



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

Development Opportunities around the Swansea MetroLink Station

SWANSEA, ILLINOIS

SPONSORED BY:
THE VILLAGE OF SWANSEA, ILLINOIS
BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT
ST. CLAIR COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

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 **Urban Land** **St. Louis**
Institute

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ABOUT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL (TAP) PROGRAM

The objective of ULI St. Louis' Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary, and objective advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the region. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI St. Louis conducts one-day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues, ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. Learn more at <http://stlouis.uli.org/uli-in-action/taps>.

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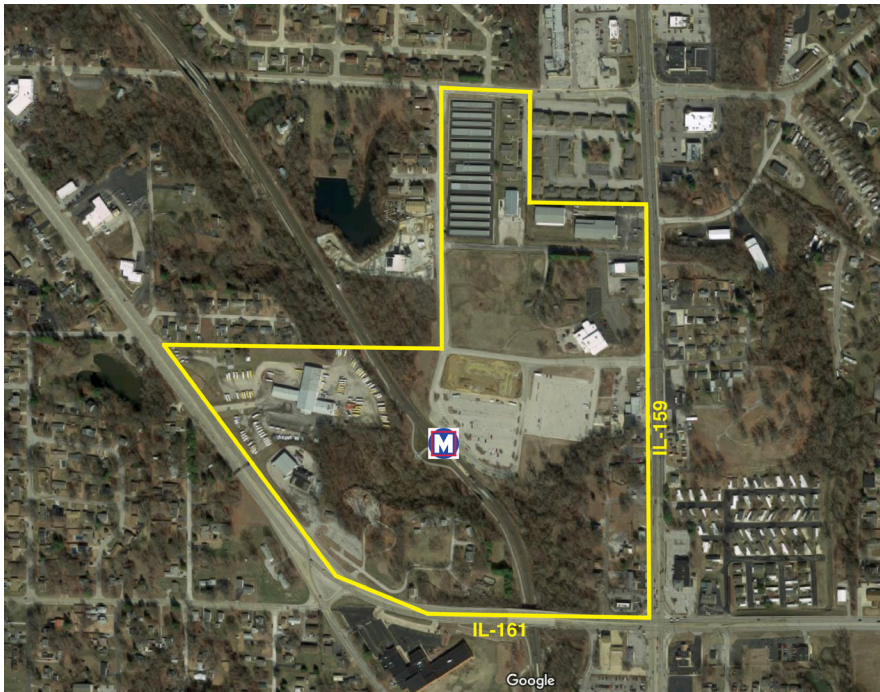
Executive Summary

The Swansea MetroLink Station, one of eleven stations in Illinois, is positioned for growth – growth in ridership and growth in other development around the station. Surrounded by undeveloped or under-developed land and situated at the crossroads of Illinois Road 159 and 161, there is solid development potential at this site. With this in mind, the Village of Swansea, Illinois, Bi-State Development, and the St. Clair County Transit District (collectively, the Sponsors) turned to ULI St. Louis – the Urban Land Institute (ULI) – for assistance in determining the best possible land use for the roughly 65 acres around the station. Through its Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program, ULI assembled a team of ULI members – real estate professionals with the expertise needed – to address the land use challenge(s) at hand.

The roughly 65-acre study area surrounds the Swansea MetroLink Station and is bound on the east by Illinois Road 159, to the south and west by Illinois Road 161, and to the north by the Hilda Ann neighborhood and jogging again north along Old Fullerton Road to Fullerton Road and the Old Fullerton lots to the north(east). Within this study area, there are existing businesses, parking lots, a small number of homes, and a new active senior living development. The Village of Swansea has been actively acquiring and assembling land in the study area with the goal of providing a cohesive development opportunity for a developer or developers to turn the area into a greater asset for the Village.

Turning to the TAP, the Sponsors asked the Panel to address the following three questions:

1. Given the possible assembly of publicly-held developable land around the Swansea MetroLink Station, how should the Sponsors position the land for development?
2. What uses should the Sponsors pursue to leverage the transit-oriented nature of the development site?
3. What pre-development work – infrastructure improvements, financing mechanisms, etc. – will need to be in place before development will



Aerial map of the Study Area surrounding the Swansea MetroLink Station.

take an interest in the site? How should the Sponsors pursue those improvements?

Through the TAP process, the Panel reviewed briefing materials provided by the Sponsors, toured the site, interviewed stakeholders from in and around the community, and ultimately delivered a set of recommendations to the Sponsors to use in addressing development in the study area. The Panel's recommendations, explained in detail in the following pages, sets forth the following for the Sponsors' consideration:

- Create a master plan for the study area with development taking place in four phases.
- Conduct detailed analysis for the first two phases, including a market study and housing needs analysis.
- Begin development in the southeast quadrant of the study area (Phase One) while continuing to acquire property throughout the study area and testing the market in each phase before proceeding.
- Focus on connectivity and pedestrian and bicyclist safety to, around, and through the study area.
- Work with the Illinois Department of Transportation to extend roadway and right-of-way improvements from Belleville north through the study area.

- Use existing TIF funds for light infrastructure investments (sidewalks, signage, etc.) in the study area to assist with connectivity and placemaking and to demonstrate public commitment to and investment in the site.
- Build on the civic identity for the Village in the study area and incorporate this identity into additional signage and wayfinding in and around the study area.
- Work with the Moose Lodge. Support/recognize the Lodge's presence as a community gathering place for Swansea and beyond and begin conversations about working with the membership to activate the open space/field directly west of the Lodge.

Environmental Scan

The Village of Swansea is a quiet bedroom community located between the St. Clair County Seat, Belleville, and the Metro East's retail center, Fairview Heights. The study area is positioned in the southern end of Swansea, in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of two Illinois state roads. As a potential development site, the study area boasts a number of assets that can be leveraged to the site's benefit and a few challenges that will need to be considered.

KEY ASSETS

Bedroom Community

The Village is generally considered a 'bedroom community' by those living in the region. Its citizens enjoy the lifestyle the Village offers and would prefer to support commercial businesses in the community. While they often leave Swansea for work and to shop, Swansea residents are generally happy to return to Swansea for its quiet lifestyle and small-town character.

Transit & Trails

Southwestern Illinois residents have embraced alternative transportation for commuting and recreation and the public sector has done a commendable job providing safe and accessible public transit options for commuters and expansive trails for recreational use. The MetroLink alignment runs through Swansea, and the Swansea Station provides welcome alternatives to commuting by automobile to/from work or baseball games. The St. Clair County MetroBikeLink is a bicycle trail that runs adjacent to the MetroLink alignment from the Shiloh/Scott Station to Memorial Hospital Station and through the study area. Funding is in place to extend the BikeLink further, but in the meantime, the trail enjoys frequent bicycle and pedestrian users during the week and on the weekend, mostly for recreation but for commuting purposes as well.

Metro Landing

In January 2018, Bywater Development broke ground on Metro Landing, a three-story active senior housing development in the study area. Positioned



The Swansea MetroLink Station is a critical transportation asset for the community.



Bywater Development's Metro Landing active living development has garnered significant interest from prospective tenants.



Southern Illinois has good public schools. High Mount Elementary is directly south of the study area.

close to the transit station, Bywater is banking on the active, aged 55+ market choosing a maintenance-free lifestyle with ready access to public transit. Due to open by the end of 2018 or early 2019, the developer has been extremely pleased with the response to Metro Landing to-date and is considering additional development options in and around the area.

Schools

Southwestern Illinois is known for good quality, small school districts. Adjacent to the study area and across IL-161 to the south, High Mount School serves elementary-aged children in the area and actively works to be a good neighbor and good citizen of the community, as evidenced by its community gardening program in the summer for area residents.

Utilities, Rates and Infrastructure

With some roads and light utilities already in place, infrastructure work to-date in the study area is a key asset when considering further development at the site. Additionally, utility access to the study area is excellent and locally-controlled, making additional improvements by future developers potentially more efficient than neighboring communities. Sewer rates and tap fees are also significantly lower than neighboring communities.

Moose Lodge

The northeast section of the study area is home to the Belleville Swansea Moose Lodge 1221. The Belleville Swansea Moose Lodge (the Moose Lodge), part of an international fraternal organization, serves as an important gathering place for members of the community, an event space for Moose members and outside organizations, and a charitable organization providing services to children and seniors. While surveying the Village for a community gathering space, the Panel recognized that this community gathering function in the Swansea community is largely being met today by the Moose Lodge.

CHALLENGES

Missing Civic Identity

As noted above, the Panel spent time considering the breadth of the Swansea community and found it wanting for a recognizable civic identity or sense of place. Its location between Belleville and Fairview Heights regularly positions the Village as a place *between* rather than a destination, a city standing on its own merit with its own identity. That missing civic identity is felt by residents and business owners alike.

Sparse Retail, Restaurant, Service Options

While residents noted frequently traveling to neighboring communities to dine, shop, and seek basic services, they also noted that they would prefer to enjoy these activities in their own community, supporting Swansea businesses and fellow residents working in Swansea. While some basic services are in place, such as a Schnucks grocery store and a number of health-related services, additional shopping and dining options, even fine-dining, would be most-welcome.

Auto-centric Community, Low Transit Ridership

While Swansea is home to a light-rail station along the Illinois MetroLink alignment, the station could benefit from increased ridership. Most of Swansea remains an auto-centric community and Village infrastructure reflects that approach to mobility. Automobiles rule the wide streets and alternative forms of transportation – walking, biking, bus, or train – are only recently beginning to gain broader attention.

Connectivity

As an auto-centric community, sidewalks, crosswalks, and connections to trails are not prevalent and are, at times, hard to locate. Illinois Road 159 does have a crosswalk at the entrance to the study area at Metro Way, but the east side of the state road lacks a sidewalk altogether, and the north side of Metro Way also lacks any pedestrian facility.

With prime access to the MetroBikeLink at the station, connectivity for those riding their bicycles to the study area is important. At present, the infrastructure in the study area assumes that those using the trail will trailer bikes to the site via automobile and then bike on the trail. Consideration needs to be given to those wishing to bike to the station and explore the trails further.

Remaining Property Assemblage and Owner Buy-in

The Village has been actively acquiring property in the study area and assembling parcels in a manner to create a cohesive development opportunity. Additional properties remain unacquired – both residential and commercial – and consideration will need to be given to the importance of these potential gaps in assembled land. It is also understood that a few property owners remain who do not wish to sell to the Village. While this should not limit significantly the development potential of the study area, those lingering privately-held parcels will need to be factored into a future master plan for the study area.



The current retail businesses along IL-159 are a jumble of uses and lack good visibility.



The entrance to the study area and to the station is unremarkable and easy to miss.



The west side of IL-159, the side that bounds the study area lacks any pedestrian facilities.

Land Use & Development Tools

In its evaluation of the study area, the TAP Panel identified a number of key elements that the Sponsors are encouraged to address in readying the site for development.

CURRENT LAND USE

It is important to fully understand the nature of the land use currently at play in the study area.

- The land around the station is underutilized. While this is clearly an asset in the form of undeveloped land ready for improvements, there are a few areas where current uses may not be maximizing the potential of a transit-oriented development (e.g. existing commercial buildings along IL-159).
- Within the commercial buildings along IL-159 sits a maintenance facility for Metro Transit. While it is possible that Metro could move these operations elsewhere, consideration will have to be given to the possible approval and financial hurdles required to do so.
- The other businesses within the commercial strip on IL-159 frequently turn over, with new users arriving with little consideration to any cohesion of uses within the buildings. One stakeholder likened the mix of uses to the Wild West – ‘anything goes.’
- The station features a very large parking lot as well as an adjacent overflow lot. Neither parking lot is used to capacity and may therefore provide opportunity for additional developable land. Use of that land comes via a multi-agency approval process, but the opportunity is compelling.
- Surrounding the study area to the north and west are light-industrial uses including a concrete manufacturer and a self-storage facility. These non-residential friendly uses must be kept in mind when master planning takes place.

COMMON THEMES FOR THE STUDY AREA – VOICES FROM THE STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

At the Sponsors' invitation, a variety of stakeholders were brought to the table to discuss with the TAP Panel their goals and ideas for the study area. Through these discussion a few key suggestions continued to arise.

- Swansea lacks a true civic center or downtown. The site could be developed in a manner that provides a much-desired city center for the community.
- Development at the site should be guided by a master plan. Stakeholders would like to see Village leadership articulate a vision for the site that is framed around market realities and seeks to actively pursue the uses outlined by the vision. Simply responding to market forces will not result in the type of master-planned development stakeholders would like to see.
- Connectivity throughout the Village and specifically in the study area was of concern to stakeholders. Better pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout Swansea are desired.

IDEAS FOR FUTURE LAND USE

Stakeholders also voiced a number of suggestions for the study area and several themes arose that might guide future land use decisions.

Broad Themes

- The uses that the Sponsors may ultimately consider pursuing or promoting in the study area would be more broadly beneficial to the community if the uses helped drive transit ridership, further supporting the station and, at the same time, lessening the impact of autos on Village infrastructure and taking more cars off the streets.
- Stakeholders would also like to see a mix of uses throughout the site instead of one large store, office building, or manufacturing center. Incorporating residential, office, retail, and possibly medical services (although there would appear to be a number of health care providers in the immediate area presently), stakeholders believe that the study area would appeal to a larger number of residents and provide options for additional housing and commercial space in the Village.
- In pursuing potential tenants for office, retail, or restaurant space, it may be more effective to pursue local operators interested in opening a first or subsequent location. These local operators may be more familiar with the hyper-local opportunities in Swansea, opportunities that would not typically meet the criteria of a national site selection team.



The entrance to the study area at the intersection of IL-159 and Metro Way.



The flat to lightly rolling topography of the site would work well for residential development.



The commercial businesses along IL-159 could benefit from more density and cohesion.



Coffee shops often serve as popular informal community gathering spaces.

- With the opening of Metro Landing adjacent to the station, there is a built-in market of active seniors (those age 55 and over) who may enjoy opportunities to shop or seek services just outside their front door.
- There also appeared to be some collective interest in developing the study area in a manner that could create a destination for the Village and surrounding communities. Whether the destination is a particular restaurant or entertainment venue (e.g. Belleville's Hofbrauhaus) or mix of entertainment options (e.g. Westport Plaza), there is a potential to build the area into something that becomes a draw for the community.
- Uses or placemaking devices (wayfinding, signage, etc.) that honor the history of the area in identity were also of interest. Stakeholders would like to see authenticity in such connections – for example, bringing to light the connections to the brick company that was once on-site and some of the kilns that remain.
- Perhaps most importantly, the uses lured to the study area should ultimately compliment the surrounding neighborhoods and communities and not simply be one more retail strip center competing for the same pool of retail tenants.

Residential Themes

Through its discovery process, the Panel found that additional residential uses could work well for the study area. The topography is well-suited for housing, particularly on the southern half of the study area and in the southeast quadrant behind the existing retail center. There appears to be a strong market for more active senior living options, given the initial success of Metro Landing, and additional workforce housing for families would also be a welcome addition to the neighborhood. Before pursuing any of these housing options, however, a housing needs analysis should be conducted to help insure proper identification of specific housing types warranted and the potential market depth.

Commercial Themes

Regarding the viability of additional commercial uses at the site, there do appear to be opportunities for additional local operators. The commercial uses currently in place along IL-159 should remain, yet attention could be given to bringing some form of cohesion – in use or services provided or in design of the buildings – to lend more of a sense of place, particularly given the area's high-visibility along a well-trafficked road. Again, local operators who know and understand the value of a market within Swansea are desirable as are businesses paying a living wage.

Ultimately, the area and surrounding neighborhoods would also benefit from a business that would also serve as a community gathering place. Whether

that is a cafe or coffee shop where residents could catch up over coffee or a business or operation that provides opportunities for neighbors to volunteer, the sense of place that could come with a gathering point such as these would be a welcome addition to the Village and to the site specifically.

It is also worth noting that the presence of the cement plant at the northwestern edge of the study area presents an interesting transitional opportunity for the neighboring land uses. While a developer would not be interested in locating new housing next to the cement plant, there might be an opportunity to locate some light industrial uses there instead, which would serve as a buffer or transition from the more residential nature of the southern reaches of the site into the more industrial section to the north and west.

Finally, there was a time when a plan was before the Village leadership which called for a big box retailer at the site. That retailer has since located in a neighboring community and other big-box operators are taking stock of the viability of the big-box retail model. A 'junior box' retailer (in the 20,000-40,000 sf range) might find success at the site, but given the facts above, the site is no longer well-suited for a big-box user.

KEY POINTS OF CONSIDERATION

As the Village contemplates potential development in the study area, the Panel suggests keeping the following key points top of mind.

The Village of Swansea is a bedroom community with good assets.

- Residents generally like the small-town nature of the community and the delivery of public services given the close nature of the town.
- Swansea's physical location, between Fairview Heights and Belleville, provides it with visibility to those traveling through, yet the lack of civic identity is currently a missed opportunity. People passing through need a reason to stop and enjoy Swansea.
- The Village has funds on hand from the TIF and Business District that could be used to catalyze further development in the study area.
- There is a need for additional housing options in the Village.

Regarding the study area specifically, the following points should remain top of mind during the development pursuit:

- The study area benefits from willing and capable public partners in development (Village, Bi-State, SCCTD, SWIDA).
- The study area provides a developer or set of developers with a large site with which to work.

- The previous plan submitted by Don Musick in 1998 has lingering benefits that can be leveraged. The plan also has its challenges, however, and cannot be simply dusted off and reinstated.
- Development in the study area is off to a great start with Metro Landing. The success of that development and the enthusiasm Bywater Development has for the site is encouraging to the broader community and may prove catalytic to further development.
- The availability of transit options – both bus and light rail – and trail connectivity in the study area is an asset to be promoted heavily.

DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

The Village has at its disposal a number of development tools it should leverage and promote in attracting further development to the study area.

- The land acquisition and assemblage that has already taken place will make the site more attractive to development as that critical pre-development work is already complete.
- The Business District overlay, which includes the study area, has generated funds (approximately \$1.9mm) that can be used for certain light infrastructure improvements, such as upgrades and improvements to exteriors of existing buildings, including Metro service center and in potential coordination with Moose Lodge. These improvements will help demonstrate the Village's commitment to the site and willingness to catalyze further development.
- Along the same lines, funds generated by the TIF District (approximately \$2.1mm) may also be used in the same manner. Utilizing the funds for basic infrastructure and wayfinding improvements in the coming 12-24 months will serve the Village well should it wish to extend the TIF. The community can see the benefits and improvements that can be funded via the TIF overlay and therefore be more inclined to approve an extension.
- The study area also lies within an Opportunity Area, a designation within the State of Illinois that will assist the Village or a developer in seeking funding assistance with development of certain housing types.
- There may also be additional funding resources available to the Village for housing should it wish to pursue a state community revitalization plan.

Recommendations

The prospects for further development around the Swansea MetroLink Station are exciting. By leveraging the catalyzing work of Bywater Development to-date, phasing the entire development site, and putting TIF and Business District funds to work in the study area, the Village has an opportunity to shape future transit-oriented development at the site into an amenity for the station, the surrounding neighborhood, and the broader Village.

The Panel believes that pursuing a mix of uses for the study area, instead of seeking one tenant or one use for the site will deliver the type of development neighbors would like to see in their community and will ultimately result in a more sustainable development with tenants' space needs flexing as the market shifts. Alternatively, if one large user were to consume much of the site, the success of the entire study area would rest on the success of that one user.

POSITIONING THE AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT

In readying the site for further development, the Panel had the following recommendations for the Sponsors:

- **Use phasing to address the entire site.** The Panel recommends pursuing mixed-use development at the site. Considering this mixed-use recommendation, the entire 65+ acre site is too large to approach at one time, and the market is not strong enough to absorb all of the ensuing new space that will result in development of the entire site. By splitting the study area into four phases, the Village can work with a developer(s) to deliver buildings and uses that are responsive to the market at any point in time.
- **Use a light touch to ready site.** Regarding further infrastructure improvements, the Village is encouraged to use a light touch – deploying Business District and TIF funds to provide better connectivity to the site, create a more visible entrance at the intersection of Metro Way and



The large development site could more easily be addressed in four separate, but related, phases.

IL-159, and improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout. This light touch will signal the Village's commitment to supporting development at the site, yet allow any participating developer to tailor each site within the study area to suite the needs of that particular development site.

- **Finance each phase and the test market before moving to next phase.** By using a phased approach to the study area, the Village and developers first address development opportunities in the areas most ready for development today and pursue financing for a smaller, more manageable project. As work in that first phase progresses, the Village and developers can work together to identify current and future needs that might be met within subsequent phases.
- **Connect to IL-161 or build a connection requirement into a development RFP.** Today, the study area is split nearly in half by the MetroLink alignment and vehicles cannot pass over or under the tracks within the study area. This leaves the parcels completely separate and apart from one another. If the study area is to be considered holistically by residents and neighbors, this connection across/under the rail line is necessary. If it is not feasible to build this connection with the study area at this time, the Village is encouraged to build into any forthcoming RFP a requirement to make that vehicular connection in the future.
- **Use TIF funds on sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, signage and wayfinding, and branding.** As noted in the discussion of a light touch on infrastructure, certain improvements – primarily those making pedestrian and bicycling traffic in and around the site safer – should be pursued immediately. These improvements will enhance the experience in the area today, signal to the public and potential development partners the Village's willingness to partner in the success of the improvements, and also demonstrate the value of the TIF should the Village wish to ask the voters to extend the current TIF when it expires in 2020.
- **Consider introducing mixed-income or non-age restricted housing.** Interest in the Metro Landing development is strong. In addition to this strong and growing market of active seniors, there is also a need for additional mixed-income housing options in Swansea. Additional housing that is not age-restricted would also be welcome in the area as young professionals and young families are also looking for new housing options in Swansea.
- **Pursue the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for extension of IL-159 streetscape improvements.** Significant improvements have been made to the IL-159 streetscape from the Belleville Square north. These improvements help to slow speeding traffic, provide widened sidewalks and lighting for pedestrians, and provide opportunities for branding and event banners from the new, more

pedestrian-friendly streetlights. The Village is encouraged to open and continue to pursue discussions with IDOT to extend those same or similar streetscape improvements north through study area at a minimum, if not through the entire Village.

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT – USES SUPPORTING TOD

The location of the Swansea MetroLink station at the heart of the study area should influence future development around the station, encouraging design and uses that support transit ridership. This will generally result in housing options that are largely multi-family (certainly on the north side of the alignment) and perhaps attached or semi-attached options in the southern half of the study area. Dense, urban housing of these types are very much in line with the compact urban nature of typical transit-oriented development. The multi-family housing might also include a certain number of market-rate apartments as this housing type is largely missing from the surrounding area.

It would also make good market sense to pursue retail uses near the station, capturing riders as they are traveling to or departing from the station and park-and-ride lot. As mentioned previously, local or semi-local operators might understand the market potential of this area more readily than national site selection teams and thus may be more ready to move to or open in the study area. That said, it's worth noting that a well-recognized coffee chain would be a welcome addition to the area, drawing in its already-loyal client base and providing the neighborhood with a much-needed gathering place.

Swansea is, and will likely choose to remain, a bedroom community. Shopping within the community will not – and should not – attempt to compete with the retail options in neighboring Fairview Heights. And, while residents indicated a desire to shop locally at Swansea merchants, it will be important to manage the expectations of the community when pursuing retail tenants and understanding the potential and realistic absorption rate of these spaces. The buildings along IL-159 should remain commercial enterprises, and, working together, those spaces and any new commercial space/retail within the study area could begin to establish a foothold of a small, mixed-use commercial district in the Village. It will take careful planning and time, but the potential is there.

PHASING PLAN

Development of the study area will be best managed by employing a phased approach to the entire site, sectioning parcels into four primary phases, with Phase 0.5 already well underway with the Metro Landing development.



- Residential
- Metro Landing
- Retail
- Mixed Use (ground floor retail, 2 levels of parking, residential)



Phase One

Phase One lies generally in the southeastern quadrant of the study area. This phase is bound by IL-159 on east, the MetroLink alignment to the south, Metro Way to the north, and Metro Landing to the west. Within this phase, the Village is encouraged to pursue development that is a combination of housing, retail, and structured parking. The housing that could work well here would be mixed-income, market-rate and low-income multi-family (not age-restricted) housing. It would be dense in nature, fitting nicely with the multi-story Metro Landing building, a possible multi-story parking garage, and the sloping topography of this section of the study area.

This phase should address the visibility and experience of the entrance to the study area. Improvements – sidewalks on the north side of Metro Way, improved signage at the corner of Metro Way and IL-159, and facade improvements to the retail building along IL-159 – would welcome transit riders and area residents as well as assist visitors in more quickly and easily recognizing the station and businesses within the study area. Some of the costs of these improvements could potential be captured by the Business District funds.

Given the expanse of surface parking currently within the study area and the suggestions of additional development made herein by the Panel, it would be beneficial to improve the northern Metro surface lot through the addition of a two-level parking structure wrapped with retail space. This configuration would maintain the parking options in the area and provide the retail space for operators sought by the community. It's also important to note that TIF funds may potentially help finance this type of public parking for the Village.

Phase Two

While work in Phase One is underway, the Village should continue acquisitions and assembly of land in Phase Two – the southwestern quadrant of the study area, bound by IL-161 to the south and west, the MetroLink alignment to the north and east, and Midwest Transit Equipment to the north and west. In this section of the study area, the Panel recommends the Village work with a developer(s) to pursue additional residential options, but of a nature that is less dense than the multi-family recommended in Phase One. This housing could be single-family residential options, either attached (townhomes or garden-style homes) or detached and might be priced well for the market in the \$100,000-200,000 range. While single-family residences, the focus of this residential development should remain dense and urban, making effective use of high-value land around the transit station. The Village is encouraged to maintain some degree of flexibility within Phase Two and allow decisions to be informed by absorption results in Phase One.

Although it is slightly outside of the study area, the Panel recommends that the Village work diligently with IDOT to improve the dangerous and confusing intersection at IL-161 and Boul Avenue. The intersection's proximity to potential housing in Phase Two and its current proximity to the elementary school and the children and families passing through that area are of great concern to the Panel and the safety of that intersection should be re-evaluated. At a minimum, the installation of a stoplight is strongly encouraged.

Phase Three

Phase Three, bounded by IL-161 to the west, the MetroLink alignment to the east, Midwest Transit Equipment to the south, and the Hilda Ann neighborhood to the north, would be the next developable section of the study area. As the development of this phase would likely occur only after phases One and Two are well under-way or nearing completion/full occupancy, the Village is encouraged to look to the market at that time and the absorption results of phases One and Two to inform the uses within this phase.

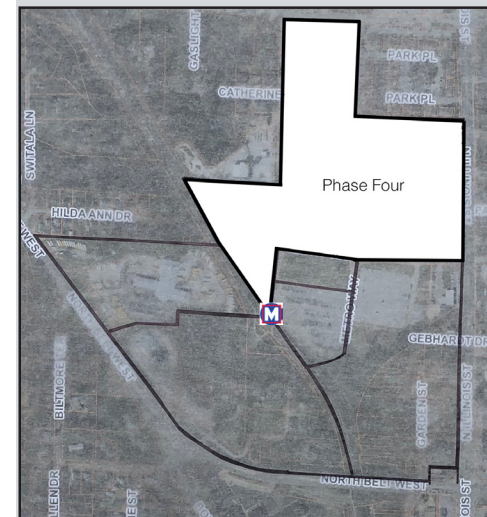
Phase Four

Phase Four, the final section of the study area, to the north and bound by the MetroLink alignment to the west and Old Fullerton Road to the west, the Old Fullerton lots to the north and east, and Metro Way to the south, could house a mix of uses and track closer with light industrial uses given the proximity of the cement plant and self-storage facility. The Moose Lodge is a significant presence in Phase Four and may be a good partner in future improvements in this section of the study area. When it is time to consider the development opportunities for Phase Four, the Village is encouraged to work with the Moose Lodge members and broader community to determine the best possible options for additional development at that point in time.

PRE-DEVELOPMENT WORK

Before formally launching full-scale development work in Phase One, the Village is encouraged to address the following key pre-development actions, which will demonstrate the public commitment to the area and help ready the site for outside development.

- Continue property assembly within Phase One and strive to close the gap on the roughly 30% of the site that remains outside of the Village's ownership.
- Invest TIF funds in light infrastructure improvements immediately. Once these improvements are underway, the Village may wish to consider



extending the TIF, but only after the current TIF finishes strong with these improvements.

- Invest some of the Business District funds on additional light infrastructure improvements, any limited and necessary demolition, and limited utility improvements.
- Use Business District and TIF funds on signage and wayfinding to assist Swansea residents and visitors to the area in recognizing the station and the surrounding site as a destination in Swansea.
- Again, using the Business District and/or TIF funds, the quality and availability of pedestrian connections to site and around the Village should be improved, thereby making pedestrian access safer and more visible and enjoyable.
- The pedestrian crossing into the study area, across the four+ lanes of IL-159, is intimidating and unwelcoming for those walking to the station or Metro Landing. By working with IDOT, the Village could significantly improve the safety and experience of pedestrians crossing into the study area.
- The Village may also wish to use the Business District fund and its strong performance and history to borrow additional funds for development in the study area.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MOOSE LODGE

The Moose Lodge serves an important community function for the Village of Swansea and neighboring communities. With its monthly activities, family events, and themed and daily dinners, the Lodge is community gathering place and draw for people from around the area (Swansea and beyond). The Moose Lodge also works with the surrounding community, providing event space for rent for outside organizations and allowing certain athletic leagues to use its field for practice.

Through a thoughtful approach and a long-term view toward building a positive working relationship, the Village might soon find strong and willing partners in the members of the Moose Lodge and the Lodge as a corporate citizen. Once these relationships are strengthened, it may be worth considering a partnership wherein the Moose Lodge provides for further opportunities to activate the field/green space to the west in exchange for assistance with grounds maintenance or some other consideration.

The Village is strongly encouraged to welcome the Moose Lodge as a current and welcome neighbor in its master plan for the study area.

Conclusion

The Swansea MetroLink Station is surrounded by 65+ acres of land, largely held by the Village of Swansea, that is primed for development. Given the strong and willing partners in the study area – Bywater Development, Bi-State Development, and the St. Clair County Transit District – the Village is in an enviable position of having a development-ready site poised for the market.

In its pursuit of development in the study area, the Panel recommends that the Village begin to make light infrastructure improvements in the study area, using existing TIF and Business District funds, to improve connectivity, enhance the safety of those moving in and through the area, and to demonstrate its commitment to catalyzing further development at the site.

The Panel would like to see the Village create a master plan for the study area, guiding development throughout the site and breaking the entire area down into four development phases. The master plan should also include detailed analysis for phases One and Two and a market and housing needs analysis. The phased approach will also provide the Village with the time and opportunity to continue to acquire property in subsequent phases and continue to test the market and adjust proposed uses as market needs dictate.

Certain infrastructure improvements are necessary in and around the study area. Focus should be placed on improving connectivity to the study area and to the transit and trail options deep in the site. Emphasis should also be placed on pedestrian and bicyclist safety moving to/from/within the study area. The experience along IL-159, along the eastern edge of the study area, could also be drastically improved if the Village could work with IDOT to extend the streetscape improvements made to IL-159 further south in Belleville, north into and through the study area.

The Village needs a stronger civic identity. Today it is known as a bedroom community whose residents leave for work and to shop/dine and others to pass through on their way to Belleville to eat or to Fairview Heights to shop. While it may not make sense for Swansea to try to compete with either of these neighboring communities, it should work to forge its own unique identity that its residents can embrace and its neighbors can begin to recognize as uniquely Swansea. This civic identity should then be incorporated into additional

signage and wayfinding throughout the study area and broader Swansea community.

Today, the study area is home to several strong partners with identities, relationships, and enthusiasm for the study area that should be embraced and harnessed to the benefit of the Village. From Bi-State and Metro Transit, to Bywater Development, to the St. Clair County Transit District, to the Moose Lodge, all of these highly-respected entities have a vested interest in seeing development succeed in the study area. Through strong and active partnerships with each, the Village and its future partnering developers should continue to enjoy interest in and success at this site.

Panelists Biographies

Todd Antoine, TAP Chair

Great Rivers Greenway

Todd Antoine, AICP is the Vice President of Planning and Projects at the Great Rivers Greenway District in St. Louis, Missouri. The primary focus of his work is to develop and implement The River Ring, a regional interconnected system of greenways, parks and trails. He coordinates efforts to establish partnerships with local, state and regional entities in the implementation of The River Ring with projects in St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County, Missouri. Todd is a member of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). He received his master's degree in urban affairs from St. Louis University.

Michael Afentoullis

CBRE Capstone

Michael is a senior vice president at CBRE - Capstone Financial, working from the St. Louis office, and was the Managing Director of Capstone Financial Solutions for three years before their merger with CBRE. He is responsible for loan origination as well as overall growth of the firm including team members and programs and has 20+ years of commercial real estate experience. Prior to joining Capstone, Michael spent 13 years with Northmarq Capital where he originated nearly \$1B in commercial loans. Michael spent 2 ½ years in Des Moines, IA as an asset manager for the Principal Financial Group. His duties at Principal included the asset management of a portfolio of 2 million square feet of office, industrial and retail properties around the Midwest. From 1997 until mid-year 2001, Michael acted as an investment sales associate for Colliers where he listed and brokered the sale of a number of prominent St. Louis institutional office and industrial properties amounting to over \$50 million in sales volume and over 1 million square feet.

Keith Price

Sandberg Phoenix & Von Gontard PC

Keith D. Price is a member of both the Business and Business Litigation practice groups, where he provides a range of services to companies ranging in size from small start-ups to nationwide corporations and from many diverse industries including real estate, non-profit and health care.

Keith provides general counsel to businesses, assisting with corporate formation and governance and contracts, including the preparation of supply, distribution, licensing, leasing and confidentiality agreements. Additionally, Keith has considerable experience in corporate transactions, regularly negotiating and drafting asset and commercial real estate purchase agreements. Keith is also trusted to handle mergers and acquisitions for healthcare industry clients and counsel community associations regarding governance, litigation and conflict resolution. A major focus of Keith's legal practice is real estate law, including acquisitions and dispositions, development, leasing and financing with emphasis in representing health care clients. He also addresses real estate related issues arising in day-to-day operations within the health care industry. As a litigator, Keith has represented lending clients in hundreds of cases in Missouri and Illinois, including replevin and loan recovery actions, fraud claims, Regulation B claims, electronic fund transfer claims, mechanic's lien actions, appointment of receivers and injunctive relief. He has both prosecuted and defended a wide range of business disputes such as employment contracts, supply agreements, creditor's rights, leases and breach of fiduciary duty. In his free time, Keith enjoys running in Forest Park, walking his two American Eskimo dogs near his home in south St. Louis City and gardening.

Jacob Surratt

Duff & Phelps

Jacob Surratt is a commercial real estate development professional with a passion for smart, sustainable development. As a Site Selection and Incentives Advisory team member for Duff & Phelps, Jacob leverages his experience in real estate incentives and economic development programs to benefit companies, developers, non-profits, and most importantly, people. His distinctive focus is on how people interact with the built environment, each other, and society as a whole. Jacob's familiarity with government agencies and private developers provides a strong background to nurture public-private partnerships. His approach to development, construction, valuation, and, site selection draws from his sociology, and urban affairs background, adding a balanced perspective to his work. He has worked with state agencies, municipal boards, and community residents to secure approvals for zoning and land use matters as well as development incentives, including: Tax Increment Financing; New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC); Historic Tax Credits; and other federal, state, and local grant, loan and tax credit programs. Throughout his career, he has lead or supported business retention and expansion projects resulting in over 4,620 jobs created/retained and \$380M in new capital investment. Prior to Duff & Phelps, Jacob managed the real estate tax incentive strategy for Save-A-Lot food stores, negotiating and securing over \$4.35M in incentives for office, retail, and industrial properties. As a real estate valuation analyst at JLL, he conducted real estate appraisals of many property types, including retail, office, industrial, and multi-family, with a market value totaling \$150M. Jacob launched his career at the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership. Jacob earned a Bachelor's degree in Urban Affairs and Sociology from Saint Louis University, where he will complete a Master of Business Administration with a focus on commercial real estate finance and development in December 2018. Currently, Jacob is a member of the Urban Land Institute, St. Clair County Historical Society, and Gustave Koerner House Restoration Committee.

Matilda Thomas

TAP Intern,
MBA Candidate
Washington University in St. Louis

Christie Voelker

America's Central Port

Christie Voelker is the Planner at America's Central Port in Granite City, Illinois and is responsible for planning improvements to the Port's 1,200 acre property, the southern 800 acres of which was previously a strategic material supply base for the U.S. Army. She is also pursuing her Master's of Science in Urban Planning and Development at Saint Louis University, where she is the president of her program's student association. Prior to beginning graduate school and her position at the Port, Christie worked for a multifamily real estate developer and assisted in all aspects of the development cycle, from market research through construction completion and stabilization. Christie is an active member of the St. Louis Metro Section of the American Planning Association and volunteers at the Humane Society of Missouri.



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