



**Regional
Transportation
Authority**

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RTA FUNDS PLANNING FOR A PROPOSED TRANSIT STATION IN SOUTH CHICAGO HEIGHTS

Station area plan will guide development within station area

Chicago -- The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) announced today the launch of a planning project for the Village of South Chicago Heights. The study will provide the Village with a transit-oriented development plan for the station area that would include a mix of residential and commercial uses in a walkable, pedestrian-friendly area. The Village received a \$100,000 grant, with the Village contributing 20% of this amount in the form of a local match, through the RTA's Community Planning program, a grant program that focuses on planning assistance for local communities.

“Working with communities at the local level is truly important as we plan for the future to take advantage of proposed transit projects while maximizing the existing transit options available,” commented Leanne Redden, Senior Deputy Executive Director of Planning and Regional Programs. “Having a plan in place helps focus investments made by the Village of South Chicago Heights and our regional transit system as a whole, as we strive to bring transit to more areas of the six-county region.”

The Village recently adopted its first Comprehensive Plan that addresses the general planning and development issues for the Village as a whole. As part of that overall project, the station area plan being funded by the RTA will specifically study the area within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of the proposed Metra rail station (south of Sauk Trail Road and east of the tracks) and will be adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. The Village of South Chicago Heights has a possible station on the proposed Metra SouthEast Service (SES) Line that would operate between LaSalle Street Station and Crete Balmoral Park.

“Our work to plan for the future comes at a time when transit is growing more and more important in our region – especially with skyrocketing gas prices and increased traffic congestion,” commented Mayor Dave Owen, Village of South Chicago Heights. He added, “We have an amazing opportunity before us that will make a lasting impact on how our village accommodates future growth, plans for future transit, and works to maintain our quality of life.”

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The Plan will include meaningful public involvement from residents, village officials, the local business community, and other interested stakeholders. In addition, representatives from Metra and Pace will serve on the Steering Committee. The proposed station area would be improved by providing much needed transportation to and from downtown Chicago and by bringing new development and business opportunities to the local economy. The plan will recommend new residential and commercial development that could occur in the station area, as well as provide recommendations for improved access to the proposed station area and creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The RTA is continuing to work with Illinois lawmakers to develop and pass a comprehensive capital bill that would enable the transit system to be maintained, enhanced and expanded. Currently, with no state capital program in place, projects like the Metra SouthEast Service Line are threatened if a capital bill isn't passed.

About the RTA's Community Planning Program

The Community Planning program provides funding and planning assistance to communities for planning projects that benefit both the local communities and the RTA transit system. Launched in 1999 under the name Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP), the program was renamed and launched as the Community Planning program in June 2008 to better reflect the program's focus on planning assistance for local communities.

Community Planning offers units of local government such as municipalities, townships, and local planning agencies an opportunity to participate in the planning of local transit and transit related opportunities. The program funds projects that increase transit usage and multi-modal connectivity, improve access and circulation in and around transit facilities, promote pedestrian and transit friendly environments, develop local transit options, and create coordinated paratransit plans.

Through this program, the RTA seeks projects that are consistent with the four primary goals of its strategic plan: provide transportation options, ensure financial viability, enhance livability and economic vitality and demonstrate value. For more information, visit the program website at www.rtachicago.com/cp.

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About the RTA: The RTA provides financial oversight, funding and regional planning for the three public transit operators in northeastern Illinois: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) bus and train, Metra commuter rail and Pace suburban bus and paratransit. For more information, visit www.rtachicago.com and www.MovingBeyondCongestion.org.