

3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Overview

Between January and May 2013, the Grand Center Great Streets project team implemented a public engagement program designed to elicit meaningful stakeholder and community involvement in the Great Streets planning process. Team members used a variety of outreach, communications and engagement tactics to facilitate constructive exchanges of information and ideas between the public and the project's decision makers. Community residents and stakeholders were given multiple opportunities to provide their input into the planning process and to share their project interests, concerns and aspirations. A summary of the engagement program's objectives, activities and outcomes is presented here.

Engagement Infrastructure

Subcommittees

A community engagement infrastructure was formed during the Framework Plan project. It eventually evolved to include Grand Center stakeholders within subcommittees that represented the street corridors of the study area. This stakeholder engagement infrastructure was comprised of 7 planning committees whose members included representatives from major stakeholder institutions, district property owners, residents and officials from municipal and state agencies. Over 50 people were involved on these subcommittees. The Corridor and Art Walk Subcommittees included the following:

- Art Walk Corridor Sub-Committee
- Grand Boulevard Corridor Sub-Committee
- Grandel Square Corridor Sub-Committee
- Olive Street Corridor Sub-Committee
- Spring Corridor Sub-Committee
- Theresa Corridor Sub-Committee
- Washington Corridor Sub-Committee

Additionally, there were three specialized committees involved in the project: The Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) and Land Use Committee.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

The Technical Advisory Group is another feature of the community engagement infrastructure that was developed during the Framework Plan. Officials from the City of St. Louis and its local utilities were asked to join the TAG at the beginning of the Framework Plan in effort to open a dialog between designers and those who would ultimately be responsible for the maintenance of the streetscape when constructed. This dialog started during the Framework Plan and the model continued throughout the Great Streets project. The TAG was engaged from the beginning of the project to help the designers understand the pitfalls of previous streetscape projects and the relative risk of particular proposals that may be considered throughout the planning process.

Plan Implementation Committee (PIC)

The chairs and co-chairs of each of the subcommittees sit on the Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) which is charged with the implementation of the recommendations for Grand Center over time. There are 15 people on the PIC that meet once a month along with Grand Center Inc. executives to discuss current and future initiatives and to advance the goals of Grand Center as an arts and entertainment district.

Land Use Committee

The Land Use committee a 16-person committee that includes stakeholders from other subcommittees and is focused on developing housing and commercial developments, not-for-profit institutional projects and parking lot/vacant land redevelopment. Chapter 5: Land Use and Development Strategy of this report was prepared in parallel with other on-going market research studies for Grand Center through coordination with the Land Use Committee.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

In accordance with the East-West Gateway Council of Government's public engagement policies, the Great Streets team complied with all federal and state laws, regulations, orders and directives regarding non-discrimination in federally assisted programs. Public outreach, marketing and involvement efforts, including the development of promotional materials and the hosting of public events were conducted in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The project team worked

closely with East-West Gateway throughout the planning process to ensure that environmental justice requirements concerning minority and low-income persons were adequately and appropriately addressed. The project team took specific actions to ensure that Title VI compliance statements were on all public meeting notices and the availability of special accommodations for the public would be provided if needed. The team reviewed demographic data from the 2010 U.S. Census to identify minority populations that may have needed special outreach. From their findings, they decided to reach out to African Americans; low-income residents living in area rental housing; and non-native English speakers, many of whom lived in one Grand Center apartment complex.

With the help of Alderwoman Marlene Davis, the project team and GCI representatives met with and disseminated public meeting flyers to nine area churches, eight of which have mainly African American congregations. They also distributed flyers at community events and residential meetings and worked with rental property managers to generate interest in the project's public open houses among their tenants. Special efforts were made to engage the residents of the Renaissance Place at Grand Apartments, a mixed income Hope VI housing development. The team discussed the flyer translation needs of the non-native English speakers living at the Coronado Place Apartments and Lofts with its property manager who indicated that the tenants' English proficiency would not warrant specially translated materials.

Other Title VI outreach efforts involved working with area institutions and media organizations that serve largely African American populations and low-income communities. The project team sent e-blasts, robo-calls, and/or flyers about its open houses to staff, constituents of the Urban League, Delta Sigma Theta St. Louis Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter, Kappa Alpha Pi Fraternity, Clyde C. Miller Academy, Loyola Academy, Cardinal Ritter College Preparatory High School and Harris Stowe State University. The team also purchased on line and print advertising with the St. Louis American and with First Civilizations – two media outlets that target the African American media market. At the project's open houses, the team distributed Title VI brochures explaining citizens' rights and protections to all event attendees. Appendix A presents the public meeting reports that document all of the team's Title VI activities.

Engagement Approach / Process

To advance public engagement goals and objectives, the project team developed a four-part engagement approach that consisted of stakeholder involvement, public involvement, technical review/capacity building, and community outreach. Though distinct in terms of their target audience or means of connection, these engagement focus areas were not only interrelated, they were also simultaneously executed to promote a high level of community awareness and participation. For each, a series of activities was undertaken to facilitate the success of the public engagement program. These activities, and the engagement focus areas they supported, are presented in the accompanying graphic.



Engagement Approach

Viewed in its totality, the public engagement program was designed to provide community stakeholders and residents with multiple points of entry into the planning process. In this way, the project team was able to assure accessibility, which helped to maintain open lines of communication with the public and maximize project participation.

Goals & Objectives

The central aim of the public engagement program was to obtain meaningful participation in the planning process by community stakeholders and constituents. Accomplishing this required that stakeholders and the public have an appreciation of planning parameters as well as an understanding of major project decisions and their implications. More specifically, meaningful participation was most likely to occur when the involvement program: 1) increased project awareness among stakeholders and the public; 2) stimulated people's interest in plan activities and findings; 3) deepened comprehension of the plan and its eventual outcomes; and 4) solicited constructive public input. These objectives are described in greater detail.

Raising Awareness

Expanding the community's awareness of Grand Center's improvement efforts required the project team to provide clear, accurate and easily attainable information on the plan's purpose, activities, and desired outcomes. To achieve this, the project team: 1) worked closely with Grand Center Inc. (GCI) and East-West Gateway to deliver reliable, timely project information to the public and area stakeholders; 2) held regular planning and coordination meetings, ensuring the accuracy of information communiqués; and 3) utilized local information outlets to maximize the project's community exposure.

Generating Interest

While public information and awareness activities broadened the community's knowledge of the project, they did not, by themselves, guarantee the public's interest in the planning process. Getting people to care about the project meant first helping them to understand how it would impact their quality of life. The introduction of green

infrastructure opportunities that were specific to Grand Center captured interest. By focusing on the outcomes that mattered most to people like economic growth, better parking and traffic flow, sidewalk and street improvements, and increased pedestrian activity, the team shaped a project identity that helped to firmly establish the project's relevance.

Promoting Understanding

Once community constituents were interested in the project, the team intensified its explanation of project issues as well as deepened its understanding of stakeholders' values, needs and priorities. Through stakeholder/subcommittee meetings and community charrettes, the team facilitated learning and sharing around key plan component. These included assessments of the public realm; pedestrian circulation/ADA/visitor experience; traffic and parking conditions as they relate to the land use potential of the district; utility conditions, feasibility and cost; and emphasis on bike, bus and MetroLink linkages.

Soliciting Input

The project team's work to educate the community about the Great Streets planning initiative prepared the public to give meaningful input into the planning process. Informed stakeholders, including civic and business interests, elected officials, educational and faith based leaders, arts and culture aficionados, and neighborhood residents, provided project feedback that was helpful and insightful. Through these interactive meetings, an on-line survey, public comment forms, email messaging and other touch points, the team received valuable information from the community that helped to shape its thinking and ultimately its recommended designs.

Engagement Activities & Findings

Stakeholder & Public Involvement Plan

Before conducting any outreach, engagement and communications activities, the project team developed a Stakeholder and Public Involvement Plan that explained the logic and methods of the community engagement program. This document presents the range of activities the project team planned to undertake to engage stakeholders and the public in the design process and decision-making. It also outlined the goals and objectives of the involvement process; identified key stakeholder groups; clarified the specific communication strategies, meeting schedules and expected outcomes of the engagement process. In January 2013, EWG and GCI approved the plan and the project team began to execute its core components in alignment with the broader design process. The full plan is provided in Appendix B.

Stakeholder Involvement Activities

One of the first and most critical steps of the public engagement program was to connect with project stakeholders. A stakeholder was defined as any person or organization interested in or directly affected by the project's activities. This included, but was not limited to, residents or property owners, neighborhood groups, business owners and operators, elected/community officials, governmental resource agencies, special interest groups, neighboring colleges students and religious and civic institutions. Stakeholders for the Grand Center Great Streets Project were identified by GCI. Most were involved in the planning process through key informant interviews, focus groups and /or large stakeholder committee meetings.

Kick-off Meeting

On January 9, 2013, GCI hosted a project kick-off for members of its 7 planning committees, community stakeholders and residents. Sixty-eight people attended this event where they received a brief refresher on the outcomes of the Framework Plan; were introduced to the project team and informed of its qualifications; learned about Great Streets' guiding principles and objectives; and reviewed the overall project schedule with its corresponding activities. The meeting followed a presentation format to facilitate comprehension of large amounts of information. Afterwards, attendees were encouraged to directly engage project team members whose areas of expertise aligned most with their interests.

Key Informant / Stakeholder Interviews

Five stakeholders, that had current planning efforts and capital improvements underway in the community, were contacted for key informant interviews in late January and early February. Sixty to 90

minutes in length, these interviews enabled the project team to learn about plans and developments that were currently underway and, where appropriate, to incorporate this information into the Great Streets planning process. Below is a brief synopsis of each interview. Full summaries of each interview can be found in Appendix C.

1. **John Cochran Veterans Administration Medical Center – Keith Repko and Gary Drikow, January 24, 2103.** VA representatives informed the project team of the Medical Center's expansion plans in Grand Center. With a large patient population and 1,100 to 1,500 full-time employees, the Medical Center is preparing to construct a new inpatient tower; expand its outpatient clinic space; add spinal cord beds; and build a parking garage that will house approximately 1,000 cars. Multiple master plan scenarios for campus expansion are being considered with a June deadline for a decision regarding the selected scenario. With regard to the Great Streets project, the VA is most interested in pedestrian-oriented improvements and most concerned about maintaining/ improving direct routes for visitors and ambulances.
2. **Alderwoman Marlene Davis (Ward 19), February 5, 2013.** Alderwoman Davis described Grand Center as a vibrant and exciting place for people to live, work and play. She talked about its transformation from a relatively lifeless neighborhood into a regional destination offering a variety of arts, culture, entertainment, retail and dining options. She also identified the community's educational institutions, ranging from elementary schools to higher education, as among the area's greatest assets. For her, the areas of greatest concern involved the community's limited residential housing offerings, traffic flow, sidewalk and street conditions; neighborhood beautification; and signage. She maintained that successfully addressing these concerns would require not only technical expertise, but also ongoing engagement of community stakeholders.
3. **Grand Center Arts Academy – Lynne Glickert, February 5, 2013.** Principal Glickert shared with the project team the history of the Grand Center Arts Academy and its affiliation with the arts district. Founded in 2010, the school is in the process of expanding its student population from its current base of 430 students to a maximum enrollment of 750 students. Among its challenges are a landlocked site, managing the traffic flow that accompanies student arrivals and dismissals, and the small sidewalks that surround its facility.
4. **Clyde Miller Career Academy – Brandon Murray, February 13, 2013.** Assistant Principal Murray provided background information on Clyde C. Miller Academy as one of St. Louis' schools of choice or educational magnets. Though it was started as a construction career

academy, it evolved into a career/technical and college-prep training school with 13 learning pathways. For Mr. Murray, one of the issues of greatest concern was the prevailing perception of North Grand as unsafe. He asserted that many of the arts patrons do not go north of the Fox or Symphony because they think the rest of the neighborhood is in the "ghetto." For him, making visitors, residents and area employees more aware of the community's strengths is critical to improving long-term appeal, along with providing more retail and dining options.

5. **St. Louis University – Peg Weathers, February 8, 2013.** Assistant Vice President Weathers was involved in the District's earlier Framework Plan and was familiar with the public realm issues that the Great Streets team was working to address and resolve. She talked about the improving perceptions of Grand Center among St. Louis University students and staff who years earlier would not cross Lindell Boulevard into Grand Center. Though more students and their parents/families now explore Grand Center, it is still not a major draw because of safety concerns and the lack of youth-focused amenities. She also noted that traffic congestion and street design (the canyon-like size and feel of Lindell) are major pedestrian-experience issues that need to be addressed.
6. **Great Rivers Greenway District (GRG) - Todd Antoine and Midtown Loop Trail Stakeholders, June 20, 2013.** Great Rivers Greenway District is a stakeholder in the Great Streets project due to an opportunity to integrate an off-road bike and pedestrian trail facility within Grand Center within the Spring Street right-of-way. This trail could connect to the former Hodiament streetcar right-of-way just north west of Grand Center and to the existing St. Vincent Greenway improvements at Porter Park north of Delmar. The Midtown Trail could also connect Cortex on the south and eventually Forest Park to the west. The trail alignment study for the Midtown Loop Trail has run concurrent with the Great Streets project. A combined meeting for Grand Center Great Streets and the Midtown Loop Trail projects was held in order to engage Great Rivers Greenway, key Grand Center stakeholders and the planning consultants in a comprehensive dialog about the potential alignment and opportunities. The group discussed the multiple initiatives that are underway on the west side of Grand Center that would be a draw for pedestrian and bicycle activity along Spring Street. These are: the Artwalk, cafe at Nine Network, Spring Church and comfort station, PXSTL art installation as well as the art/entertainment venues in the area. Feedback from GRG during the Great Streets project, led to the integration of the Midtown Loop Trail and Artwalk along Spring in the Master Plan.

Focus Groups

In addition to conducting stakeholder interviews, the project team held two focus groups – one with Grand Center residents and the other with area employees. These 90 minute meetings helped the project team understand the live-work priorities, interests and concerns of those who experience the community daily. In both groups, participants were asked to share their perceptions of Grand Center and reflect on its assets, challenges, transportation conditions and amenities. Highlights of the focus groups' findings are briefly described. Complete summaries can be found in Appendix D.

1. **Employee Focus Group, February 21, 2013.** Sixteen employees of local organizations and retail establishments met with members of the project team to share their desires for community beautification, traffic, parking, streets, sidewalks and more. Most participants were members of the Grand Center PR/Communications Network, which holds a monthly meeting for employees of major cultural and educational institutions as well as local restaurants. As part of the focus group process, team members explained the Great Streets project to attendees; solicited participant information via a written survey; and conducted a facilitated discussion of 10 project related questions.

Data from the participant surveys revealed that on average, attendees had worked in the District for nearly four years, though some were new to the area and others had worked in the community for 20 years. Attendees maintained employment with 10 local organizations, including:

- Grand Center Inc.
- University Plaza Apartments
- The Sheldon Concert Hall
- Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis
- Craft Alliance
- KDHX – 88.1 FM
- St. Louis University
- Plush
- St. Louis Symphony
- Metropolitan Artists Lofts

The survey also revealed that most participants drive to work daily – 15 out of 16, while 3 out of 16 frequently ride their bicycles. Although they rely heavily upon their cars to get to work, participants communicated that parking was not a major challenge as they either park on lots behind or adjacent to their offices or in nearby parking garages. A few also noted that they sometimes utilize street parking for convenience.



Employee Focus Group

The facilitated discussion with participants revealed that Grand Center is generally seen as being full of potential, a diverse community that is in the midst of positive transformation. Attendees noted, however, that the District still feels underutilized in terms of general or pedestrian activity and seems unsafe in some areas. Yet, the community's unique architecture, critical mass of artistic and cultural venues, entertainment and dining options, and easy access to public transit make it an appealing destination for people to live, work and visit even today. Attendees asserted that Grand Center would be even more attractive if it had improved lighting and bike accessibility, more amenities between and among the cultural institutions, less surface parking, better traffic flow and signage, and a wider variety of neighborhood conveniences (e.g. delis, dry cleaners etc.) and dining options.

2. **Resident Focus Group, February 26, 2013.** Twelve people who live in or near Grand Center met with the project team to share their perceptions of the neighborhood's assets, challenges and needs. Property managers at the Renaissance Place at Grand Apartments, Metropolitan Artists Lofts, University Plaza Apartments, Continental Life Building and Coronado Place Apartments and Lofts were asked to solicit the involvement of their tenants. Individual property owners who lived between Spring and Grand were also invited to participate.

Following the same format as the employee focus group, attendees at the resident meeting were first given a brief survey and later participated in facilitated discussions. Survey results indicated that participants had lived in the district nearly five years on average, though the actual length of time spent in the area ranged from six months to 31 years. Most attendees either resided at the Metropolitan Artist Lofts, where the focus group was held, or in personal residences along Washington and Olive. Everyone used motorized transportation (cars or a scooter) as their major means of travel. However, one-third walked frequently and one-sixth often rode their bicycles. As with the employee group, parking was not a major concern since attendees used garages and residential parking lots to accommodate their vehicles.

From the facilitated discussions, the project team learned that area residents view Grand Center as an exciting, creative and diverse place to live. It has the potential for more growth and needs more consistent levels of programming and activity. While some parts may feel unsafe, it remains a prime location because of its geographic accessibility, unique arts and entertainment venues, engaging community programming (First Fridays, First Night, summer music concerts etc.), and increasing neighborhood investments. These strengths are, however, moderated by the absence of neighborhood conveniences like a grocery store, the lack of pedestrian accommodations, security concerns, limited residential offerings, insufficient community branding, chronic parking hassles, and a sometimes "dull" street life. Even with these concerns, participants maintained that Grand Center's overall residential experience was a positive one that could ultimately be enhanced by the development of more neighborhood amenities and comforts, increased residential density, larger amounts of green space, and more community events.

Public Involvement Activities

Great Street's public involvement activities were designed to reach any person or stakeholder interested in, impacted by or invested in Grand Center's revitalization and development efforts. To that end, members of the public were invited to attend a public open house in late February and a final presentation in early May. Additionally, the project team and Emerson developed and conducted an electronic survey in March and April that targeted area residents, patrons, and community stakeholders. Through the team's combined efforts, 1,116 people participated in the Great Streets planning process via public involvement activities.

Charrette and Public Open House

The project team held a two-day community charrette /workshop at the end of February that culminated in a public open house. The event was held on February 28, 2013 in a future retail space of the historic, renovated Metropolitan Building at the corner of Grand and Olive. The timing for the event coincided with the completion of the analysis phase of the project. With 103 people in attendance, the open house encouraged participants to discuss their desires for neighborhood beautification, traffic, parking, streets, sidewalks and more. Individually and in small groups, participants met with team members who listened to and documented their aspirations, issues and recommendations for community improvement.

Stakeholder Charrette/Workshop

The second round of subcommittee meetings was conducted at the Charrette/Open House. At these meetings, committee members became acquainted with the project team; reviewed design sketches for their corridors of interest; provided the team with information on their committees' work to date; and identified critical corridor issues that the team needed to consider during the planning process. Seventy-seven community stakeholders and GCI representatives participated in these meetings. The study area was divided into three sections, West Community, Central Community and East Community, in order for corridor subcommittee participants to think about the inter-related issues and intersections of one corridor to another. The feedback from each of the groups was documented at the end of the meeting by summary statements that follow:



Sketches and stakeholder input

West Community

1. Develop the Spring Park as part of a gateway between Olive Street and Washington Avenue
2. Provide great connections along Spring – greenway, Lindell gateway, view to campus, link to VA Medical Center
3. Coordinate the mid-block pedestrian way with Land Use committee recommendations
4. Allow the Art Walk to define the character of the west section of Washington
5. Create a pedestrian environment on Spring – benches, destinations
6. Widen sidewalks/narrow streets on Spring and Washington
7. Frame buildings and destinations with trees

Central Community

1. Widen sidewalks into the parking lane on Grand – places for pedestrians, outdoor dining, performance, retail
2. Provide turn outs on Grand where needed
3. Reduce Grand to 2 travel lanes and one turn lane
4. Clusters of trees on north Grand sections
5. Close Grandel and re-image the Tilted Plain green space
6. Develop the art screens concept
7. Open the view of the Fox from the east
8. Consider moving Washington along the Jazz at the Bistro frontage
9. Integrate Land Use committee recommendations – mixed use wraps on parking garages
10. Reveal and enhance the character of community gateways
11. Lots of light, fewer light poles

East Community

1. Develop a multi-use/multi-season park space that also works for the circus
2. Design for easy and slow traffic and good pedestrian facilities
3. Opening Theresa to Lindell with cross-walks to Saint Louis University
4. Integrate parking with a plaza setting at Olive and Theresa
5. Widen sidewalks/narrow streets on Theresa and Washington
6. Integrate Land Use committee recommendations – mixed use wraps on parking garages
7. Lots of light, fewer light poles
8. Frame buildings and destinations with trees

A full summary of each meeting is presented in Appendix E.

Open House Exhibits

As part of the meeting's activities, participants viewed exhibit boards that provided information on the Great Streets principles, project goals, planning schedule, qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis. These boards were clustered in themed stations that covered nine topics, including:

- Great Streets Principles
- Framework Plan Information
- Transportation
- Branding and Wayfinding
- Spatial Analysis
- Site Analysis
- Lighting
- Public Art
- Street Conditions



Open House at the Metropolitan Building



Attendees marking comments on a large plan of the study area



Attendees and analysis exhibits at the Open House

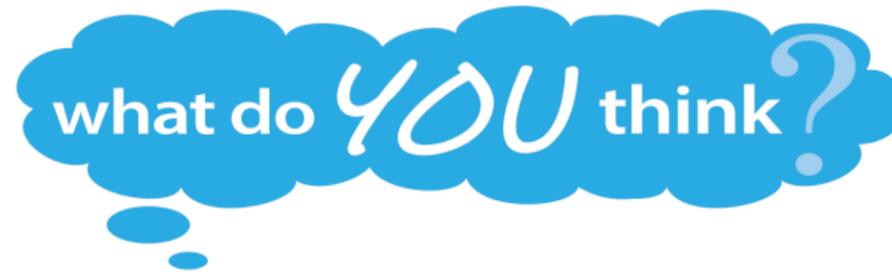
Open House “What do you think?” Boards

Two comment boards and a large aerial photo of the project area were positioned at the Open House and asked the question “What do you think? Participants filled the boards with yellow Post It Notes with personal comments.

Below are the question prompts used at the Open House and the list of responses. The first question is an open response question to seek ideas that participants have for the community. The results revealed a robust list of pedestrian amenities, services and retail offerings.

QUESTION: What would you like to see in Grand Center?

- Wayfinding as BOLD art
- More places to kill time and linger
- Find a way to include the Palladium Building into the district
- Less clutter – lights too close together
- More interesting and affordable housing options
- Make Grandel a cul-de-sac
- FroYo?
- Bike lanes
- More bike lanes!
- More restaurants and retail
- Street cars connecting Delmar Loop, Grand Center, and downtown!
- Green stormwater management systems in existing parking lots (retention & educational uses)
- Bring back the Wagoner Building façade
- Walls of abandoned houses as video screens
- Bookstores, clothing shops, boutiques, unusual retail, home furnishing stores
- I would like to see more creative eateries and lounges; chill party places
- Less concrete!
- More retail!
- Better drop off/pick up
- Grocery
- Grocery store (not Whole Foods!)
- Affordable housing / renting
- More buildings
- More houses
- No more demo of historic buildings!!
- Art along the streets
- Higher class restaurants
- Cheap/casual/classy coffee and quick breakfast place
- No more parking lots please!
- More parking garages
- Less parking garages
- Parking RAMPS, not lots!
- IF more parking, make it permeable!
- 5-10-15 minute walk times are irrelevant if you are in heels or elderly (or both)
- Co-working spaces
- StarFire Productions
- Pop-up shops and restaurants
- More retail! More retail! More retail! Daytime activities!
- Park – make it easier to traverse
- Benches! Ledges! Places to sit!
- More dining and retail options to facilitate a trolley service (King Street – Alexandria, VA)
- Outdoor theater/movie/performing space (First Fridays, etc.)
- Public performing arts space
- Pedestrian amenities (more public seating areas)
- Lots and side streets need better lighting – feel dark compared to Grand itself
- Neighborhood boutique community-owned feel for other streets (Froyo, grocery, etc.)
- Retail and art placement – regional draws along Grand
- More boutique/neighborhood feel for side streets
- Give a reason to turn off Grand or come to Grand from other streets
- Retail placement – Vandeventer/Delmar could also have regional retail; think Magnificent Mile in Chicago, State Street is an off-shoot



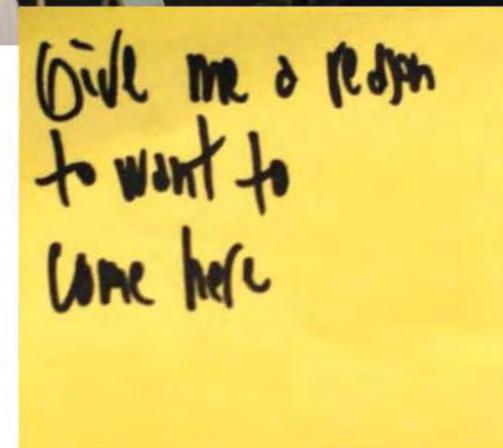
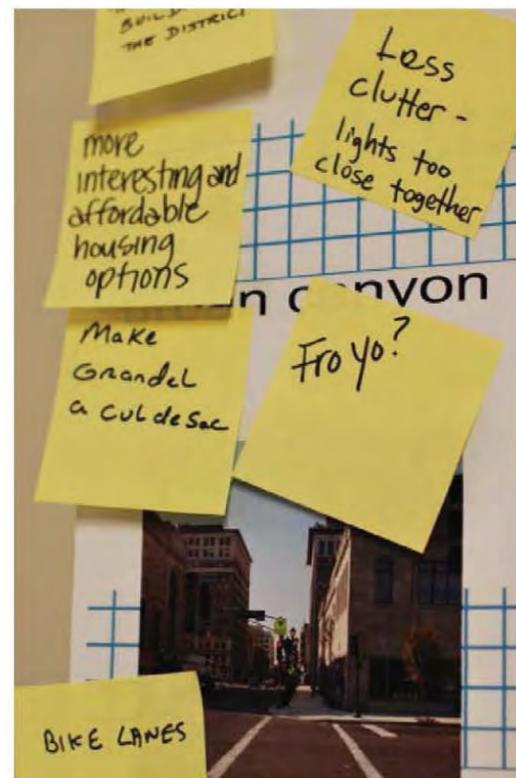
Attendees comments posted on board

what do YOU think?

The second question asked for opinions of the transportation strategy advanced by the Framework plan. The outcomes revealed that these participants are savvy about the alternative routes to Grand Center and can see this as a viable option.

QUESTION: As an alternative to Grand, would you take either Compton or Vandeventer to get to Grand Center? Why? Or Why not?

- Yes, with better lighting and wayfinding
- Never use Grand; always use Vandeventer
- Compton is more direct for me
- Vandeventer currently has more businesses, etc. which could benefit from the direct route
- Yes! Either! Space traffic out to make transportation faster/ safer/easier.
- Compton – less traffic, less construction, less dangerous
- On bicycle I would prefer Compton, but in a car I would use Vandeventer
- Yes, I think both Compton and Vandeventer are great options. I use them already!
- I think Vandeventer is good.
- County-based patrons need interstate signs to help them find their way home
- Vandeventer – I’m coming from the west.
- I ONLY use Vandeventer to get here!
- Yes – we almost never use Grand because everyone else does.
- Compton has less traffic and no students crossing
- Vandeventer - goes to 44



Open House Image Preference Survey and Results

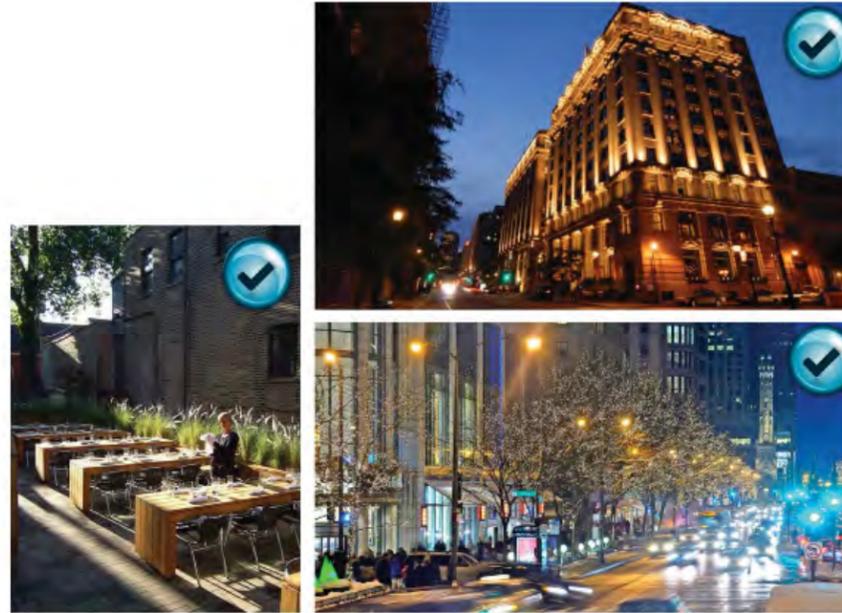
There was an opportunity to participate in an Image Preference Survey at the Open House. Participants were asked to review 42 images in a continuous loop and simply record their response to the instructions "Circle the numbers below of any images that represent a look that is appropriate for Grand Center." A wide variety of images were presented including streetscapes from around the world, public art installations, gathering spaces, lighting and materials.

The results of the survey can be summarized by reviewing the top 3 preferred images and the top 3 least preferred images:

Highest ranking images: a vibrant nighttime street scene reveals a street where cars and pedestrians and trees and retail destinations are all in balance. Tree lighting and building lighting enhance the experience and highlight the assets of the street. A unique outdoor dining space reveals a desire for an intimate gathering spaces and sense of community.

Lowest ranking images: these street-dominated images and a lack of people give the impression that the needs of the vehicle comes first. Spaces and intersections are not human scale. Architecture is not highlighted or celebrated.

The images and results from the Image Preference Survey are provided in Appendix L.



Highest ranking images



Lowest ranking images



Attendees participating in image preference survey

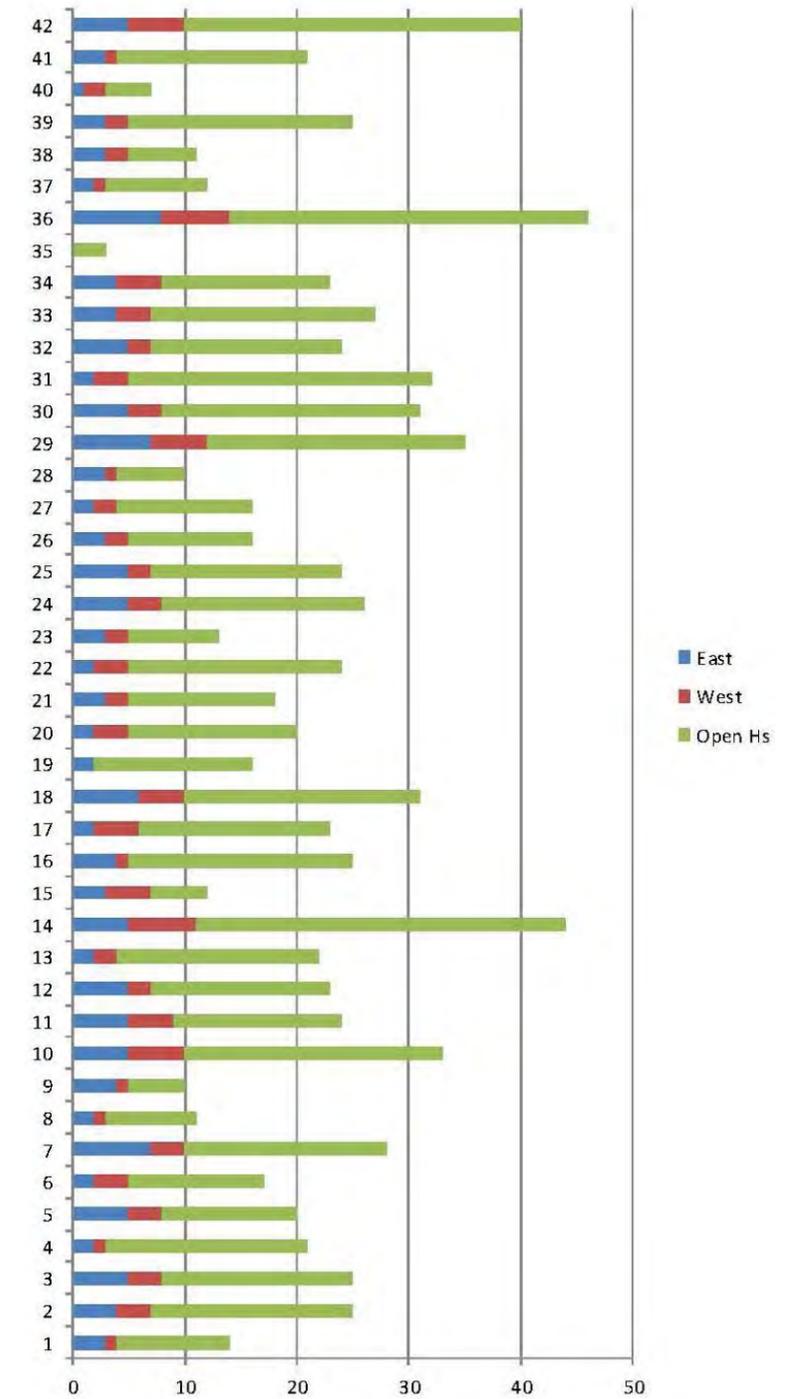


Image preference survey results

Open House Comment Form

After participants completed the participation activities of the Open House, they were invited to complete an event comment form. This document asked them to provide basic information about themselves; share how they learned about the event; evaluate their open house experience; describe what would make the Great Streets project a success; and provide additional comments or questions. Twenty-eight participants submitted completed comment forms. The findings from their submissions were compiled in a summary report that is presented in Appendix F. A brief synopsis of these findings is offered below.

More than 40% of those who completed open house comment forms were patrons of the arts in Grand Center, shopped and/or dined in the community, and were either students or parents of students who attended area schools. Nearly 20% lived or worked in the community.

GRAND CENTER GREAT STREETS OPEN HOUSE COMMENT FORM

Thank you for completing this comment form. Your input will be used by the Grand Center Great Streets team in its community planning efforts and will inform the development of a more vibrant, attractive Grand Center.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

1. Which of the following best describes you? Please check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> I live in or near Grand Center	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a student or a parent of a student of a nearby school, college or university	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a property owner in Grand Center
<input type="checkbox"/> I work in or near Grand Center	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a patron of the arts in Grand Center	<input type="checkbox"/> I worship in Grand Center
<input type="checkbox"/> I shop and/or dine in Grand Center	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a patient or visitor at the Veterans' hospital	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

2. How did you find out about this Open House? Please check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Printed Flyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Media / Advertisement
<input type="checkbox"/> Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media / Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

3. Please evaluate this event according to the following, circle your answer...

A. The study team was:

Informative					Uninformative
1	2	3	4	5	
Helpful					Not Helpful
1	2	3	4	5	
Prepared					Unprepared
1	2	3	4	5	

B. In general the Open House was:

Well Planned					Disorderly
1	2	3	4	5	
Worth My Time					Waste of Time
1	2	3	4	5	

4. What would make this project a success to you?

5. Additional comments or questions:

THANK YOU!

Most respondents learned of the open house through word of mouth (41%), email (33%), social media (15%), and printed flyers or GCI's website (11% respectively). A little more than a quarter of respondents (26%) identified "other" as their primary information source, but none provided a written explanation that illuminated this response.

On the whole, respondents found the project team to be highly informative, helpful and prepared. They maintained that the open house was well planned and worth their time. While some would have preferred a presentation format to the high-touch open house setting, all appreciated the multiple opportunities to give their input and make their preferences known. This focus on meaningful engagement helped to make the open house a success.

Respondents later reflected on what would make the project a success and in this context emphasized the need for project funding and implementation. They want to see the community move forward with neighborhood beautification efforts, the adoption of better street designs, the development of a more robust pedestrian experience, improved traffic flow, increased parking, and the transformation of Grand Center from an arts and culture district into a livable area.

Design Review

The third round of committee meetings took place on April 4 and 5, 2013 to reveal the first look at the integrated design proposal for the public realm. The first meeting held was a general stakeholder presentation that was attended by 50 representatives of area institutions and community organizations. The subsequent meetings were focused on aspects of the design for each of the corridor sub-committees and afforded the team the opportunity to share its findings and emerging conclusions, including the opportunity to provide their feedback on the recommendations, including any desired design modifications, additions and deletions. An additional 95 people attended these sessions. Each subcommittee had specific direction for the refinement of the design that can be found in Appendix E. The core concepts of the design proposal generated excitement and had strong support for the following:



Reviewing the design with the stakeholders

1. The opportunity to widen sidewalks and right-size travel lanes including the recommendation to formalize Grand Boulevard to a 3-lane road section.
2. The "Street as Urban Stage" concept for Grand Boulevard which included a durable, elegant streetscape, theatrically-styled lighting and a curbless area at Grand and Washington.
3. The alternative parallel route strategy to use the additional capacity of Vandeventer and Compton to reduce the through-traffic load on Grand as well as the arrival and exiting strategy for the venues.
4. The emphasis on a mode shift strategy to encourage visitors to arrive at Grand Center from Vandeventer and Compton, find parking off of cross-streets and become pedestrians as soon as possible.
5. Reinforcement of the transportation strategies with a more comprehensive wayfinding strategy that includes integrated highway signs, local wayfinding and detailed levels of pedestrian wayfinding.
6. Guidelines for public temporary and permanent art integration in Grand Center.

Digital Survey and Analysis

The project team was assisted by the market research department of Emerson, a diversified global manufacturing and technology company in St. Louis to prepare a digital survey for the project. Emerson structured and administered the survey in February and analyzed the results in April. Survey questions directed toward patrons, residents, students and the area workforce were composed to solicit input regarding the conditions of the Grand Center area in comparison to peer business districts in the St. Louis area, aspects of public transportation use and to establish the baseline data for Great Streets criteria. The research objectives include the following:

- Determine the most important Great Streets criteria for Grand Center to fulfill
- Assess the performance of Grand Center in meeting Great Streets goals / benchmarks
- Collect information on user subgroups and their needs;
- Identify factors critical to community design and targeted marketing efforts
- Explore special topics like transportation, barriers to using MetroLink, parking behaviors, traffic concerns and pedestrian interests. Including special topics:
 - Transportation
 - Barriers to using MetroLink
 - Parking behaviors
 - Traffic concerns
 - Pedestrian concerns

A total of 871 people from St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, nearby Illinois counties and other states completed the on-line survey. Emerson analyzed data from respondents' submissions and produced a 59-page report summarizing the detailed findings. A brief summary is included below:

Summary of Findings

Over 65% of the respondents were major venue subscribers. Nearly all of the respondents visit Grand Center frequently and 83% of them live in St. Louis City or County. The respondents could be categorized into two major segments:

1. Distant Visitors (45% of respondents) – more concerned about parking, vehicular circulation, getting in and out of Grand Center efficiently and less concerned about the characteristics of an active, energetic community.
2. Nearby Visitors (55% of respondents) – more concerned about creating an active, energetic community and less concerned with parking, vehicular circulation issues and getting in and out of Grand Center.

Emerson found that Grand Center had a higher-than-average score on Great Streets' "Active Interesting Character" concept because of its arts and culture focus as well as its exceptional architecture. However, it had a lower-than-average overall Great Streets' score because of basic concerns involving safety, comfort, food and cleanliness. To increase the community's appeal, respondents suggested having the following: police walk the streets; more landscape plantings; and a heavier emphasis on street tree health, vehicle emissions and stormwater management. In addition, they indicated that MetroLink should be easier to access; parking easier to find; traffic congestion abated; and better lighting established throughout the community.

Final Presentation

On May 9, 2013, the project team held a final presentation for community stakeholders and the public describing in detail its recommendations for a more vibrant, attractive Grand Center. Team members incorporated community input from earlier public involvement activities into their designs and then formally shared their recommendations for better lighting, parking, streets and sidewalks, landscaping and beautification, traffic flow, and bicycle and transit access. Seventy-four people attended the evening's opening reception, 90-minute presentation, and 30-minute question and answer session.

Every member of the project team participated in the final presentation, which covered a host of topics, including:

- An overview of Great Streets' principles
- A synopsis of Grand Center vision statements
- A summary of the public engagement program
- Digital survey results
- An exploration of redevelopment opportunities
- Streetscape and lighting recommendations
- A vision of public art in the District, along with guiding principles and strategies

- Suggested stormwater treatments and best management practices
- A listing of branding, signage and wayfinding opportunities
- Insights on changing travel habits to, from and through Grand Center

With so much content to discuss, the team presented a 142-page slide deck that captured for attendees the essence of its final deliverable to EWG and GCI. Participants were, however, invited to give another round of input via public questions and comments and an event comment form. As with the comment form for the February open house, this document asked attendees to provide basic information about themselves; share how they learned about the event; evaluate their final presentation experience; give their impressions of the team's design recommendations; and provide any additional unscripted comments. Twenty-five participants submitted completed comment forms. The findings from their submissions were compiled in a summary report that can be found in Appendix G. A brief synopsis of these findings is offered below.

Sixty percent (60%) of those who completed comment forms identified themselves as patrons of the arts in Grand Center. Thirty-six percent (36%) worked in or near the community and/or shopped or dined at local establishments. Nearly 30% stated that they lived in the area. Most respondents learned of the open house through email (48%), GCI's newsletter (20%), social media (16%), word of mouth (8%), and media / advertisements or the project's webpage (4% respectively). An additional 20% identified "other" as their primary information source, but did not provide an accompanying written explanation.

Respondents found the project team to be very informative and prepared. They asserted that the final presentation was well planned and comprehensive, though it offered too much information to easily digest. Overall, they felt that the team's proposed designs were very positive and would be beneficial for Grand Center. Of particular interest to them were the lighting concepts, which generated great excitement, and the widening of sidewalks. Several respondents did, however, suggest that the team provide more substantive designs for areas outside of the study area; adjacent to Vandeventer and along the northeast corner of Grand and Lindell. They also requested more emphasis on the community's residential development and amenities. The comment form summary is available in Appendix G.

Technical Review & Hand-off Activities

To help ensure a smooth transition from Great Streets planning to project implementation, the Grand Center team engaged municipal officials, utility representatives and state agency staff in its planning efforts both early in the process and at critical decision-making points. Meetings with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) were conducted along with other stakeholder involvement activities. In addition, a capacity building workshop for those charged with plan implementation was scheduled at the project's end.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Meetings

Three TAG meetings were held over the course of the planning process. These meetings were conducted after the kick-off meeting and first and second rounds of stakeholder committee meetings described earlier in this document. The meetings' primary purpose was to understand the long-term transportation and utility needs of the community within the context of the Framework Plan and the evolving Great Streets master plan. They also afforded the project team an opportunity to incorporate the TAG's planning expertise and design requirements into its proposed designs. A summary of the findings from the first TAG meeting can be found in Appendix E. Insights from the second TAG meeting are included in Chapter 6: Master Plan.

Hand-off Meeting

At the end of the project on June 27, 2013 the project team met with representatives from political leadership, municipal staff, Grand Center, Inc, East-West Gateway, and representatives for residents, businesses, and institutions. The intent of the meeting was foster a commitment to the project and to protect the integrity of the planning process over time and implementation cycles. Often, the rationale for decisions and project history are lost to time or during the involvement of new people in the process. As changes are made, the intricacies of the layered, multi-disciplinary process that drove decisions with significant community input need to be considered by those in charge of implementation. Changes to the plan will be necessary and incremental implementation will be necessary to build this plan. The meeting was aimed at educating project "implementers" about the plan fundamentals, the range of issues at play, and the process that was used. A commitment to support the plans was given from the mayor's office and other constituents at the end of the meeting.

Community Outreach Activities

The project team's community outreach activities were largely undertaken to drive stakeholder and public participation in the February public open house and May final presentation. Working together, team members and GCI's community liaison, conducted a variety of communications and outreach tactics preceding both public meetings. A comprehensive list of these activities can be found in the Record of Public Meeting documents submitted to East West Gateway and presented as Appendix A. A brief summary of outreach efforts is provided in the table below.

OUTREACH TACTICS	REACH / DISTRIBUTION
Electronic Invitations & E-Blasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the February and May public meetings, electronic flyers and email invitations were sent to nine GCI committees / boards, GCI's community database and the "listservs" of seven area institutions Total of 2,000+ electronic notices sent to area residents and stakeholders (twice)
Newsletter Inserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the February and May public meetings, newsletter inserts / articles on the events were presented in GCI's newsletter and the Fox subscribers' newsletter Total of 1,500+ community stakeholders and patrons reached
Automated Phone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the February public meeting, automated phone messages about the event were sent to all Clyde C. Miller Academy students and families
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the February and May public meetings, on line and print advertising was purchased for the events in the <i>St. Louis American</i> and <i>First Civilizations</i> Total circulation for both publications 86,000
Flyer Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flyers for the February and May public meetings were disseminated to more than 35 area churches, businesses, restaurants, schools and institutions in or near the District Total of 8,500 flyers distributed
Web-based Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting announcements for the February and May public meetings were placed on GCI's Great Streets web page

Public Communications Log

Occasionally, the team's outreach efforts resulted in unsolicited public inquiries or comments. All of these exchanges with the project team were addressed and subsequently recorded in a public communications log. Over the course of the project, only four public comments / questions were submitted to the team for consideration. These focused on a range of topics from MetroBus movement along Grand Boulevard to the length of the on-line survey, to interest in the public meetings. Appendix H contains a listing of each query, comment and team response.

