



Red Line Extension Virtual TSD May Community Meetings
Questions and Responses
May 2021

The CTA hosted two identical virtual Transit-Supportive Development (TSD) Plan community meetings for the proposed station areas along the Red Line Extension (RLE) corridor on Wednesday, May 5th, and Thursday, May 6th, 2021. This document includes questions directed to the Red Line Extension Project team through the Zoom meeting platform, as well as questions received as of May 24, 2021, in the comments section of the meeting live streams on the RLE Project’s Facebook page. Responses to all questions received are outlined in this document.

As a reminder, the public can send questions to RedExtension@transitchicago.com at any time for a response. In addition to these questions and responses, be sure to check out the project’s Frequently Asked Questions page, which is available at transitchicago.com/rle/faq.

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Station Design & Access

Why put new tracks alongside the existing freight track, when you can just run it above the freight tracks and not do any damage?

This is not something that would be approved by freight rail. The CTA is required to maintain a minimum distance from the freight tracks.

What types of transit connections will be made from the new station to the surrounding areas?

Existing bus routes may be adjusted to complement the new high-capacity transit service. RLE stations would also be accessible by bicycle using existing on-street bike lanes on 103rd, 111th, 115th, and State Streets. In addition, there may be



opportunities in the future to connect stations to proposed bike lanes and off-street paths. Station areas would be designed to accommodate future bicycle parking and Divvy bike share stations.

Will this be a 24-hour station?

Yes. The operating hours for RLE are anticipated to be the same as for the current Red Line, which operates 24 hours, every day of the year.

Do you have any plans for walking & biking trails, especially the 130th Street Sidepath?

The TSD Plan is in coordination with CDOT on the 11th Street and Michigan Avenue Streetscape and the Phase 1 study for the 130th Street Sidepath from Indiana to Ellis as identified in the Riverdale Multimodal Plan. The TSD Plan identifies strategies to connect the 130th Street side path to the new station.

Is there anything in the proposal to incorporate planters or aesthetics to Michigan Avenue?

The TSD Plan is in coordination with CDOT on the 11th Street and Michigan Avenue Streetscapes. The TSD Plan will also include concepts for additional streetscape elements that could be incorporated as part of future development sites.

**What will the station architecture look like in the fabric of the neighborhood?
What will the station landscaping be like?**

At the current stage of preliminary design, the CTA is focused on the functional layout of the stations and engineering of the rail track. Final architectural features and finishes will be determined in future phases of design.

Why can it not extend to the suburbs?

The RLE is currently proposed to extend to the City of Chicago limits, which define the service area for CTA. The RLE Project would not preclude future regional commuter rail connections with NICTD and the Metra Electric District. There is potential for connection of the proposed Red Line Extension to the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) South Shore Commuter Rail Line near 130th Street. A direct connection between RLE and Metra Electric District at Kensington/115th Street station would be possible along 115th Street. The transfer between the RLE Michigan Avenue station and Kensington/115th Street station would be possible using bus or pedestrian connections.



What is CTA’s plan to connecting community residents that are west of the station? If you live in Altgeld Gardens, you could still potentially walk far to get to the proposed station.

The CTA is currently conducting additional analysis and review of bus service planning near stations and as part of the ongoing project planning.

At what point will the train be elevated?

The RLE would operate on an elevated structure from approximately 95th Street to 118th Street, where it would transition to an at-grade profile and then continue at grade before terminating near 130th Street. The 103rd Street, 111th Street and Michigan Avenue stations would be elevated, and the 130th Street station would be at-grade. The RLE will be grade-separated, meaning that it will not intersect or conflict with existing roadways.

Parking

Where will the park & ride be located?

Park & ride facilities are planned in proximity to each of the four RLE stations.

Construction, Funding, and Service Timeline

When is the RLE planned to open?

The timing of construction and start of service is dependent on federal approvals and funding availability. As the project progresses, and additional information is available (e.g., engineering, construction methods, federal approvals, funding, others), the CTA will revise and update the timeline and share this information with stakeholders and the public. The CTA is committed to actively moving this project forward in order to bring much-needed rapid transit rail service to Far South Side residents and communities.

Potential Property Impacts

What changes will you make to the hospitals?

Changes to hospitals are not a part of the RLE Project. The City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development is currently developing a Master Plan for the Roseland Medical District. The RLE TSD Plan is in coordination with this effort.

Are you going to eliminate existing residential homes and if so is there a plan for acquiring property?

In planning for the RLE Project, the CTA has determined that it may be necessary to acquire certain properties to implement the project. Property

impacts are based on conceptual engineering and represent the maximum impacts to parcels. All owners and tenants whose property would be potentially affected by the Preferred Alignment were notified during outreach that the CTA conducted in January and February 2018 and will be continually engaged throughout the environmental review process. Information about potentially displaced properties is available on our website at transitchicago.com/rle/potential-property-displacements.

The CTA does not plan to pursue acquisition of private property for the RLE Project until the environmental analysis is complete and project funding is secured.

Has there been discussion of strategies for routing traffic away from schools?

Strategies associated with routing traffic away from schools are not a part of the RLE Project. RLE will provide a new transit option for Far South Side residents, including local students and students who travel to the area for school.

What is the plan for Altgeld Gardens?

The housing in Altgeld Gardens will not be affected by the RLE Project. For property-related questions, please email us at RedExtension@transitchicago.com or call customer service at 1-888-YOUR-CTA (1-888-CTA-TTY1 for hearing impaired/TTY) and our property relocation liaison will contact you within 24 hours.

Environmental Impacts

What is the expected increase in noise pollution and vibrations and what measures are used to reduce them for residents?

The CTA studied potential noise and vibration impacts during the Draft EIS. It was determined that there would be no impacts from vibration. Detailed analysis is being done along the entire corridor to further refine the noise assessment completed for the Draft EIS. The CTA is taking steps in the design process to reduce noise. Those steps include:

- Installing noise barriers, which absorb and reduce noise from the tracks by 10 decibels.
- Using a closed-deck structure, which limits transmission of noise beneath the tracks.
- Using continuous welded rail, which has fewer joints and means a smoother and quieter ride.

Is there some way to preserve the parks?

The Preferred Alignment would require the use of Fernwood Parkway between 99th Street and 103rd Street for permanent incorporation of the park space into the project. CTA is actively coordinating with the Chicago Park District to mitigate this impact. Mitigation measures would include replacement of the park space at a 1:1 ratio with passive park space in the project area. The TSD Plan will also identify future opportunities for open space and potential partnerships for implementation.

Safety & Security

Will you have a police officer station at 103rd Street?

A project-specific safety and security plan for the Red Line Extension is being developed during Preliminary Engineering, and security measures will be consistent with that of the entire CTA system. A number of steps have been taken to improve your safety and security while on CTA. To learn more about these steps, please visit: www.transitchicago.com/security. CTA will be coordinating with the Chicago Police Department on issues related to public safety.

Youth & Workforce Opportunities

Is the Transit-Supportive Development (TSD) team working with partner entities in each station area?

The CTA has had a many conversations with stakeholders, and is making sure to speak to them in regard to each station area to understand the specific needs and concerns of community members .

Will additional money be available to improve the schools near those particular locations due to the possible increase in foot and other traffic?

The RLE Transit-Supportive Development (TSD) Plan will present the community vision for future development around each new CTA station. While there will not be any funding to nearby schools from the CTA, the projected increase in development and population may result in additional support and funding for local schools.

Staying Involved

Do you feel like you are getting enough input from the community residents around the stations?

The CTA has had had a varying number of participants at RLE public meetings. Recent public meetings have had about 60 or 70 attendees, with most of them

community residents. The CTA would always like to reach more people at meetings, and has been working to get the word out about the meetings and trying different meeting times to accommodate community members' schedules better.

Housing and Economic Development

What is the relationship of the RLE TSD Plan to DPD's development of a new Chicago Comprehensive Plan?

The RLE TSD Plan will be more targeted than the Chicago Comprehensive Plan, We Will Chicago, <https://wewillchicago.com/> The CTA is closely coordinating on the TSD Plan with the Department of Planning & Development (DPD). The TSD Plan is intended to be aligned with the objectives of We Will Chicago, which will have a longer timeframe for completion.

How does the RLE TSD Plan propose to mitigate housing speculators in the market area? How does the RLE TSD Plan propose to mitigate housing speculators in the market area? What are the zoning changes envisioned? What protective designations for affordable housing or equitable development does DPD intend to institute? How will absentee landlordism be controlled? What assurances do community areas have that housing speculators and developers will not reap tax abatements, lowering tax revenues? What regulations will the CTA and DPD develop to restrict the influence of elected officials from giving out tax abatements?

The RLE TSD Plan will utilize an equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD) planning approach. The eTOD approach seeks to promote development without the displacement of existing residents and achieve community-focused benefits, such as affordable housing, local economic development, and environmental sustainability. In order to achieve this, the Plan will incorporate policies to preserve existing housing stock and build new affordable housing, while stimulating economic development and encouraging new construction on vacant lots. The CTA is working closely with Chicago's Department of Housing, the DPD, and the Cook County Land Bank Authority to identify the best policies and programs to support existing residents within their RLE communities. Please contact the CTA to follow-up about policy concepts or mitigation methods.

What local organizations will have input into the design and implementation of the Employment & Training (E&T) Plan?

As a part of the RLE project, the CTA is seeking to address barriers to sustainable employment for residents within the project area and people from economically disadvantaged zip codes. The CTA is establishing partnerships with community organizations, educational institutions, and trade organizations to promote workforce opportunities on the project and in the broader construction industry.

The Red Line Extension Project Advisory Council Workforce Subcommittee is assisting CTA with this effort as well.

Are you talking about revitalizing the existing homes or is all of this new structure-type housing?

As a part of the RLE TSD Plan, the CTA is working on identifying predominately vacant sites near the RLE station areas that are large enough to support new transit-supportive development. For larger sites that could support new development and for vacant sites in the station area, that would be new construction, but the CTA is also working with the Chicago Department of Planning and Development and the Cook County Land Bank to help promote rehabilitating the existing homes.

If you do build new housing, where is the room for shopping? Should there be more of that for Michigan Avenue?

The TSD Plan envisions a balance of different types of development. Much of the development along the commercial corridors is anticipated to be “mixed-use” with commercial and retail at the street with the potential to develop additional housing above the retail. The proportion of retail will be higher where commercial activity can be supported. The more people that live close to retail the more business for the retailers, so housing is an important component.

***Michigan Avenue Draft Vision Statement:** “Revitalize Michigan Avenue as a thriving mixed-use shopping district in the heart of Roseland. Renovate historic buildings and infill vacant parcels with commercial destinations. Increase access to housing throughout the neighborhoods and improve connections to all forms of transit”*

Are you working on a grocery store for us?

CTA understands the fundamental need to bring access to fresh and healthy food to the community. While the CTA is not a developer, it is actively soliciting input from experts in the field and are working to find creative solutions to grocery store concerns. Like you, the CTA are particularly aware of the vulnerabilities that come with a community being reliant on a for-profit food provider. The exact right solution is unclear at this time, however one idea might be for a smaller, more local, and more innovative store.

Will the store owners will be invited to buy-in?

In addition to what the CTA has heard from the community, the market analysis identifies the types of retail and commercial uses that are most needed. Retail development that happens near the station will be done by private developers. There are numerous organizations and resources to help small businesses. Local business owners can work with the local chamber of commerce, numerous City departments and programs such as the Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF),

Invest South/West programs, Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDC), Neighborhood Opportunity Funds, Special Service Areas, Illinois Department of Commerce, and many others. CTA will continue to work with these organizations to support existing and future business.

Does part of the TSD Plan include incentives for businesses to occupy the proposed commercial spaces, so that residents can take advantage of them and have access to these new jobs?

Part of the TSD Plan also includes economic development that has an identification of programs and opportunities to encourage and support businesses.

Has there been engagement with Roseland businesses to ensure that they and their needs are considered in the plan?

Yes. The CTA has met with the Roseland Chamber of Commerce, local pastors, and community representatives to ensure that they and needs are reflected in the plan.

What about density in neighborhoods and single-family housing?

In general, the TSD plan recommends preserving the neighborhood feel with low density housing and single-family infill throughout the station areas, with mixed-use, medium density adjacent to the RLE stations.

Would any of this be tied into the Pullman District?

Yes, the CTA plans to work with the Pullman District on any aspect of this project directly affecting Pullman. The Pullman community has done a stellar job of revitalizing their community with new jobs, new residents, and the Pullman National Monument. The CTA hopes to continue on those successes as it works to become a part of the fabric of the neighborhood. As a part of the “New Start Grant,” the CTA is required to identify policies for proposals including: Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) or an opportunity to develop potential sites.

Will the mixed-use development also address the food deserts?

The CTA is looking for innovative ways to support the community in addressing the “food- deserts” that exist around the community. The CTA recognizes the current business models of commercial grocers look for areas with higher residential density. In addition to helping reverse population loss in the neighborhoods, CTA strongly believes there are other incentives to grow the neighborhoods, the CTA, in partnership with DPD, elected officials, and local developers, is exploring ways to create incentives and other ways to bring in healthy food and meet that urgent need residents have expressed.

Has there been an effort to reach out to the types of businesses that have proven to work well in station developments?

The CTA has not reached a point of connecting with current businesses in the TSD process. The CTA will explore more the ideas of what works and does not work once it hears more from the residents about desired outcomes/developments. As the CTA continues in the process, it will explore economic development more closely and examine available incentives and opportunities.

Why hasn't the 95th Street corridor been developed, and how does that affect the proposed RLE station areas?

The CTA is looking at a Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) for the immediate area surrounding the 95th St. Station to support development.

Will pre-existing homeowners who can't qualify for home improvement upgrades be overlooked?

Homeowners that don't qualify for income-based home improvement programs have additional resources. Homeowners can apply for property tax exemptions and seniors can apply for property tax freezes. If property values increase, homeowners can tap into loans based on the homes increased value.

I am curious as to the direct hand that CTA will have in providing housing?

The CTA does not provide housing. However, the Plan will utilize an equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD) planning approach. That approach seeks to develop without the displacement of existing residents and achieve community-focused benefits, such as affordable housing, local economic development, and environmental sustainability. The CTA also has worked to develop the TSD Plan that creates a vision to attract, incentivize, organize, and create a strategy for others who do provide housing.

What job opportunities are available for those currently living in the area and what plans are being made now to help the businesses in the area so they are prepared for the opportunities that will arrive in the future?

The CTA has developed workforce opportunities through Hire360.com to support residents interested in working on the project. CTA also posts all CTA hiring information on the RLE website, RLE Facebook page, and the RLE Instagram page. The CTA continue to work closely, examining how this project can bring in new jobs to the area.