



APPENDIX: Public Involvement Plan

Dorsett Road Great Streets: Public Involvement Plan

Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan

The purpose of a public involvement plan is to organize the public involvement effort in a transparent, efficient and deliberative manner. The goals of public involvement for this project are to:

- Help the community visualize what is possible in the long and short-term to transform Dorsett Road (from Lindbergh to Creve Coeur Park) into a Great Street.
- Educate the community about the planning elements that will make the vision a reality – including design standards, access management, and designing for multi-modal transit.
- Build consensus on a master plan for the Dorsett Road corridor.

This document includes the following elements:

- Project Overview
- Key Messages
- Targeted Audiences
- Public Involvement Topics
- Outreach Methods
- Schedule of Public Involvement Activities

Project Overview

The Dorsett Road corridor as it exists today is a loose mix of suburban residential, industrial, and commercial land uses bisected by the Interstate 270 interchange. Over the long-term, Dorsett Road has the potential to become Maryland Heights' Main Street, a community asset that brings people together, enhances the local economy and establishes a unique sense of place for the city. As envisioned by the City of Maryland Heights, the Dorsett Road plan will support the creation of unique spaces along the corridor that become destinations to attract visitors and businesses, while encouraging new growth and economic development opportunities.

Within five years, the City of Maryland Heights intends to allocate resources to implement community supported projects identified in this plan.

Key issues to work on during the planning process include:

- Development of design alternatives that meet the needs of current property owners *and* the community's vision for Dorsett Road as a Great Street;
- Identification of projects that can be implemented in the short-term including projects that support a designated "downtown" along the corridor

Key Messages

A primary component of our approach is to craft consistent messages to educate and inform stakeholders throughout the course of the process.

Over the long-term, Dorsett Road has the potential to become Maryland Heights' Main Street, a community asset that brings people together, enhances the local economy and offers a unique sense of place.

The Dorsett Road plan will incorporate the community's vision for the area over the next few decades, but it must create a viable action plan for implementation and actual development within the next five years.

The Dorsett Road plan will build upon the successful businesses and institutions in the corridor today, ensuring their strength now and in the future.

The corridor will provide balanced mobility that supports the safe and convenient travel of all modes of transportation.

The master plan will work with natural systems to better manage stormwater, reduce negative impacts to the environment and enhance the overall appearance of the corridor.

To be successful, the master plan must reflect significant community outreach and buy-in of participants.

Targeted Audiences

The following is a comprehensive list of specific project stakeholders which represent audiences for communication and involvement.

Project Partnership Team

The Project Partnership Team includes the City of Maryland Heights and East West Gateway Council of Governments. This technical team will meet with the consultant team on a weekly basis and provide overall coordinating guidance on the study.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will help manage the public process, develop and review alternatives for consideration by the community and help guide the creation of the overall master plan document and implementation strategies. The Steering Committee will include representatives from the East West Gateway Council of Governments, St. Louis County, retail property owners, institutional property owners, the Maryland Heights Chamber of Commerce and elected officials as well as city staff from the City of Maryland Heights.

Transportation agencies

Several transportation agencies have influence in the Dorsett corridor and are important stakeholders. St. Louis County, who maintains the Dorsett corridor, will be represented on the Steering Committee and involved throughout the planning process. MoDOT owns and manages the 270 interchange and will be consulted on developments relevant to that portion of the corridor. Finally, Bi-State Development Agency (Metro) has a bus line that runs along the corridor and will be involved as appropriate. Transportation agency representatives will be invited to all public meetings.

Elected Officials/City Staff, City of Maryland Heights

The City Council will be represented on the Steering Committee. The City Council as a whole will also be briefed so they can be informed about the project and provide input to the project team. The Planning Commission will be updated on an ongoing basis during the study and may be briefed as well. Additionally, leadership and staff members from the police, fire, public works, planning, and economic development departments may be consulted by the Project Partnership Team upon request or as needed to address specific key issues such as coordination with other ongoing policy and infrastructure initiatives.

Adjacent property owners along the corridor

Property owners along corridor have a stake in the outcome of the Dorsett Road plan. Property owners adjacent to the corridor will be invited to all public meetings.

Residents/General Public

Any interested party should have the opportunity to become informed about the corridor plan and provide input into the decisions. Public notices of meetings will be included in the Maryland Heights Patch (an on-line newspaper). Existing channels of communication used by the City of Maryland Heights will be used to notify the general public about the project and encourage participation. Channels of communication include the City's website, Twitter, Facebook, city newsletter, and message boards at parks and city hall. The citizen group, Citizens for Responsible Growth, will be invited to all public meetings and receive all project communications. Additional efforts to engage the general public include public meeting announcements in Local Government Briefings, East West Gateway's weekly newsletter and advertisements on St. Louis County's roadside notification signs.

Senior and Youth Populations

Many public involvement efforts in suburban communities such as Maryland Heights result in turnout from a narrow set of demographic groups and senior citizen populations and youth (under age 30) tend to turn out for meetings at a lower rate compared to the general population. The project team will work with local high schools, middle schools, 4H groups and scout troops to increase turnout from the community's youth (encouraging them to attend public meetings and make suggestion using Mindmixer) in order to gain input from the next generation of residents in the local community. The project team will work with local senior organizations in order to publicize the corridor planning effort with local senior activity groups, at senior communities in the area, and with local senior service agencies.

Economically and Socially Disadvantaged Populations

Special outreach methods will be used to engage those groups typically under represented but impacted by transportation related decisions (socially, environmentally and economically), consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Maryland Heights is home to a small but growing population of Asian-Indians, many of whom reside at apartment buildings at the intersection of 270 and Dorsett Road. Efforts to encourage participation among this population will include posting flyers in central gathering spots such as laundry areas and "club houses" and providing notice of public meetings in the apartment newsletter.

The project planning team will use the information gleaned during the ongoing discovery process to identify languages for which translation of documents are appropriate, and will use the channels and relationships developed during the stakeholder interview process along with existing knowledge among city staff to disseminate information as needed.

Public Involvement Topics

Input from the public is critical to the success of the study. Our approach is to collect input in a targeted and timely way so it can work in tandem with technical data collection and corridor design work. Due to the compressed timeframe for this study, the initial phase of public input will include a conversation about goals for the project as well as preliminary design alternatives.

Public Involvement Topics

Goals/Purpose, February-March

- How is the corridor used today?
- What issues or problems exist in the corridor?
- What opportunities are there for improvement?

Review of Preliminary Design Alternatives and Initial Strategies, February – March

- How do the initial design concepts address issues and opportunities identified?
- Are the districts identified by the design team the right way to think about the corridor?
- Are the nodes identified as potential areas of investment the best locations for initial investment?
- Are the Great Street criteria, as defined by the project team, an acceptable way to evaluate alternatives?

Review of Preferred Design Alternatives, April

- What is acceptable/unacceptable about the preferred design solutions?
- Do the preferred design solutions help the Dorsett Road corridor meet the criteria of a Great Street?
- Was feedback from the public reflected in the alternatives?

Review of Final Design Alternatives, May

- Was feedback from the public reflected in the alternatives?
- What are the priorities for implementation?

Outreach Methods

The core communications methods to be employed will include both one-way and two-way communication opportunities. Two-way communication methods will allow for stakeholders to provide input. With one-way communication methods, information will be provided with the purpose of informing.

One-Way Communication

Project Website

Two-Way Communication

Mindmixer Website

Stakeholder Interviews

Elected Official Briefings

Public Meetings

Project Website

A project website will be used to communicate overall project messages, to host overall documents concerning project background and our findings on particular topics related to Great Streets, and to host links to online surveys.

Mindmixer Website

We plan on using the Mindmixer website, primarily during the initial two months of the project, in order to solicit ideas from the community for the future of the corridor. The Mindmixer website involves the organization and input of ideas from the community based upon a series of “topics” identified by the project team. Potential topic areas may include economic development, biking and walking improvements, aesthetic improvements, and additional topics identified during the project.

Stakeholder Interviews

We anticipate facilitating one on one interviews and focus groups with various groupings of stakeholders in order to learn more about how previous efforts to create economic development, placemaking, and revitalization in general along Dorsett have or have not worked in the past, the key goals for the effort, and the ideas the different groups have for improvements along the corridor.

Elected Official Briefings

Maryland Heights elected officials will be provided with updates during the project to keep them informed regarding key findings from technical data collection, to review and gain input concerning upcoming public involvement activities and to review and gain input on key elements of alternatives being considered.

Public Meetings

Public open houses will explore the key issues with the public as identified in Table 1, discuss key findings from existing conditions analysis, and review and gain input concerning some key alternatives for the future evolution of the corridor, at various locations. We will use keypad polling (and an online version of the questions as well) to help gain specific guidance from the public and stakeholders concerning the key issues and ideas for alternatives for the corridor.

Schedule of Public Involvement Activities

The table facing includes the process steps along with public involvement topics and communication tools.

