

Mayor Rory Hoskins
Commissioner Joseph Byrnes
Commissioner Maria Maxham
Commissioner Ryan Nero
Commissioner Jessica Voogd

RE: Altenheim Property Recommendations
Prepared by the Altenheim Advisory Committee
Dated March 6, 2023

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

The Altenheim Advisory Committee (AAC) is pleased to provide recommendations for the future use of the Village owned property at the Altenheim. Upon formation of the committee, it was anticipated that the committee would complete its work in 6 months with monthly meetings. However, due to the complexity of the task and the amount of information that required review, the committee met nine times over a period of 8 months.

The report contains an executive summary and provides information on the site background, the formation of the advisory committee, and the committee's general recommendations with key considerations for the future development. Following the general recommendations, more detailed recommendations are provided for the Residential Development and Parks and Public Space along with two Conceptual Pot Plans. These detailed discussions and plot plans incorporate the committee's goals and vision for the property. The two conceptual plot plans show different amounts of development and are provided to help visualize the property with different levels of development. Although the committee's scope is limited to "matters that directly concern the property", the report also includes discussions on financial considerations and traffic which the committee feels are especially important to determine the balance between development and open space.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on this committee and share our recommendations with you and the citizens of Forest Park. Special thanks to Steve Glinke, Director of Public Property, Commissioners Maria Maxham and Jessica Voogd, and Kindy Kruller, Muse Community + Design, for their guidance and assistance.

Roberto Escalante	Scott Presslak	Karen Swinger
David Gulyas	Steven Rouse	Marty Tellalian, Chair
Kurt Hansen	Jocelyn Sims	Mark Zinni
Therese O'Brien	Geoff Smith	

Cc: Moses Amiedi – Village Administrator
Steve Glinke – Director of Public Health and Safety
Courtney Kashima / Kindy Kruller – Muse Community + Design

Altenheim Property Recommendations

Altenheim Advisory Committee

March 6, 2023

Executive Summary

This report contains recommendations for the property owned by the Village of Forest Park west of Van Buren Street and south of Madison Street referred to as the Altenheim property. The recommendations contained in this report are from the Altenheim Advisory Committee formed in 2022 and facilitated by the Village of Forest Park. The committee consists of residents from Forest Park who toured the property, reviewed regulatory and contractual requirements, and considered past proposals and preferences expressed by Village residents, previous committees, and neighbors. The committee recommends that the Altenheim property be used for a mix of public space and residential development. The committee further recommends that the residential development be done as a Planned Unit Development in collaboration with the Village of Forest Park and the Altenheim Senior Living Facility as required to meet the regulatory and contractual requirements of the property.

Site Background

The Altenheim Senior Living Facility (ASLF) opened at 7824 Madison Street in Forest Park, Illinois in 1886 as a senior residential home for the German American community. The ASLF remains in use as a privately-owned, senior living rental community. In 2001, the Village of Forest Park purchased 11 acres of land and existing but obsolete structures from the ASLF. The purchased land surrounds the ASLF on three sides. The purchase agreement between ASLF and the Village includes restrictive covenants regarding the future use of the property. In addition, the property is subject to an intergovernmental grant agreement with the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO). The DCEO financed the Village's demolition of the obsolete buildings with a provision that future development consisted of a mix of residential and recreational uses. Other than the demolition of five structures, the site remains essentially unchanged since the purchase in 2001. The land to the east of the Altenheim property has been recently developed with townhomes and condominiums with the Residences at the Grove completed in 2007 and the Van Buren townhomes completed in 2021. The site is near the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Blue Line Forest Park station and train terminus.

Altenheim Advisory Committee

There have been various proposals for the site over the years, ranging from a YMCA to a Cultural Park and music venue. In response to the proposed developments, many residents have indicated a strong community interest in retaining open space. The Altenheim Advisory Committee (ACC) was formed through mayoral appointments in 2022 to provide recommendations from residents on the future use of the Altenheim property. The AAC is made up of 11 Forest Park residents with diverse backgrounds and experience. One member of the AAC serves on the Board of Directors of the ASLF to ensure that the residents at the Altenheim were represented on the committee. Forest Park Director of Public Health and Safety Steve Glinke, and two current Forest Park Commissioners, Maria Maxham and Jessica Voogd, serve as ex-officio members. The process was facilitated by Courtney Kashima, AICP and Kindy Kruller, AICP of MUSE Community + Design.

The AAC met monthly from August 2022 through March 2023 with an additional meeting in January of 2023. Early in the process, the committee toured the property and engaged in discussions with the major stakeholders including members of committees from neighboring residents and advocates for

public uses. Prior resident input was reviewed, and a random survey of 50 residents was conducted to gauge the preference of the residents. In response to the desire of many residents and AAC members for public park space, the ACC submitted questions to the Park District of Forest Park and discussed the involvement of the Park District with their Director. After hearing from the various stakeholders and community members, the AAC provides their consensus recommendations for the future of the Altenheim property to the Village of Forest Park Mayor and Commissioners. It should be noted that the ACC did not review or consider either the financial condition of the Village or the potential value of the property depending on the zoning or density of development.

General AAC Recommendations for the Altenheim Development

All committee members recommend a mix of public space and residential development as the primary uses of the property. Many committee members also recommend that isolated business development be considered for the extreme southern portion of the property if deemed by the Village, developers, and surrounding neighbors to be feasible and desirable. The AAC feels that the key considerations for future development are the zoning, revenue, neighborhood impact, community input, and parking/traffic.

Zoning: The current zoning for the property is R-3 and the restricted covenants in the Purchase agreement further limit the zoning to R-2. While the ACC generally prefers to limit the density of the development to be in accordance with in the restricted covenants, the economics of the development may require the consideration of increasing the density to R-3 in isolated areas of the property. The ACC recommends that any increase to R-3 zoning be limited to the south and southeastern portions of the property. The ACC recommends that any residential development be done under a Planned Unit Development (PUD) to safeguard the residents. In addition to extensive community engagement and site analysis, the PUD will require negotiations between the Village, Developer, and the ASLF Board of Directors on any proposal that deviates from existing covenants.

Revenue: Although financial considerations are outside the scope of the AAC, the AAC recommends that the development of the Altenheim property provide increased revenue and include suggestions on how the development can fund the establishment and maintenance of open/park space.

Neighbors: The current property line surrounding the ASLF was based in large part by the buildings which previously existed on the site. The development process should address the health, safety, and quietude of the Altenheim residences and neighboring residences east of Van Buren. The ASLF should begin to actively manage the Altenheim Cemetery and maintain it in a condition consistent with other cemeteries.

Community Input: The development proposal should consider the following: address mitigating climate change and environmental impacts by incorporating a set of green building best practices such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), ENERGY STAR, or other third-party verification protocols. The committee further recommends the potential participation of Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), Women-Owned Business Enterprises (WBE) and Veteran's Business Certification.

Parking and traffic: The development should consider the traffic circulation and relationship to the CTA, identify driveway access and provide a plan to ensure traffic in the area remains locally orientated. The development should consider existing traffic inadequacies at peak demand.

Residential Development

- The AAC recommends that a significant portion of the Altenheim property be developed for residential use. To maintain neighborhood context, areas immediately adjacent to existing residential development should not be more intense than the current neighboring use. Higher density residential uses should be concentrated further south on the site.
- AAC recommends residential development for the portion of the Altenheim property between Altenheim Senior Living buildings and the Altenheim Cemetery which is consistent with R-2 zoning. The AAC further recommends that the residential development in this area consist primarily of two flats, townhouses, and row houses or single-family homes.
- The AAC recognizes that the development must be economically viable, which may require an increase in the housing density and increase in the area designated for residential development. The AAC recommends PUD with Multifamily zoning for the southern portion of the residential development, provided that the Village and Altenheim residents can agree on increased density.
- If determined to be economically feasible by private developers, the AAC recommends considerations of mixed-use commercial and residential development in the southern portion of the residential development. The committee further recommends that Traffic Oriented Development (TOD) should be prioritized, and parking requirements may be reduced through the PUD process.

Park and Public Space

- The AAC recommends that a significant portion of the property be designated for open public recreational use. Any proposals for active recreation should include financial information regarding expected expenses and space necessary for ongoing maintenance and programming, as well as potential revenue generation. It is anticipated that open space will also contribute to the site's storm-water management needs; wherever possible, open space to be used for storm-water management should also be available for passive recreation uses as well.
- The north triangle of the Altenheim property is optimal for an open park space that can be both active and passive. The accessibility to Madison St and the Prairie Path creates an opportunity for a picnic area and playground. The existing driveway is not currently used for access to the ASLF and should be removed resulting in the only access to the ASLF being directly from Van Buren Street.
- The south and southeastern areas of the property can incorporate walking paths and pollinator gardening, which provide a unique and enjoyable experience for all citizens.
- Although the Park District of Forest Park has stated that they are currently unable to play a role in the development or maintenance of park space, the role of the Park District is very important to future plans for park and public space. A developer should be flexible in how park management will be maintained in the future.
- An extension of the Prairie Path is currently planned on the west side of Van Buren and the development of the property should be done in harmony with the future path.

Commercial/Specialty Development

- The ACC recommends that the RFP should indicate that commercial/specialty development would be entertained if the right development mix is presented after approval by the ASLF and Village.
- Businesses such as coffee shops, dry cleaners, and other convenience retailers will be market-driven and only included if the developer believes they are feasible and economically viable.
- No commercial or specialty development will be allowed "as of right" since only residential, parks and schools, cemeteries, and churches are allowed by the current zoning.

Traffic Considerations

The Altenheim site is currently accessible by vehicular traffic from Des Plaines Avenue via Van Buren Street which runs along the eastern edge of the property. Van Buren Street connects to Madison Street immediately north of the site and also connects to Des Plaines Avenue southeast of the site, east of the CTA's Forest Park Transit Center. While both intersections allow for access to the site, currently Van Buren Street does not provide for egress to Des Plaines Avenue for private vehicles. The Village is currently studying options and working with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to provide a "right out" that would allow eastbound Van Buren Street motorists to turn onto southbound Des Plaines Avenue. The site also includes a single-lane driveway from Madison Street to the existing Altenheim parking lot and buildings. The masonry archway at the north end of the driveway is a protected local landmark and the existing driveway from the Altenheim facility to Madison Street should be closed to traffic.

Due to the lack of eastbound access to Des Plaines Avenue from Van Buren Street, Van Buren Street is a relatively lightly trafficked street. Any development that would be reasonably expected to increase traffic volumes, including land uses that would increase vehicle trips coming to the site in addition to trips generated by new residential uses, should include mitigation measures to ensure traffic does not unduly burden existing and future residents nearby. Furthermore, additional traffic calming measures should be included to discourage cut-through traffic if/when eastbound access from Van Buren Street to southbound Des Plaines Avenue is created.

The site is also well-connected to the region's public transportation and non-motorized transportation networks. A new multi-use path is currently being constructed along the eastern edge of the site that will eventually link the Des Plaines River Trail with the Illinois Prairie Path. The future site plan should accommodate this path and minimize vehicular crossings across the path. Additionally, the site is located within convenient walking distance of the CTA's Blue Line terminus and is directly served by Pace Routes 303, 310, and 317. Four additional Pace routes (301, 305, 308, and 318) serve the transit center. Site plans are strongly encouraged to utilize equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD) strategies to leverage these transportation amenities to their highest potential.

Local residents have routinely commented about traffic and parking as major concerns regarding the future use and plan for the site. However, existing parking facilities near the site - specifically the CTA-owned park-and-ride surface lot immediately south of the site - are underutilized, especially in the pandemic era. Proposals for better management of existing parking assets as a way to reduce the need for new parking required on the site itself should be considered as a way to maximize permeable, public open space to be provided as part of the overall site plan.

Financial Considerations

The AAC discussed the general financial implications of the development to the Village of Forest Park. The value of the property to developers is dependent on the amount of land designated for development and on the density / zoning of the development. In addition, the amount of future tax receipts will be dependent on the nature and density of the development. Although dependent on the nature of the public park space (passive or active), the public space will require an initial investment and ongoing maintenance costs. Detailed analyses of the financial considerations were outside of the AAC's scope of work. The future tax income must be balanced with the open space concerns to reach a compromise and balance between development and open space.

Conceptual Plot Plans

Although the density of the development, amount of open space, and overall plot plan must be determined by the Village in conjunction with the developer, two example plot plans are offered for conceptual purposes only. One plot plan shows essentially the maximum possible density of development and the other plot plan shows a mid-level of density for the development. The plot plans are attached.

ACC Committee Members

Roberto Escalante	Scott Presslak	Karen Swinger
David Gulyas	Steven Rouse	Marty Tellalian, Chair
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