



**FAQs from Public Workshop #1**  
**Questions for Hammond, IN**  
Updated 1/4/17

**Q) What is the plan for redevelopment of downtown Hammond? Business? New or old.**

The most recent successes/updates for Downtown Hammond are the following:

- A. Mental Health America opened up new offices in the First Merchant Bank building bringing 70 white collar workers to Hammond. MHA is a not for profit group that works with families in Lake County that have needs beyond their own means.
- B. 18<sup>th</sup> Street Brewery, which opened in 2015, is now working on Phases 2 and 3 for their business. Both of these phases involve new employees and investment and will build on the success that 18<sup>th</sup> Street has already accomplished. Although they are not prepared to announce what the new phases are, they have assured us there will be additional opportunities for Hammond residents and beyond in Downtown.
- C. The Indiana Building is fully leased for the first time in several years. This building houses the Lakeshore Chamber and other organizations. Recently they brought The Crossing School which is a school of business and entrepreneurship for kids that have historically struggled in other formal school settings.
- D. The First Midwest Bank building was purchased by a group called F9 Properties. Their plans are to market the property and bring new tenants into Downtown Hammond capitalizing on their success they have had with other investment properties throughout NWI.
- E. A new café opening in Downtown called Stella Vi. They have opened where the former Blue Room Café and Steel Toe Joe's were on the bottom floor of the Indiana Building. The new owner was the former chef at 18<sup>th</sup> Street Brewery and has already impressed with her culinary skills.
- F. The City of Hammond is waiting on assessments for the possibility of moving City Hall to Downtown Hammond. This would bring hundreds of employees to Downtown not to mention the hundreds of other people who come to City Hall on a daily basis. The potential "new traffic" in Downtown would certainly lead to other retail, office, etc. businesses to follow.
- G. The renovations for the new Police Garage are underway at the "Sub Hub" building in Downtown. This will not only give the Police a more modern and efficient building for working on vehicles, but it also will increase the police presence in the Downtown Hammond corridor.
- H. A new Artist HUB has been started on the first floor of the old Mercantile building. Over 10 artists are currently located at the HUB and there is a waiting list for several others that are looking for space.
- I. We are currently working on a lease agreement with a company called "Green Cow" which will create a new Co-working space at the Hammond Incubator. If all falls into place, we should have the agreement formalized in February and this will be the first co-working space throughout the entire City.

**Q) What else is going to be done to attract this growth to the Hammond Area?**

The City of Hammond has many different ways of attracting new businesses. The Economic Development team attends many real estate conventions throughout the year and focuses on different priority areas of the City

depending on the business that we are trying to attract. We also use Social Media to get the word out on different areas of the City where there are opportunities. Most of the new businesses we attract to Hammond however, are done through word of mouth. We have worked very hard over the past several years to create a proactive business environment through the projects we have successfully accomplished. Because of the major successes we have had in Hammond, specifically over the past 3 – 4 years, many investors, developers, and companies have heard of what Hammond has to offer and this has created a lot of buzz in the business community. We are currently working on over 20 projects, throughout the entire City, mainly based on referrals from others who have worked with our team.

**Q) Hessville has much mixed-use retail and residential - it has a lot of walkability - but we are being neglected in this plan. We need funding to assign owners in legacy communities. We need revitalization, not demolition.**

Hammond is committed to improving all parts of the community, including Hessville. We are proud to have Hessville and HC3 as partners in our community. Redevelopment is working to promote available property where possible. Unfortunately for Hessville, this plan only affects the West Lake Extension of the South Shore, basically along the former Monon railroad alignment.

**Q) How will the property value of a house be affected if it only has a street between the tracks and your house? Are there any statistics on this? Can you share some additional info about property values? How does this train improve property values? What makes you sure property values will rise near the rail line? Do you have several examples where this has occurred in communities similar to ours?**

Property values increase near transit stations on a commuter rail line, because there is an excess of demand around those stops. If a person has a job in downtown Chicago and is inclined to ride the train, their family can “downsize” from two cars to one, for example. The annual cost of automobile ownership has been calculated at \$8700.00 per year, and that doesn’t include the cost of parking in downtown Chicago. So a rational family could save a substantial amount, and put some of that towards its monthly rent or mortgage. The result is that developers know that they can charge higher rents or sell at higher prices if the properties that they are developing are close to transit.

In a report from the Federal Transit Administration completed in 2008, there were 24 studies referenced that looked at the impact of transit in proximity to both residential and commercial property on value. Of the 24 studies, 20 found a positive impact on property values, 3 found no significant impact, and only 1 found a negative impact.

**Q) If you are trying to raise property values in Hammond along the route? Hammond already has highest rate per 100 assessed valuations compared to other communities along route. New assessments just went up 20% compared to last year.**

Hammond does NOT have the highest property tax rates of any municipality along the South Shore line, and AV did NOT increase by 20% in Hammond last year. Accordingly, there is no answer that could address all of these problems.

**Q) How can I continue to participate in this planning process?**

For more information on the West Lake TOD planning process, please visit: [westlaketod.civicpage.com](http://westlaketod.civicpage.com)