474	-	-	7,364,541
2012	-	-	805,609	1,110,821	8,303,977	-	-	10,220,407
2013	-	-	887,927	1,235,440	9,186,319	16	-	11,309,702
2014	-	-	953,386	1,335,881	11,007,638	61,906	-	13,358,811
2015	-	-	882,419	1,329,985	12,057,620	61,651	-	14,331,675
2016	-	-	903,330	1,356,176	12,030,955	62,891	-	14,353,352
2017	-	-	881,150	1,832,523	11,685,283	62,821	-	14,461,777
2018	-	-	-	1,505,531	13,855,692	61,489	-	15,422,712
2019	-	-	-	1,475,844	12,922,940	72,115	20,296	14,491,195
2020	-	-	-	-	12,042,530	61,862	20,556	12,124,948
2021	-	-	-	-	11,751,133	61,198	21,226	11,833,557
2022	-	-	-	-	11,230,315	68,513	41,421	11,340,249
2023	-	-	-	-	11,662,266	73,784	172,287	11,908,337
Total	3,352,166	38,329,480	13,267,841	25,659,897	166,326,775	648,246	275,786	247,860,191

Sources: Illinois Department of Revenue, Will County Clerk, JRG

*Estimated for all active TIFs

C. Comparison of TIF EAV and EAV in Village Tax Base

Another metric used to gauge the effectiveness of TIF is comparing the proportion of total TIF EAV to the proportion of EAV in the municipality's tax base that is not in a TIF and how the proportions changes over time as TIFs come to an end. The total amount of EAV in the Village's TIF districts account for a significant portion of the total EAV in the Village (see **Table 4**). Within the larger context of total EAV in the Village, the amount of EAV in TIF districts has ranged from a high of 46.0% following the expiration of TIF#1 to a low of 29.7% following the expiration of TIF #2 a year later. Since the expiration of TIF #2 the proportion has grown to 43.9% in tax year 2018 but declined modestly again following the end of TIF #3 and TIF #4.

Table 4: *TIF EAV and Village EAV, by Tax Year*

Tax Year	Active TIF Districts	Total TIF EAV (\$)	Village EAV (\$)	Total EAV (\$)	EAV in TIF (%)
2005	5	47,427,312	83,862,614	131,289,926	36.1
2006	5	66,847,901	85,708,118	152,556,019	43.8
2007	5	78,780,840	102,639,932	181,420,772	43.4
2008	5	81,393,084	107,151,277	188,544,361	43.2
2009	4	91,958,416	107,939,502	199,897,918	46.0
2010	3	58,394,846	138,225,023	196,619,869	29.7
2011	3	59,206,240	128,656,071	187,862,311	31.5
2012	3	73,616,976	120,303,331	193,920,307	38.0
2013	4	73,246,111	112,446,754	185,692,865	39.4
2014	4	80,014,525	106,768,375	186,782,900	42.8
2015	4	86,230,091	108,138,335	194,368,426	44.4
2016	4	84,703,767	110,826,966	195,530,733	43.3
2017	4	85,491,029	113,258,817	198,749,846	43.0
2018	3	93,207,741	119,257,307	212,465,048	43.9
2019	4	89,363,558	126,640,719	216,004,277	41.4
2020	3	80,223,284	137,328,904	217,552,188	36.9
2021	3	80,239,469	141,496,976	221,736,445	36.2
2022	3	80,463,816	153,659,935	234,123,751	34.4
2023	3	87,574,819	161,004,933	248,579,752	35.2

Sources: Will County Clerk, JRG

The figures in **Table 4** tell another story, which is that the TIF districts (especially TIF #5) appear to have captured most of the private investment in the Village over the years. The Village's EAV appears to have grown in no small part due to the closing of four TIF districts and the EAV for those TIFs being added to the Village's tax base. With the expiration of TIF #5 in 2025, approximately \$85M in TIF EAV will be available to other taxing agencies and the share of TIF EAV to total EAV will drop from 35% to less than 1%.

D. Leveraging Private Investment

Another metric used to gauge the effectiveness of a TIF district is the degree to which investment of public resources, including TIF funds, bond proceeds or other sources leverage private investment in economic development projects. The Annual TIF Reports and Village

Annual Audit indicate that the Village has entered into redevelopment agreements with developers in a few TIF districts, although details are scarce and the agreements themselves are not readily available to the public.

The Annual TIF Reports contains two sections where a municipality should provide information on private investment in the district. As noted earlier, Section 3.2b of the ATR directs the municipality to list entities that have received cumulative payments over \$10,000 during fiscal year and type of expenditure. For example, this section could include payments to vendors for legal services, accounting services, and contractors working on public infrastructure projects, in addition to payments to private developers. A review of section 3.2b suggests that the Village has entered into redevelopment agreements with multiple entities in at least two TIF districts including TIF #3 Cicero Industrial and TIF #5 Dralle Governors.

Section 5 of the Annual TIF Report directs the municipality to list all projects undertaken in the TIF district and list the amount of public investment and private investment to date as well as the amount required to complete the project. Based on these inputs, the report calculates a leverage ratio of public to private investment. The Village has not completed section 5 in any of the Annual TIF Reports JRG reviewed.

The Village's Annual Financial Report also provides some evidence that the Village is party to redevelopment agreements with multiple private developers. Some years show payments for redevelopment agreements for certain TIF funds. However, there is a lack of consistency in the reporting from year to year.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

A. Conclusions

The effectiveness of past and current TIF districts in University Park is mixed. On one hand some TIF districts have been incredibly successful considering the amount EAV growth and TIF revenue they have generated. Notable among them is TIF #5, which will add a significant amount of EAV to the Village's tax base when it ends in 2025. However, this and the effectiveness of prior TIF districts to help grow the Village's property tax base when they end is overshadowed by a history of poor administration and lack of transparency.

The current Village administration is making efforts to comply with all financial reporting and filing requirements involving the Office of the Illinois Comptroller. However, more will need to be done regarding the Village's financial practices involving the use of TIF funds and improving transparency around the use of TIF.

B. Using TIF to Subsidize Residential Development

Using TIF to finance implementation of the TOD Plan would mark the first time the Village has used TIF to incentivize residential development. State law requires municipalities that subsidize residential development with TIF to set aside up to 40% of the incremental property taxes generated by the development to reimburse affected school districts for increased operating costs resulting from additional enrollment from students living in a TIF-supported residential development.

Crete-Monee School District 201-U would need to demonstrate that the TOD residential development has contributed to increased enrollment at the end of each school year and make its claim for reimbursement to the Village between July 1 and September 30 each year or else it waives its claim for the prior school year. The Village can negotiate with District 201-U to provide less than the State mandated maximum and codify it in an intergovernmental agreement approved by both entities.

C. Implementing Best Practices

Tax increment financing can be an effective tool to induce private investment and spur economic growth in a redevelopment project area. Garnering broad support from various stakeholders is critical to initiating a successful redevelopment plan intended to harness 23 years of property tax growth. However, a lack of transparency can undermine the best laid plans.

Prior to adopting TIF to finance the TOD plan, the Village, residents, businesses, and overlapping taxing districts would be well served by implementing of several best practices around the use of TIF. These include but are not limited to:

1. Updating the Village's website to include all TIF plans (draft and final form), TIF ordinances, redevelopment agreements, intergovernmental agreements and Joint Review Board meeting minutes;
2. Updating the Village's website to include past and current financial information including Annual TIF Reports and Village Annual Financial Reports;
3. Completing all sections of the Annual TIF report including but not limited to section 3.2b and section 5 to demonstrate the degree to which TIF funds are subsidizing and leveraging private investment; and
4. Negotiating and posting online, an intergovernmental agreement with Crete-Monee School District 201-U detailing the terms under which District 201-U can seek reimbursement for increased costs attributed to TIF supported residential development.

While not exhaustive, the practices outlined above lend themselves to increased transparency concerning the use of TIF and other municipal funds.

Village of University Park Transit Oriented Development Plan Special Financing Study Recommendations and Implementation Guide

Prepared for
Regional Transportation Authority Transystems

By
Johnson Research Group, Inc.

February 11, 2025

APPENDIX D

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Regional Transportation Authority (“RTA”) engaged TranSystems and its subcontractor Johnson Research Group, Inc. (“JRG”) to conduct a Special Financing Study for funding implementation of the Village of University Park Transit Oriented Development Plan (“TOD Plan”) adopted by the Village of University Park (“Village”) in February 2023. The TOD Plan builds on the Village’s 2002 TOD Plan and 2014 Comprehensive Plan by providing a vision for transforming 77 acres of vacant land east of the University Park Metra Electric Line Station. The 2023 TOD Plan was completed with the support of the RTA Community Planning program.

The University Park Special Financing District Study was overseen by a Steering Committee and received input from various stakeholders as well as a Focus Group. Discussions with the Steering Committee and Focus Group included reviewing the purpose and scope of the Special Financing District Study, presenting the TOD Plan, study area, and existing conditions. Existing and past tax increment financing (TIF) districts was also discussed as well as assets and constraints for future development. An overview of the tools in the “economic development toolbox” provided information on the various forms of economic development incentives that the Village could select to finance development on the TOD site. Discussions with stakeholders included representatives from Crete-Monee School District 201U, Governors State University, PACE, Metra, Illinois Department of Transportation, real estate brokers and a nearby industrial business.

This document incorporates the final steps in the development of the Special Financing Study, which are to present a set of recommendations for financing implementation of the TOD Plan, including potential revenues generated by those recommendations, and lay out the steps necessary to implement the recommendations.

II. TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

The TOD Plan envisions four phases with residential development occurring across all four phases and commercial space developed in the first three phases. Based on renderings in the TOD Plan, the consulting team estimated the number of residential units and amount of commercial space that could potentially be built across all four phases (see Table 1). Key to implementation of the TOD Plan will be acquiring two privately owned parcels. The estimated cost to acquire both parcels is estimated to be \$2.47 million (see Table 2).

Table 1: Estimated Quantities by Phase

Development Type	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Total
Multi-family apartments (units)	200	280	450	140	1,070
Townhomes (units)	-	-	19	57	76
Single-family detached (units)	-	-	11	23	34
Total Residential Units	200	280	480	220	1,180
Mixed-use commercial / retail (sq. ft.)	3,000	13,600	7,200	-	23,800
Free-standing commercial / retail (sq. ft.)	5,600	16,800	31,200	-	53,600
Total Commercial / Retail Sq. Ft.	8,600	30,400	38,400	-	77,400

Sources: University Park TOD Plan, JRG.

In addition to acquisition costs, the TOD Site will require site preparation and basic infrastructure, including water and sewer lines, construction of roadways and sidewalks, electrical work and installation of lighting and traffic signals, and landscaping and erosion control systems. The estimated costs for construction and engineering for each phase are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Estimated Infrastructure Costs by Phase

Expenditure	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Phase 4 (\$)	Total
Acquisition	2,474,000	-	-	-	-
Engineering	1,442,000	748,000	2,250,000	1,504,000	5,944,000
Construction	8,007,000	4,157,000	12,499,000	8,349,000	33,012,000
Total	11,923,000	4,905,000	14,749,000	9,853,000	41,430,000

Sources: University Park TOD Plan, Transystems.

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING OPTIONS

The consulting team identified six potential options available to the Village to finance implementation of the TOD Plan (see **Table 3**). Authorization for utilizing four of these financing options rests with the Village, while others would require either state or federal approval.

Table 3: Economic Development Financing Options

Tool	Mechanism	Examples of Eligible Cots	Designation Authority
Tax Increment Financing District	Value capture of property tax growth	Acquisition, demolition, site prep, renovation/rehab, and public infrastructure	Municipal
Special Service Area	Additional property tax levy	Maintenance/beautification, marketing, business attraction, special events & promotions, auto and bike transit, security, and façade improvements	Municipal
Business District	Additional sales/hotel tax	Similar to TIF	Municipal
Economic Incentive Agreement	Sales tax rebate	Site preparation, building rehab, tenant improvements, and public infrastructure	Municipal
Enterprise Zone	Tax exemptions (sales, real estate transfer, utilities)	Sales tax exemption on construction materials	State
Opportunity Zone	Federal capital gains tax credit for qualifying investments		US Treasury

Sources: JRG

A. Tax Increment Financing District

Tax increment financing in Illinois is structured to capture property tax growth in the district over 23 years, which can be used to pay for improvements within the district. Eligible costs include land acquisition, demolition, site preparation, environmental remediation, construction and reconstruction of public buildings, renovation and rehabilitation of existing privately- owned buildings, and public infrastructure. To create a TIF district, state law requires a study demonstrating that the area meets certain statutory criteria as well as a redevelopment plan that includes estimated project costs, revenue projections and anticipated term of any debt obligations. A TIF can be extended for an additional 12 years with approval from the state legislature and governor.

B. Business District

A Business District imposes an additional sales tax and/or hotel tax in 0.25% increments up to 1.00% for 23 years. Similar to TIF, eligible costs include land acquisition, demolition, site preparation, environmental remediation, construction and reconstruction of public buildings, renovation and rehabilitation of existing privately-owned buildings, and public infrastructure. Creation of the district requires a finding that the area meets certain statutory criteria to qualify and a redevelopment plan that includes estimated project costs, funding sources, tax rates and anticipated term of any debt obligations. Taxes are administered by the Illinois Department of Revenue and remitted to the municipality. A Business District can be used in conjunction with TIF.

C. Special Service Area

A Special Service Area imposes an additional property tax within its boundaries to pay for eligible costs including but not limited to public way maintenance and beautification, marketing, business retention and attraction initiatives, special events and promotional activities, automobile and bike transit, security, façade improvements, and other commercial and economic development initiatives. A commission oversees the SSA and typically contracts with an administrator to manage operations. The commission works with the municipality to develop an annual budget and property tax levy that must be approved by the municipality's legislative body. SSA property tax billing and tax collections are administered by Will County.

D. Economic Incentive Agreement

An Economic Incentive Agreement is a negotiated agreement between a municipality and developer to rebate sales tax to a specified party for improvements of vacant buildings and parcels. Eligible costs include site preparation, building rehab, tenant improvements, and public infrastructure. The agreements can be used in conjunction with TIF and a Business District to make projects financially feasible.

E. Enterprise Zone

An Enterprise Zone provides for sales and use tax exemptions on building materials for projects in the zone. An Enterprise Zone can also include additional state sales tax exemptions on purchases of personal property used or consumed in the manufacturing process or in the operation of a pollution control facility; an exemption on state utility taxes for electricity and natural gas; an exemption on state telecommunication charges and excise tax. The program also provides an Enterprise Zone Construction Jobs Credit that allows eligible project owners to deduct allocated tax credits from their taxable income. Tax exemptions are available for companies that make minimum statutory investments that either create or retain a certain number of jobs. These exemptions require a business to make application to, and be certified by, the Illinois Department of Commerce. Creation of an Enterprise Zone requires state authorization.

F. Opportunity Zone

An Opportunity Zone is a federal program aimed at incentivizing private investments in economically distressed communities by providing capital gains tax credit on qualifying investment vehicles. A state's governor nominates a qualifying area, which must be certified by the US Treasury Secretary.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section focuses on which options would be best suited to financing the TOD Plan implementation. Also included with each recommendation is the potential amount of revenue that each option could generate. In brief, a TIF district, business district sales tax, a special service area and economic incentive agreements are options readily available to the Village and can be tailored to meet the needs of implementing the TOD Plan under local control.

A. Create a Tax Increment Financing District

Creating a TIF district to capture the growth in EAV and property taxes from development of the TOD site will produce the most revenue of all the options. **Table 5** shows the total estimated TIF revenue generated by each TOD Project phase. TIF revenues could be used to help fund infrastructure improvements across all four phases. The Village could issue alternate revenue bonds and use the proceeds to fund TOD Plan infrastructure improvements and repay the principal and interest due on those bonds with future TIF revenue.

Table 4: Total TIF Revenue by Year and Project Phase

Project Year	TIF Year	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Phase 4 (\$)	Total (\$)
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	1	0	0	0	0	0
3	2	0	0	0	0	0
4	3	325,900	0	0	0	325,900
5	4	627,300	0	0	0	627,300
6	5	990,700	518,400	0	0	1,509,100
7	6	1,010,800	991,900	0	0	2,002,700
8	7	1,031,200	1,562,900	1,012,300	0	3,606,400
9	8	1,052,100	1,594,300	1,927,600	0	4,574,000
10	9	1,073,300	1,626,500	3,031,100	0	5,730,900
11	10	1,095,000	1,659,300	3,091,900	690,500	6,536,700
12	11	1,117,200	1,692,700	3,154,000	1,318,000	7,281,900
13	12	1,139,700	1,726,700	3,217,300	2,074,500	8,158,200
14	13	1,162,700	1,761,500	3,281,900	2,116,200	8,322,300
15	14	1,186,200	1,797,000	3,347,700	2,158,800	8,489,700

Project Year	TIF Year	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Phase 4 (\$)	Total (\$)
16	15	1,210,200	1,833,100	3,414,900	2,202,200	8,660,400
17	16	1,234,600	1,870,000	3,483,400	2,246,500	8,834,500
18	17	1,259,500	1,907,600	3,553,400	2,291,600	9,012,100
19	18	1,284,900	1,946,000	3,624,600	2,337,700	9,193,200
20	19	1,310,800	1,985,100	3,697,300	2,384,700	9,377,900
21	20	1,337,300	2,025,100	3,771,500	2,432,600	9,566,500
22	21	1,364,300	2,065,800	3,847,200	2,481,400	9,758,700
23	22	1,391,700	2,107,300	3,924,300	2,531,300	9,954,600
24	23	1,419,900	2,149,700	4,003,100	2,582,100	10,154,800
25	24	1,448,400	2,193,000	4,083,300	2,634,000	10,358,700
Totals		25,073,700	35,013,900	59,466,800	32,482,100	152,036,500

Assumptions:

1. Base Annual Assessed Value ("AV") per residential unit: \$31,648;
2. Commercial / retail assumes Assessor Fair Market Value ("FMV") of \$120 per square foot and annual property taxes of \$5.44 per square foot;
3. Annual AV growth: 2.00%;
4. Tax Rate: 13.5979%
5. Collection rate: 100%

Source: JRG

State law requires municipalities that subsidize residential development with TIF to set aside up to 40% of the incremental property taxes generated by the development to reimburse affected school districts for increased operating costs resulting from additional enrollment from students living in a TIF-supported residential development.

The TOD site lies within the attendance boundaries of the Crete-Monee School District 201-U ("SD 201-U"), which is a unified school district with five elementary schools, one middle school and one high school as well as an early childhood learning center. SD 201-U would need to demonstrate that the TOD residential development has contributed to increased enrollment at the end of each school year and make its claim for reimbursement to the Village between July 1 and September 30 each year or else it waives its claim for reimbursement for the prior school year. The Village can negotiate with SD 201-U to provide less than the state mandated maximum and codify it in an intergovernmental agreement approved by both entities.

Table 5 presents the allocation of projected TIF revenue with 40% set aside for Crete-Monee School District 201-U and 60% available for Project financing.

Table 5: TOD TIF Revenue Allocation

Project Year	TIF Year	40% SD 201-U (\$)	60% Project (\$)	Total (\$)
1	0	0	0	0
2	1	0	0	0
3	2	0	0	0
4	3	130,360	195,540	325,900
5	4	250,920	376,380	627,300
6	5	603,640	905,460	1,509,100
7	6	801,080	1,201,620	2,002,700
8	7	1,442,560	2,163,840	3,606,400
9	8	1,829,600	2,744,400	4,574,000
10	9	2,292,360	3,438,540	5,730,900
11	10	2,614,680	3,922,020	6,536,700
12	11	2,912,760	4,369,140	7,281,900
13	12	3,263,280	4,894,920	8,158,200
14	13	3,328,920	4,993,380	8,322,300
15	14	3,395,880	5,093,820	8,489,700
16	15	3,464,160	5,196,240	8,660,400
17	16	3,533,800	5,300,700	8,834,500
18	17	3,604,840	5,407,260	9,012,100
19	18	3,677,280	5,515,920	9,193,200
20	19	3,751,160	5,626,740	9,377,900
21	20	3,826,600	5,739,900	9,566,500
22	21	3,903,480	5,855,220	9,758,700
23	22	3,981,840	5,972,760	9,954,600
24	23	4,061,920	6,092,880	10,154,800
25	24	4,143,480	6,215,220	10,358,700
Totals		60,814,600	91,221,900	152,036,500

Source: JRG

B. Create a Business District

In conjunction with a TIF district, the Village could also create a Business District for the TOD site, which could potentially generate \$3.0 million assuming a 1.00% BD Sales Tax rate applied 50% of sales of \$300 per square foot, growing at 2.00% annually (see **Table 6**). Revenue generated by the Business District Sales Tax could augment funding of improvements supported by TIF, focused on acquisition, site preparation, and building out infrastructure.

Table 6: Business District Sales Tax by Year and Project Phase

Project Year	TIF Year	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Total (\$)
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	4,731	0	0	4,731
5	2	8,963	0	0	8,963
6	3	14,065	17,401	0	31,466
7	4	14,345	32,962	0	47,307
8	5	14,633	51,725	22,869	89,227
9	6	14,925	52,760	43,319	111,004
10	7	15,224	53,815	67,977	137,016
11	8	15,528	54,891	69,336	139,755
12	9	15,839	55,989	70,723	142,551
13	10	16,155	57,109	72,138	145,402
14	11	16,479	58,251	73,581	148,311
15	12	16,808	59,416	75,052	151,276
16	13	17,145	60,605	76,553	154,303
17	14	17,488	61,817	78,084	157,389
18	15	17,837	63,053	79,646	160,536
19	16	18,194	64,314	81,239	163,747
20	17	18,558	65,601	82,863	167,022
21	18	18,929	66,912	84,521	170,362

Project Year	TIF Year	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Total (\$)
22	19	19,308	68,250	86,211	173,769
23	20	19,694	69,616	87,935	177,245
24	21	20,088	71,008	89,694	180,790
25	22	20,490	72,428	91,488	184,406
26	23	20,899	73,877	93,318	188,094
Totals		376,325	1,231,800	1,426,547	3,034,672

Assumptions:

1. Business District Sales Tax rate: 1.00%;
2. Sales per square foot: \$300 growing by 2.0% annually;
3. Retail sales subject to Business District Sales Tax: 50.0%;
4. Illinois Department of Revenue administrative fee: 1.25%.

Source: JRG

C. Special Service Area

An SSA could produce up to \$11.2 million in conjunction with the TIF assuming an SSA tax rate of 1.00% (see Table 7). Under state law, incremental property tax revenue generated by an SSA property tax extension in a TIF district can be used to fund eligible expenses of either the SSA or the TIF. Unlike TIF or a Business District, the SSA requires an annual budget and property tax levy that must be approved by the Village Board. The SSA could also extend past the life of the TIF and Business Districts to generate additional revenue. The approved ordinances must be sent to the Will County Clerk who determines final property tax extensions and rates applied to parcels on the site.

Table 7: *Table 7. Special Service Area Property Tax Revenue by Phase and Project Year*

Project Year	SSA Year	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Phase 4 (\$)	Total (\$)
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	24,788	0	0	0	24,788
5	2	46,954	0	0	0	46,954
6	3	73,683	38,942	0	0	112,625
7	4	75,156	73,768	0	0	148,924
8	5	76,659	115,759	75,265	0	267,683

Project Year	SSA Year	Phase 1 (\$)	Phase 2 (\$)	Phase 3 (\$)	Phase 4 (\$)	Total (\$)
9	6	78,193	118,074	142,574	0	338,841
10	7	79,756	120,435	223,731	0	423,922
11	8	81,351	122,845	228,206	51,600	484,002
12	9	82,978	125,301	232,769	97,745	538,793
13	10	84,638	127,808	237,425	153,385	603,256
14	11	86,331	130,363	242,173	156,453	615,320
15	12	88,058	132,971	247,017	159,582	627,628
16	13	89,819	135,631	251,958	162,774	640,182
17	14	91,615	138,343	256,996	166,029	652,983
18	15	93,448	141,110	262,136	169,350	666,044
19	16	95,316	143,931	267,379	172,737	679,363
20	17	97,222	146,811	272,727	176,191	692,951
21	18	99,167	149,747	278,181	179,715	706,810
22	19	101,151	152,742	283,745	183,310	720,948
23	20	103,173	155,796	289,419	186,976	735,364
24	21	105,237	158,912	295,208	190,715	750,072
25	22	107,342	162,091	301,112	194,530	765,075
Totals		1,862,035	2,591,380	4,388,021	2,401,092	11,242,528

Assumptions:

1. SSA tax rate: 1.00%
2. Annual AV growth: 2.00%;
3. Tax collection rate: 100%

Source: JRG

D. Economic Incentive Agreements

An Economic Incentive Agreement could be used to incentivize a particular retailer by rebating a portion of sales taxes generated by the retailer. Since Business Districts sales taxes are already pledged and can only be used for specific purposes, the Village could rebate portions of the Village's Home-Rule Retailer Occupation Tax (1.00%) or the portion of the Municipal Retailers Occupation Tax (1.00%) it receives from the State of Illinois. An Economic Incentive Agreement could also be used to incentivize re-tenanting of commercial spaces that become vacant over the life of the TIF District and Business District as well as after they end.

V. IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

The matrix in **Table 8** below incorporates the recommendations from above and outlines implementation steps for financing the TOD.

Table 8: Implementation Matrix

Phase	Process	Responsibility	Partners	Funding Mechanism
Site Assembly	Inducement ordinance(s)	Village		
	Create TOD TIF district	Village	TIF Consultant, General Public, Will County	TIF
	Acquire privately owned parcels	Village	Private Property Owners	TIF
Pre-Development	Issue request for proposal for a TOD site developer	Village	Developers	
	Determine final quantities	Village, Developer	General Public	
	Develop project budget	Developer	Village	
	Identify tenants for commercial/retail space	Developer	Village, General Public	
	Identify funding gap	Village	Developer, Village Consultant	TIF, SSA, BD
	Identify eligible costs by funding mechanism	Village / Consultant	Village / Consultant	
	Determine funding sources	Village		
	Negotiate intergovernmental agreement	Village, SD 201-U	Village Consultant	
	Negotiate redevelopment agreement	Village, Developer	Village Consultant	TIF, SSA, BD
	Permitting	Developer	Village	

Phase	Process	Responsibility	Partners	Funding Mechanism
Site Development	Construct Phase 1 Multi-Family, Mixed Use, Free-standing Commercial		Village	
	Create a Special Service Area	Village	Village Consultant, Will County	
	Phase 1 Lease-up & Occupancy	Developer	Village	
	Create TOD Business District	Village	Consultant, IDOR	BD
	Create TOD Special Service Area	Village	Will County	
	Construct Phase 2 Multi-Family, Mixed-Use, Free-standing Commercial			
	Phase 2 Lease-up & Occupancy			
	Construct Phase 3 Single Family, Multi-Family, Mixed Use, Free-standing Commercial			
	Phase 3 Lease-up & Occupancy			
	Construct Phase 4 Single Family, Multi-Family			
	Phase 4 Lease-up & Occupancy			
Stabilization	Determine school enrollment impacts	SD 201-U	Village	
	Project monitoring & compliance	Village	Village, Consultant, IDOR, Will County	
	Ongoing financing commitments	Village	Developer / Lenders	
	Determine annual SSA property tax levy	Village	Will County	