

Two studies will look at Franklin Park downtown, industry

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Tony Manno, project manager for the Regional Transportation Authority, speaks at Franklin Park Village Hall on Feb. 27 about a study to create a transit-oriented development near the Metra station at 25th and Pacific in Franklin Park | Mark Lawton~Sun-T

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FRANKLIN PARK —A more successful industrial corridor and a better Franklin Park downtown are the goals of two efforts announced Wednesday, Feb. 27.

One is the O'Hare Industrial Corridor study, to be conducted by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning over the next 10 to 12 months.

"Where do we see the industrial areas in the next ten to 15 years?" asked Trevor Dick, senior planner with the agency. "What kinds of uses will there be?"

The study will consider such topics as land use, workforce development, strategies to attract private investment and how to attract freight business from O'Hare Airport and area railroads — referred to as cargo-oriented development,

"We have freight coming in by rail from international boundaries," said John Schneider, economic development director for Franklin Park. "We have O'Hare. That is international. We need to capture more business that comes out of there."

A steering committee will be created this spring. Interviews with stakeholders will start soon after. The overall process will start with understanding current conditions, then creating a vision and finally turning that vision into a plan that can be used.

"We want to make plans that are implementable," said Samyukth Senbaga, a senior planner with the metropolitan planning agency. "We can create visions but what are the steps to get to that vision?"

"We include priorities," Dick said. "We'll work with the community and steering committee on the top five or top ten things."

To make the plan usable, the agency will identify potential grant sources and put staff names or departments next to tasks.

About half the land in Franklin Park is zoned industrial or commercial.

The study is being paid for by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The other effort detailed is courtesy of the Regional Transportation Authority. The RTA will fund village efforts to update their transit-oriented development zoning within a quarter-mile of the Metra station at

25th and Pacific, an area that includes downtown Franklin Park.

The RTA also paid for a 2005 study of transit-oriented development in the village.

Transit-oriented development means creating higher density, mixed-use development near the Metra station.

“It’s so people can work, live and play in a small area,” said Tony Manno, project manager for RTA. “Our biggest recommendation is to update your zoning. The zoning code now seems to be a bit confusing, like many are.”

The zoning near the Metra station dates back to the 1970s, Manno said.

The study will take place over the next nine months.