



Local Technical Assistance (LTA) project scope: Robbins TOD and Industrial Area Planning

The following is a proposed outline of steps to develop plans for the Robbins TOD and Industrial Areas in the Village of Robbins as part of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) Local Technical Assistance program and in partnership with the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Community Planning Program, and the MWRD's stormwater planning efforts. Through this program, CMAP and the RTA will provide staff and consultant assistance to complete this project.

Approximate timeline

This scope of work is designed to be completed in approximately 15-18 months; however, the timeline can change as the project progresses. The remainder of this document describes the schedule and timeline in more detail.

Steering committee

CMAP recommends that a steering committee or similar oversight group be created to assist in guiding the development of the subarea plan. This group could be one that is already in place through MWRD's ongoing efforts, or be formed specifically to oversee this project and include members of existing committees, commissions, or other village bodies, and other stakeholders. Throughout this scope of work, this group is referred to as the "steering committee." The exact makeup of this group will be determined early in the planning process through discussion between CMAP and the Village Mayor and staff.

Background

Currently, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is working on a new plan to reduce flooding and create new recreational and economic opportunity in eastern Robbins near Midlothian Creek. Residents and municipal leaders in the Village of Robbins are motivated to address flooding in a way that spurs economic development and creates a more beautiful place to live and work. Through stormwater investments, the Village can spur economic development, reduce flooding in the surrounding neighborhoods, and connect residents to the proposed Robbins Park. The proposed plan envisions a combined stormwater management facility featuring a retention "lake" surrounded by parkland and open space, ("Robbins Park." The lake and park would reduce periodic localized flooding in residential areas and create a unique community amenity. In addition, the Robbins Park facility would make land within a former floodplain available for new transit-oriented development investment adjacent to the park and the nearby Robbins Metra station. Another area of economic opportunity is the underutilized industrial district north of the proposed park. Currently, commercial and industrial land uses comprise less than three (3) percent of the total land use in the Village.

In 2017, the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) completed the [RainReady Calumet Corridor Plan](#). The plan's purpose is to create a shared vision to put Blue Island, Calumet City, Calumet Park, Dolton, Riverdale, and Robbins on a path towards greater resilience through improved stormwater management, sustainable economic development, and integrated planning.

In 2002, the Regional Transportation Authority developed a plan through its Community Planning Program. The [Village of Robbins Metra Station Transit-Oriented Development Study](#) (Robbins TOD Plan) focused on the Robbins Metra station as a catalyst for economic and community development.

Deliverables

This LTA project will serve as an update to the Robbins TOD Plan and will assess the feasibility of residential and commercial/industrial uses in the study area portions of the Village. The plan will also identify opportunities to implement recommendations from the RainReady Calumet Corridor Plan in the Village of Robbins. The final deliverable of this project will include market-feasible subarea concept plans for the Transit Oriented Development and Industrial Districts. These subarea concept plans will recommend development approaches and land use strategies within each district based on market feasibility. CMAP will present an existing conditions report, a memo of key recommendations, and a draft plan during the planning process. Finally, CMAP will present the final plan to the Village’s Board for formal adoption.

Roles

Project management and production

CMAP will lead and manage the project including day-to-day project management, communications, outreach and engagement, data analysis, and production and oversight for all elements of this project from initiation through Existing Conditions Report, Key Recommendations memo, and draft and final plans. Additionally, CMAP will focus its subarea planning effort on the industrial area, and support the RTA in analysis of the TOD area. The RTA will assist CMAP in developing the TOD plan component, providing analysis, planning, and outreach related to that subarea. The TOD elements will be coordinated and integrated with CMAP’s process and deliverables. To complete this project, CMAP and RTA may enlist the assistance of consultant expertise for discreet project components, such as the market and infrastructure analyses.

Village staff and elected officials

Village input and support is critical to the development and implementation of this plan. CMAP and RTA will meet and communicate regularly with Village of Robbins staff, trustees, and other village representatives to present progress and receive feedback throughout the planning process. The meetings may include items such as presentations, discussion of timelines, findings, and recommendations, and outreach and engagement tasks. It is our expectation that the Village representatives will engage and participate in any necessary meetings and events, as well as review and provide feedback on deliverables in a timely manner, which we assume to be within 2-3 weeks of receipt.

Key partners

Key partners have met regularly to discuss the development of this project. The key partners will continue to provide information and feedback on interim and final deliverables. The primary key partners who will be engaged on this project include but may not be limited to the following:

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| Village of Robbins | Metra |
| MWRD | Pace |
| CMAP | Center for Neighborhood Technology |
| RTA | Openlands |
| University of Illinois - Chicago | Cook County Bureau of Economic Development |
| Blue Island | Others as necessary |

Proposed tasks

Pre-kickoff Tasks

CMAP will work with the Village on several tasks before the project formally kicks off in January 2018. These steps include:

- The Village Board must adopt a resolution expressing support for the project and authorizing staff to participate. CMAP will provide a sample resolution, to be modified as necessary. The Village must pass this resolution before the project begins.
- Before the project formally begins, the Village of Robbins, CMAP and the RTA will sign a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA.) This document will explain expectations for the relationship between CMAP, the RTA and the applicant, project management, access to resources, a local financial contribution, and other details. This project scope will be attached to the MOU or IGA.
- CMAP will collaborate with the Village to form a steering committee for the project that can serve that purpose. The membership of the steering committee will be determined through discussions between CMAP and the Village Mayor and staff before the project formally begins. A representative from the Village of Robbins should lead/chair the Steering Committee and be responsible for its involvement and decision-making process.
- CMAP will collaborate with the Village Mayor and staff to develop a stakeholder list. The Village will also identify relevant stakeholder groups to include in the public engagement activities and to help CMAP make contacts locally. CMAP will work with Village Mayor and staff and the Steering Committee to identify approximately 10-15 key person interviews that will help inform the plan. The Village staff will also provide feedback on any surveys or other outreach materials.

Roles: CMAP will lead this Task, with support from RTA and the Village of Robbins as needed to develop the scope and agreement. The Village of Robbins will help CMAP form and will lead/chair the steering committee and be responsible for its involvement and decision-making process. Robbins will also assist CMAP with creation of the stakeholder list and identify individuals for key person interviews, and provide feedback on outreach materials in a timely manner.

Timeline: These activities will occur within two months of the Notice to Proceed (NTP).

Deliverable: Signed resolution and agreement, established steering committee, stakeholder list, key stakeholders for interviews.

Task 1 – project initiation

The planning process for the TOD and Industrial areas will begin in January 2018 with project initiation meetings between CMAP, RTA, MWRD, and appropriate Village staff, commissions, and committees. Consideration will be given to integrating meetings, processes, and organizational structures that may already be in place or underway into the CMAP process. Meetings can include:

- Meeting with Village staff. This may include staff other than those involved in the pre-kickoff work (e.g. directors from other departments.) This meeting will include discussion of timelines, priorities, issues and opportunities, as well as discussion of existing plans, studies, reports, and other information.
- Presentations at meetings of the Village Board and/or commissions or committees. The purpose of these meetings is to introduce the project to key decision-makers. This may occur at the same

meeting as the adoption of the required resolution (see the Pre-kickoff Tasks) or at another meeting.

- Touring the study area. Due to its complexity, understanding the project subareas, context, and stakeholders will be critical. Project partners (full list to be determined, but may include CMAP, RTA, MWRD, and CCBED) will make at least one joint site visit in Robbins.
- Initial Steering Committee meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce the steering committee members to the project scope and timeline, discuss the committee's roles and expectations for the project, identify any early priorities and goals, data and information resources, and important stakeholders.

Roles: CMAP will lead this Task, with support from RTA as needed for meeting preparation and participation, and tours. Robbins will assist with meeting scheduling and participation, encourage participation by important stakeholders and decision-makers, and, ideally, lead the meetings themselves with support and content provided by CMAP and RTA (and other partners.)

Timeline: These activities will occur during January and February 2018.

Deliverable: Meeting agendas and notes/summary of meetings and outcomes.

Task 2 – community outreach and engagement

As an initial step, CMAP develops a detailed **project outreach strategy (PROUST)** document for each project that outlines the goals and methods for public participation. A primary goal of all CMAP's projects is to elevate community engagement in planning – particularly focusing on engaging populations typically underrepresented in previous planning processes. The steering committee and community leaders' full participation in this process is vital to the success of the plan. Once created, the draft PROUST will be discussed with Village staff and the steering committee during the pre-kickoff stage of the project. After receiving input and guidance from the Village Mayor and staff and the steering committee, a detailed outreach plan (PROUST) will be produced.

The outreach plan will also be coordinated with other outreach activities that have or are planned to occur in Robbins. As mentioned above, where appropriate this project will utilize the results of community outreach and engagement previously conducted during development of the RainReady Calumet Corridor Plan, as well as work done as part of the MWRD-led Robbins Park project thus far, with the aim of avoiding unnecessary duplication and potential planning / meeting fatigue in the community. In light of this approach, likely community engagement activities include but are not limited to:

- Key person interviews with individuals, organizations, tenants/business owners, property owners, institutions, and organizations.
- Two to three public meetings
- Possible use of an interactive website (MetroQuest) allowing public input and/or social media
- Updates at Planning and Development Commission or Village council meetings
- Other ideas, to be added following discussion with City staff.

Roles: CMAP will lead this Task, with support from RTA as needed such as review of the PROUST, support / participate in stakeholder interviews, public meetings, updates, and promotion of outreach and engagement efforts. Robbins will assist with meeting scheduling and participation, encourage participation by important stakeholders and decision-makers, and, ideally, lead the meetings themselves with support and content provided by CMAP and RTA (and other partners) for specific topic areas.

Timeline: These activities will occur throughout the duration of the project.

Deliverable: A project outreach strategy which lays out key stakeholders and outreach methods for the length of the project. As the project progresses and the activities are completed, the document will be updated to describe the results of the outreach, so that it functions as a report on the results of work completed. The revised project outreach strategy will be an appendix to the final plan. Statistics and summary of outreach activities, feedback results, etc.

Task 3 – existing conditions report

CMAP and RTA will produce an important interim product of the plan, the “existing conditions report” (ECR), which documents current conditions in the TOD and Industrial areas, as well as the surrounding municipal context, using available data sets, studies, and information typical for a subarea planning effort. The report will describe existing conditions in the municipality, including a summary of issues and opportunities, for the following topics:

- History and regional context
- Previous studies, reports, and plans
- Summaries of community outreach results
- Community facilities and services
- Land use, zoning, and development
- Housing and population
- Economic assessment
- Transportation (e.g., transit, bike-ped facilities, circulation, access, wayfinding, and parking)
- Key issues and opportunities

In addition to these standard ECR sections, CMAP and RTA will examine and integrate the following (as resources allow):

- **Industrial District Market Analysis:** To better understand the market potential of the Industrial District, CMAP will examine existing employment, vacancy rates for industrial buildings, recent industrial developments, and similar data. CMAP will also review regional trends in manufacturing and logistics, and explain their implications for the Industrial District. This analysis will attempt to:
 - Identify the cluster of industries or commercial uses that may be best suited for the district
 - Identify advantages and/or opportunities and disadvantages and/or weaknesses of the industrial district (e.g., transportation and freight access, utilities, environmental challenges)
 - Identify resources that may be available to develop sites within the district
 - Identify actions that can help prepare for any future industrial use on the site
- **Transit Oriented Development District Market Analysis:** To better understand the market potential of land uses within the TOD District (residential, retail, office, and commercial), RTA will conduct a market analysis that builds upon prior plans and studies surrounding the TOD District. This analysis will include:
 - Identification of vacant and underutilized land parcels in the TOD district to determine infill development opportunities
 - An evaluation of the adequacy of the City’s existing zoning tools to implement TOD
 - Key person interviews and focus groups with property owners, realtors, and developers to gain additional insights into market conditions and opportunities

- Comparative analysis of residential and commercial uses near other South Suburban TOD sites
 - Analysis of the types of units that can be supported in the TOD District, such as townhomes, condominiums, multifamily rental, etc.
 - Estimate of price points and/or rents for new housing units
 - Estimated demand/capture potential of for-sale housing, rental units, and senior housing
 - Estimated demand/capture potential for new commercial, retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses in the TOD District
- Infrastructure Analysis: To better understand infrastructure conditions and needs, and as a complimentary analysis to the market analysis, CMAP will conduct an analysis of necessary infrastructure improvements for both the Industrial and TOD Districts. This task will:
 - Assess the state of existing municipal infrastructure and public utilities within the Industrial and TOD districts
 - Assess the MWRD capital program elements for Robbins Park and their impact on storm water management within the Industrial and TOD districts
 - Determine if existing and programmed infrastructure (land, roads, rail, water, sewer, utility, etc.) is adequate in accommodating desired potential development
 - Identify any additional infrastructure and/or public utility improvements required to support the desired development patterns (storm sewers, curb, gutters, sidewalks, roads, signals, etc.)
 - Estimate the costs associated with installing or upgrading any necessary infrastructure into the TOD and Industrial Districts

Roles: CMAP will lead production of the ECR, including mapping and content production, with support from RTA as needed for data analysis and content production needs of transportation, transit, station access, and TOD related elements of the ECR. CMAP and RTA will jointly determine responsibilities, roles, and the best approach to accomplish the market and infrastructure analyses, either in-house or with consultant assistance, including management and timely completion of those tasks. The Village of Robbins will provide necessary information and data to the project team upon request, such as that data exists and is available. The Village of Robbins will also provide timely review of documents and deliverables within 2-4 weeks of receipt in order to maintain project momentum.

Timeline: A draft of the report will be completed by May 2018, and the final report will be presented to staff and the steering committee by July 2018.

Deliverable: An “existing conditions report” which includes charts, maps, and other graphics to support the narrative description of the topics listed above. It is a stand-alone product which will be an appendix to the final report.

Task 4 – key recommendations

CMAP and RTA will prepare a memo describing the key recommendations that are expected to be contained in the final plan. The key recommendations memo will also be sent to transit agency staff for review followed by a transit agency meeting two weeks after delivery of the memo to discuss comments on key recommendations. This document will be provided to Village Mayor and staff, transit agency staff and the steering committee for review and discussion by October 2018. Based on feedback received from the village and partners, the draft plan will begin to be prepared. The purpose of this step is to provide the steering committee members with a summary of key recommendations before writing them

up in detail; if there are significant problems with any elements of the plan, they should surface at this point. Other partners will be asked to review the key recommendations memo as needed.

Roles: CMAP will lead production of the Key Recommendations Memo, with support from RTA. The Village of Robbins will provide timely review of documents and deliverables within 2-4 weeks of receipt in order to maintain project momentum.

Timeline: The Key Recommendations memo will be produced by October 2018.

Deliverable: A memo summarizing key recommendations that will be made in the plan to achieve the vision, based on existing conditions findings and stakeholder involvement. It will be approximately four pages in length. This will be an internal working document containing initial ideas, and is not meant for public distribution.

Task 5 – plan preparation

After reaching consensus on the key recommendations, CMAP and the RTA will develop a draft plan for the two study areas. This will occur primarily between October 2018 and February 2019, with a draft expected to be sent to Village staff and steering committee members for review in the first quarter of 2019. This draft plan will be revised based on Village staff and steering committee comments, resulting in a final, illustrated plan.

The plan will likely include the following chapters:

- Introduction, Project Goals, and Process
- Community Outreach
- Existing Conditions Assessment Summary (typically presented as the Key Findings of the existing conditions assessment, market assessment, and public engagement, including key challenges and opportunities)
- Vision, Goals, and Objectives
- Recommendations (broken into sections such as land use, housing, economic development, transportation, community, and others)
- Implementation strategies (focusing on activities to be undertaken within the following two years to advance the plan's implementation)

Roles: CMAP will lead production of the plan, with support from RTA. CMAP and RTA will jointly determine responsibilities, roles, and the best approach to provide illustrations and graphics for the plan, either in-house or with consultant assistance, including management and timely completion of those tasks. The Village of Robbins will provide timely review of documents and deliverables within 2-4 weeks of receipt in order to maintain project momentum.

Timeline: A draft of the report will be completed by February 2019, and the final report will be completed by April 2019.

Deliverable: The plan will include narrative recommendations for action, supported by graphics and maps. It also will include language concerning implementation, including descriptions of actions that should be taken within the next two years to advance recommendations. The format of the final plan will be the same as that of the draft plan, except with a higher quality of graphics.

Phase 6 – adoption

The final plan will proceed through the community’s approval and adoption process. This will likely involve a series of meetings, including an initial presentation to the Steering Committee, an open house for community feedback, and finally, consideration of adoption by the Village Board. The exact order and timing of these steps will depend on the Village’s preferences and standard practice. The revised plan will be further revised if necessary based on discussion at each meeting to create a final plan.

Roles: The Village of Robbins will lead the approval and adoption process, with support from CMAP and RTA as needed for presentations and other meeting needs.

Timeline: The adoption process is expected to take place within two months following plan completion.

Deliverable: Approval and formal adoption by the Village of Robbins. Though this is an expectation of CMAP and RTA, it will depend solely on the Village of Robbins’ actions and is not the responsibility of CMAP or RTA.

Phase 7 – implementation

After the plan is adopted, CMAP and the RTA will remain involved for a period of two years after its completion, with the purpose of monitoring and encouraging progress on the implementation actions specified in the plan. This will be a much lower level of involvement than during plan production, but may include meeting periodically with Village staff, tracking and monitoring progress in accomplishing the plan’s recommendations, assisting with applications for external funding for plan implementation, and similar activities.

Roles: CMAP and the RTA will monitor and support plan implementation as resources allow. The Village of Robbins will ultimately be responsible for plan implementation.

Timeline: Two years following plan adoption.

Deliverable: Following this two year period, CMAP and the RTA will assess the work that has been accomplished to date and provide the village with advice on potential next steps for the following two years.