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CTA threatens route cuts, longer wait time

by Mike Stevens
The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) will eliminate all of Bronzeville's express routes and could double riders' wait times beginning July 17 under a new plan approved by the CTA Board last week.

Faced with five doomsday scenarios of service cuts and fare hikes, the

board unanimously opted for a surprise sixth scenario that cuts 54 routes—including the #N3 King Drive Express and the #N4 Cottage Grove Express—unless state lawmakers find \$55 million for a short-term bail out of the cash-strapped agency this spring.

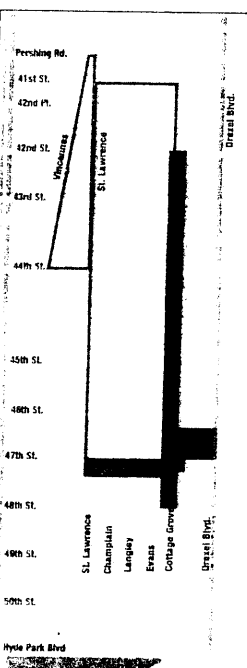
In addition, riders paying cash will cough up an extra quarter and will no

longer receive paper transfers. Transit card users can still transfer for a quarter and face only a fare hike of a quarter when they use the train.

"The day has come," board member Nicholas Zagotta said before giving his "yes" vote. "We've been putting it off and putting it off and now we're left holding the bag."

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TIF outlines business area needs



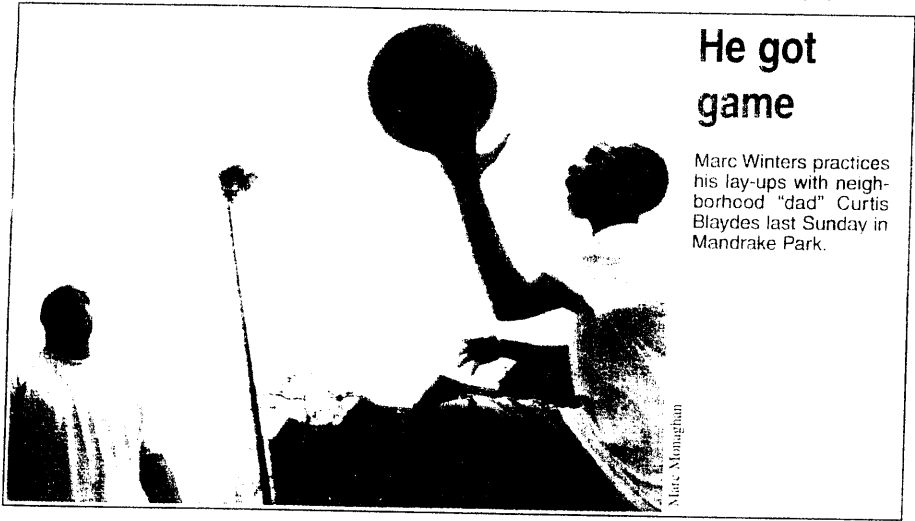
by Jeremy Adragna
Area residents packed the inaugural meeting of the 43rd & Cottage Grove Tax Increment Finance (TIF) advisory council meeting last Thursday to discuss plans to develop commercial property along the Cottage Grove corridor.

Some argue the plans are much needed.

Residential development in the North Kenwood and Oakland neighborhoods has been growing rapidly in the past few years and to meet that need the TIF advisory council is employing two studies created by ShoreBank subsidiary MetroEdge and another by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill LLP which outline the imperative need for new businesses to catch-up to residential growth.

The North Kenwood/Oakland Conservation Community Council (NK/O CCC) approved a plan put forth by Hyde Parker Andrew Dibble April 7 to construct a large-scale townhouse develop-

The new TIF stretches from 48th Street to Pershing Road. continued on page 3



He got game

Marc Winters practices his lay-ups with neighborhood "dad" Curtis Blaydes last Sunday in Mandrake Park.

43rd St. development attracts tenants to NK/O

by Kiratiana E. Freedom
After a 12-year odyssey to buy non-commercial building at the 1001-1013 block of East 43rd Street, owner Norman Bolden is one tenant away from completing his dream of bringing "beneficial" businesses and organizations to his North Kenwood neighborhood.

"I bought it in 1991 to put in what I believe was going to be a liquor mall," he says. "I'm a member of the 43rd & Cottage

Grove Tax Increment Finance district. It was in the best interest of the community that I would purchase it."

The Bronzeville Black Chamber of Commerce will run the last available lease May 1. But the building's first, second and upper floor already represent the entire spectrum of the Bronzeville, Kenwood and Oakland community. Retail shops, art-in-progress, a church and other neighborhood organizations are in the

12,500-square-foot building. Law's concept, chain salon, Latsore Health Foods and the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO) are located in the building. The Icon Foundation and the Chicago Neighborhood Investments and Mortgage Fund estate brokerage, have already signed leases and will soon move into the empty space next to Bolden's. In addition the

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TIF

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ment in North Kenwood, increasing the need for a grocery store and other smaller businesses nearby. Fourth Ward Ald. Toni Preckwinkle praised the support of residents who packed the TIF meeting. "I think that what everyone agrees we need is mixed-use development to bring human beings to help create a market for the area."

Dibble says he'll need 99,000 square feet of land near the corner of 43rd Street and Drexel Boulevard to accommodate the entire project, which includes 48 townhouses, 10 affordable units and a park in the center of the development.

"This project has a real implication in the sense that it would really be something that will drive the absolute need for commercial development," said NK/O-CCC board member Doug McKeever. "You have people who are going to be wondering where to go for all their necessities and you're going to be backing up to the Cottage Grove corridor. It excites me to see this level of development." The city of Chicago owns nearly 70 per-



This lot at 43rd Street and Drexel Boulevard is currently vacant but could be developed into 48 new townhouses.

cent of the property Dibble is looking to develop while the rest is privately held. The NK/O-CCC's approval could signal a go-ahead by the city to sell the land to Dibble.

The Drexel Club Townhomes development would be built on a lot that is currently vacant, directly across from King High School. The townhouses would also abut the \$4.7 million Effie Ellis Center, to be built by

Centers for New Horizons and completed by June 2006.

Dibble says homes would likely sell for between \$450,000 and \$750,000 and would be completed within three-years after construction begins. Although Drexel Club Townhomes technically falls just outside the TIF district, its residents would benefit from development as the majority of Cottage

Grove Avenue nearby is devoid of any commercial development. Two plans outlined at the TIF advisory meeting would center the majority of new development near the corner of 45th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue. Officials say they are looking to install less "big box" and more medium size businesses so not to overpower the small amount of land remaining.

In other news, the NK/O-CCC board is looking to fill seven seats on its board. The city's Department of Planning and Development will take applications until May 6 and those appointed will serve until February 2008. The board has also twice tabled discussion of Muntu Dance Theater, 1100 - 1116 E. 47th St. construction and Chicago Department of Transportation plans for a pedestrian bridge crossing Lake Shore Drive at 47th Street.

The new TIF advisory board consists of 19 members including chairman Susan Campbell, vice-chairman Rudy Nimocks, secretary Bernita Johnson-Gabriel, Bill Little, 21st District Commander Adrienne Stanley, Courtney Pogue, Douglas McKeever, Fred Bonner, Gregory Newsome, Ina Wilson, James McKee, Jerome Wade, Michael Henderson, Norman Bolden, Sharon Eubanks-Pope, Terry Nichols-Clark, Terry Young, Timothy Schau and William Howard.

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SALE DATES: April 20th to April 26th, 2005. All sale items cash and carry. Plus 3% State and Local taxes where applicable.