

**FEATURE**

**Trains, buses and stores**

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Place project. The Genesis Place project began in 2011 and provides affordable single-family housing in a neighborhood setting. Part of the Genesis Place project replaced the Major Bird Hi-Rise at 125 N. 13th St., while the rest of the 41 units are located on Carpenter, Reynolds and Mason streets.

This project site is estimated to take up eight blocks — about 25 acres — in downtown Springfield.

Ringer said that by building a multi-modal facility on 10th Street, Springfield would see an immediate increase in business.

"The multi-modal center could provide access to a neighborhood, much like if you live in the Chicago area, where everyone wants to live near the el station," Ringer said.

"You find your coffee shops, sandwich shops and convenience stores in these areas, so when you have a transportation hub like that and it becomes someone's place to go to work or come home from work or to travel, that's where businesses will start to pop up."

Tisdale said that if the conceptual drawings by SSCRPC are used for the site it could transform downtown Springfield.

"The designs that the planning commission have come up with could really create a very beautiful space down there and it would add tremendously to the look of Springfield as visitors come in," Tisdale said. "It would certainly make Ninth Street a much more attractive area and when you add in the green spaces (areas for visitors to walk through) it creates a very pleasant atmosphere for folks."

In addition to improving the business climate and the visual appeal of downtown Springfield, the creation of a multi-modal center also could serve as a new source of job creation.

Leroy Jordan, chairman of the Rail Issues Task Force for the Faith Coalition for the Common Good, said that the multi-modal idea would be a great job opportunity for members of the Springfield community.

"Any business or way that we can bring



This rendering provides a view of the passenger rail terminal looking from east to west, with 11th Street in the foreground and new commercial development along it. At top left is the historic Great Western Depot, which is included in the site planning. ILLUSTRATION COURTESY SSCRPC

jobs into our community will help the whole community," Jordan said. "If we have members of the community working and contributing to the economic welfare of the community those are just more positives."

Then there's the issue of funding for the multi-modal facility.

Currently, Springfield doesn't have enough funds for a project like this, but the multi-modal center in Bloomington-Normal, which is expected to open in July, could serve as an example of how to get the process started.

In February 2010, Normal received a federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant that

accounts for \$22 million of the estimated \$43 million project.

The TIGER grant program, created in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, gives out federal funding for projects that combine transportation with economic development, the environment and other criteria.

Tisdale said that based on her 2009 figures the project in Springfield would cost around \$48 million. She also said that SMTD has applied for grants and obtained some funding, but not enough for what it will cost to build a multi-modal facility.

"We have applied for funding and received

some funding for the land acquisition and preliminary engineering work, but we currently do not have enough funding for either one or for the construction costs," Tisdale said.

Tisdale said that if the TIGER grant program is still being funded when the final decision is made on where the high-speed rail system will go in Springfield, then "we will definitely go after those kinds of funds because it might be best at this point, given the funding mechanisms that are available."

However, the multi-modal concept faces another hurdle.

The Republican-controlled U.S. House is

likely to vote this month on the Five-Year Surface Transportation Reauthorization, which is legislation that determines how federal transportation funds are spent. The Republican-sponsored version of the bill, H.R. 7, would remove a rail relocation fund and other programs that would help Springfield, especially if high-speed rail is built through the city.

One thing is clear concerning the multi-modal center: If the tracks are not moved or consolidated from Third Street to 10th Street, then the current proposal for a multi-modal center will likely not happen.

It's a tentative plan with no funding, no timeline for completion and no overall cost estimate, but Sims said the purpose of the presentation was to give people an idea of what could potentially become a new transportation hub, while also demonstrating some of the difficulties that could come with creating a multi-modal facility.

"We wanted to have something that would get people thinking about what some of the challenges would be, in terms of what usages the facilities would have," Sims said. "From our end, there are also some ideas within this TOD that could potentially be used for other places, so we can start looking at those for a lot of different purposes." □

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The SMTD bus terminal, foreground, would be between Ninth and 10th streets, Adams and Jefferson, with parking structures on either end. ILLUSTRATION COURTESY SSCRPC

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