

# BUSINESS

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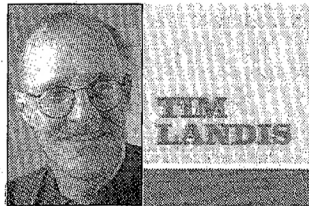
## HIGH-SPEED RAIL

### Committee releases bold plan for transportation hub

There is a great-looking plan for the **SPRINGFIELD MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION** facility out there.

If money were no object, and if it was clear where the trains will travel.

A transportation committee of the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission got a slide-by-slide, color-graphic look at the proposed facility



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last week, courtesy of associate planner Neha Soni Agarwal.

The center, which would combine train, bus, taxi and shuttle services in a single location, would be along the

east side of the 10th Street rail line between Jefferson Street and Washington Street. It is the same spot the Springfield Mass Transit District earlier concluded would be a good for a bus transfer center.

But this is one ambitious plan.

Think lots of open-air and green spaces, Agarwal said. Amenities could include retail shops, bike paths, sky bridges, a day-care cen-

ter, playgrounds, a tourism center, business offices, a hotel and a police station, just to name a few.

“The core of the block is a more open, lighter space,” Agarwal said.

The complex also would tie in to Prairie Capital Convention Center and downtown hotels, she told the committee.

Of course; there is no money, and the high-speed rail issue remains

unresolved. The Federal Railroad Administration is not expected to make a decision on the preferred route for local trains — Third, 10th or 19th streets, or some combination of the streets — until this fall.

But commission executive director Norm Sims said after the meeting there was a purpose to drawing up the facility plans beyond an attrac-

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tive presentation.

He said a significant piece of the site already is owned by Sangamon County and is readily available. The commission staff also looked at similar plans for the Amtrak station on Third Street, but determined land acquisition would be difficult, Sims said.

As for money, he said communities such as Bloomington-Normal have used public plans to attract private development.

All everyone needs to know, Sims added, is where the trains will go.

“That’s the big question,” he said.

The plans can be found at: [http://co.sangamon.il.us/Departments/RegionalPlanning/Special\\_Projects\\_Programs.asp](http://co.sangamon.il.us/Departments/RegionalPlanning/Special_Projects_Programs.asp). Click on the “Thinking Beyond Transit” link.