

CHARRETTE SUMMARY REPORT

Florissant Old Town Development Plan

July 20, 2021 – August 3, 2021

Objective

The following report is a collection of conclusions and information gathered throughout the planning Charrette process for Old Town Florissant. It reflects the conclusions and information provided from the community as to the direction Old Town should consider as it moves forward in its development.

Charrette Session Summaries

1. Site Walk and Kickoff Public Meeting 1

Date: July 20th 2021

Attendees: 44

Presentation: see website

a. Purpose of the Meeting

This meeting introduced community members to the scope of the Old Town planning project. Primarily contextual, it aided in formulating a list of issues and opportunities that guided the upcoming design directions and generated discussions regarding the challenges and opportunities in Old Town.

b. Engagement Activities

- i. Site Walk
- ii. Interactive Workshop

c. Site Walk Outcomes

The discussion generated during the site walk provided the following key takeaways regarding Old Town:

- i. Lack of walkable streets, they are narrow and few have sidewalks along them. Narrow streets create on-street parking challenging in the district.
- ii. Traffic is heavy and fast along major corridors like St. Denis and St. Ferdinand contributing to walkability issues.
- iii. Old Town should expand its official boundary to remedy the disconnect between the land southeast and northwest of St. Ferdinand Street therefore re-incorporating the entirety of the historic grid of Old Town.
- iv. Main Street shuts down at 5pm and lacks vibrant active businesses.
- v. Strip centers, continuous curb cuts, and parking lots disrupt pedestrian circulation and accessibility.

d. Issues and Opportunities

Issues:

Community member expressed the following as issues in Old Town that they feel contributes to lack of vibrancy or activity in an otherwise interesting part of Florissant:

- i. Old Town lacks visibility and signage, a clear point of arrival is missing from the city.
- ii. Rue St. Francois lacks diversity of businesses that could contribute to outdoor spaces and activity.
- iii. Poor building conditions and randomized facades give Rue St. Francois an outdated and incohesive image.
- iv. The conditions of sidewalks, street, and traffic make pedestrians uncomfortable and walkability challenging.
- v. Landscaping is lacking in public areas and along public streets due to constrained and limited public rights-of-way.
- vi. There are no family programs and places to go in Old Town Florissant.
- vii. It is challenging to get from Old Town to other areas of Florissant as a pedestrian due to high traffic and unsafe and uncomfortable pedestrian facilities.

Opportunities:

Community members provided insight to potential programs and activities they would like to see occurring in Old Town. They emphasized the following possibilities for different areas of interest or assets in Old Town:

- i. St. Francois Street
 - a. St. Francois is the main street of Old Town and has an opportunity to become an active corridor by encouraging businesses to occupy and engage with sidewalks and allowing commercial, recreational, and community activities to happen along it.
 - b. If St. Francois's overall visual and physical condition were improved so that sidewalks felt safer and more comfortable, buildings weren't so close to the street, and landscaping were incorporated along businesses and streets, then pedestrian and community traffic could be increased.
- ii. The parking lot across from city hall
 - a. Make use of empty lots (such as the lot across from City Hall) and facilitate future redevelopment along Rue St. Francois Street so that new developments create active spaces adjacent to the public realm along building frontages to create vibrant street life.
- iii. Riviere Plaza
 - a. This plaza has a deep setback with many curb cuts, greatly impacting the pedestrian experience along this block. If this site is redeveloped

in the future, new development should be orchestrated so that the building addresses the street, provides an active frontage and has service and parking in the rear. Future development would also benefit the district by diversifying uses, allowing for more mixed-use and active ground flood uses.

- iv. Green spaces along St. Charles Street
 - a. This area can be used to create a central gathering space in Old Town that activates Old Town and attracts community and regional visitors to Florissant.
 - b. The community garden is a huge asset to the area and expanding it could provide educational opportunities and diversify nutritional choices in the community increasing the self-sufficiency of the community.

- v. The Park and greenway systems
 - a. Greenway trails can be woven through Old Town to make it an active and well landscaped corridor enhancing its main street.
 - b. A continuous connection to Old Town via greenway enhances it as a regional destination or stopping point for bikers, walkers, campers, and hikers in the area and ties it to recreational uses.

- vi. Fountain and Coldwater Creeks
 - a. The creeks, if cleaned, can become focal points for the beautification of the city and its recreational opportunities giving residents and visitors a safe and fun place to engage with this natural feature.

- vii. St. Ferdinand Street
 - a. St. Ferdinand is a potential gateway for Old Town but has no indication that one has entered Old Town. Unique signage, event advertisements, and better traffic calming could allow St. Ferdinand to create a more engaging and visible frontage for Old Town.

- viii. Lindbergh Boulevard/Florissant Meadows
 - a. Lindbergh boulevard is a significant regional connector. Old Town could expand its boundary to Lindbergh to increase visibility and draw in more people from Lindbergh into Old Town. It could also be the site of significant mixed-use developments that improve the quality of retail amenities and expand living opportunities in Old Town.

e. Key Conclusions

The information gathered through public meeting #1 has highlighted the following conditions regarding the future of Old Town Florissant:

- i. The community values walkable, well paved, well lit, and well landscaped streets that strengthen the connectivity in Old Town and creates a safe pedestrian environment.
- ii. The community believes Rue St. Francois has the potential to become an active retail corridor with diverse economic opportunities and active comfortable outdoor spaces.
- iii. The community recognizes the beauty of the park and creek systems believing in the potential development and expansion of recreational, event, and natural programs along them.
- iv. The community establishes the need for active and visible gateways into Old Town to create a sense of place, identity, and arrival for Old Town.

2. Public Meeting Two

Date: July 29th 2021

Attendees: 47

Presentation: see website

a. Purpose of the Meeting

This meeting took the conclusions and direction provided by the community at the first Public Meeting to develop three distinct potential options for the Old Town Redevelopment Plan. The options were not intended for choosing one, but rather a mechanism for exploring concepts with the community for facilitating a discussion around the positives and negatives of each, so that a preferred plan could be synthesized according to the community needs and attitudes.

b. Engagement Activities

- i. One word vision cards
- ii. Interactive workshop

c. Options Feedback

The three options presented were developed according to the drafted goals during this stage of the planning process. The following is feedback from the community on the presented options:

- i. The quality of the streets should be improved in terms of walkability and landscaping.
- ii. The removal of overhead utilities that conflict with walking paths is encouraged
- iii. Traffic on St. Denis should be addressed and managed due to high volumes of cut thru traffic, speeding, and limited visibility due to topography.
- iv. Vibrant retail spaces should be created along Rue St. Francois with enough space for activity to spill out onto the street.
- v. A gateway along St. Ferdinand would make Old Town more visibly present

- vi. Reconfigure Old St. Ferdinand to reduce high speed traffic in the district making it more pedestrian friendly.
- vii. Public art and murals should be developed along Rue St. Francois.
- viii. The Lindbergh corridor should be developed to highlight the historic shrine and allow pedestrian access from Lindbergh into Old Town.
- ix. The Park land should be developed into a destination park with diverse amenities, recreations opportunities, playgrounds, and event venues that complement the historic shrine.
- x. The Lindbergh corridor should become a new front door for Old Town.

d. Key Conclusions

The community expressed increased interest in the following areas and concepts of the plan development:

- i. Creating a walkable well-connected neighborhood with landscaping, sidewalks, adequate drainage, and a potential one-way system to limit and control traffic making streets safer.
- ii. Revitalizing main street into a vibrant and well landscaped corridor with diverse businesses allowing activity to occupy the edges of the street and relocating conflicting utilities.
- iii. Developing the park area into a strong recreational and natural center with event spaces, trails, pavilions, bike trails, and family-oriented amenities and activities.
- iv. Redeveloping Florissant Meadows Shopping Center to give Old Town a frontage along Lindbergh. The redevelopment should also front Coldwater Creek, therefore turning what is today a back door/back of house area into an active frontage along the Creek, with the historic shrine as a center piece.

3. Open House

Date: July 31st, 2021

Attendees: 57

Presentation: N/A

a. Purpose of the Meeting

The Open House was a workshop to discuss the details of many of the ideas and give the community another opportunity to provide input on the development of Old Town before the presentation of the preferred plan.

b. Engagement Activities

- i. Interactive Workshop

c. Preferred Plan Draft Feedback

The following are sections on which the community provided substantial feedback in preparation for the preferred Old Town Redevelopment Plan through the open house:

Streets:

- i. Consider speed tables and or speed bumps to slow down traffic in residential neighborhoods
- ii. Investigate closing off St. Denis to Lindbergh in order to limit dangerous cut thru traffic.
- iii. Developing a landscaping and beautification ordinance that mandates a quality condition of lawn and landscaping on public/commercial properties.
- iv. Piloting a one-way system along secondary north south routes with protected intersections in order to reduce speed and traffic in the residential area.

St. Francois:

- i. Protecting the historic architectural character and image of St. Francois, preserving the sense of history and ensuring new development complements the diverse historic architecture.
- ii. Establishing active business uses (such as shops and restaurants) as the primary ground floor uses along St. Francois Street.
- iii. Establish pocket parks and landscaping, and seating areas within the proposed amenity zone along St. Francois Street.

St. Ferdinand:

- i. Reconfigure St. Ferdinand to better connect Old Town across St. Ferdinand improving walkability, bikeability, and image as a key entry point into Old Town.
- ii. Beautify the edge of the street to reconnect the Historic Shrine area to the Historic commercial district along Rue St. Francois.
- iii. Limit curb cuts along St. Ferdinand to create a comfortable and continuous pedestrian environment, limiting conflict points between cars and pedestrians through an access management strategy.

Northwest of St. Charles Street to Lindbergh:

- i. Develop this land as Florissant's regional destination – The Valley of the Flowers.
- ii. The park system should expand and preserve the community gardens and orchards which serve the community.
- iii. The park should diversify programs and play spaces to include playgrounds, picnic tables, pavilions, playscapes, splash pads and an improved and expanded trail system.
- iv. The creeks must be cleaned and remediated for the potential of recreational and future development.
- v. The vacant lot along St. Charles Street can be used for soft infrastructure and temporary uses initially for city activities and events. Eventually, the city can

use this lot as an opportunity for permanent mixed used development or a community/event venue making it a more active and livable area of the city.

Parking:

- i. As the district grows and attracts more visitors, create a district parking strategy and encourage shared parking amongst businesses.
- ii. Consider a residential parking permit zone to limit commercial parking in residential areas if it becomes an issue for residents.
- iii. Ensure parking lots are well landscaped and curb cuts and access are designed for pedestrian comfort, work to eliminate continuous curb cuts and front pull-in parking where feasible.

4. Public Meeting Three

Date: August 3rd, 2021

Attendees: 43

Presentation: *see website*

a. Purpose of the Meeting

This meeting was the presentation of the preferred Old Town plan which has been developed based upon the feedback and recommendations of the city and community members. Additionally, it puts into perspective phasing and completion strategies for the various recommendations provided through the preferred plan.

b. Engagement Activities:

- ii. Interactive workshop

c. Preferred Plan Feedback

Overall, there was significant consensus around the actions and suggestions provided by the plan and the majority of the community supports the goals, ideas, and iterations.

The following are final comments and suggestions for the Plan to incorporate and investigate:

- i. Ensure that if Old Town is expanded to Lindbergh, it complements the historic character and is not compromised by the character of modern buildings.
- ii. Create a strong sequence of gathering spaces between the park system and the downtown lot across from city hall.
- iii. Preserve the calm and peaceful nature of the green areas near the creek achieving a balance between active and peaceful spaces
- iv. Expanding the connections of the trails regionally beyond Florissant
- v. Manage traffic on New Florissant through similar strategies to St. Ferdinand.
- vi. Liven public spaces through art and music venues in businesses or open spaces

Overarching Themes and Approaches for the Development of Old Town

The following are conclusions regarding the values of the community as an approach to the development of the Old Town preferred plan. Based on discussions and observations of the community values:

- a.** The improvement of streets to create safe and walkable connections across old Town.
- b.** The management of street design to slow down and limit dangerous traffic along primary streets to create safe pedestrian environments.
- c.** Diversifying the business mix, providing more active ground floor uses along St. Francois Street with restaurants and retail. In order to support more restaurants, the district must act as a destination, drawing in customers from outside Old Town and Florissant to support expanded restaurant uses.
- d.** Restore the streetscapes through public art and improved facades which retain a historic character and unify St. Francois Street.
- e.** Increase the visibility of Old Town through gateways and new frontages to Lindbergh.
- f.** Expand the beauty and activities in recreational and park areas to create a regional destination in the Old Town District with amenities for festivals and families.
- g.** Capitalizing on the improved activities to entice new economic development in the area and along main street.