



Chapter Three

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

“I expect to spend the rest of my life in the future, so I want to be reasonably sure of what kind of future it’s going to be. That is my reason for planning.”

– *Charles Kettering*



CHAPTER THREE

summary of alternatives analysis

IN THIS CHAPTER

STEPS OF ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION

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DEVELOPING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT A FINAL CONCEPT, a process of reviewing and refining ideas must take place with the public and key stakeholders. This process of reviewing and redrafting concepts is called alternatives analysis, and immediately preceded the development of the Master Plan. The consultant team spent several weeks evaluating a vision statement, goals and concepts that met the expectations of the community for the West Florissant Avenue project. Specifically, the analysis included evaluation of five concept categories:

- Overall Vision, Goals and Strategies
- Specific corridor segment visions and strategies addressing land use, identity and image, as well as mobility and access
- Toolbox of techniques to apply in the corridor re-design, encompassing multi-modal transportation, green spaces, lighting, sustainability, infrastructure and utilities, parking, zoning, and placemaking.
- Specific economic development concepts for two key segments
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) access scenarios



Community members and stakeholders were consulted on corridor alternatives, with preferences indicated through electronic polling and facilitated discussion

3.1 STEPS OF ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION

West Florissant Avenue, in North St. Louis County, has long been a street that serves motorized vehicles well. In recent years there has been increasing need to do more than that – local communities along this corridor need also to be able to walk, bus, and bike, and many see the corridor as their only central place for shopping, meeting neighbors, and economic development.

The team led a process that included three Community Advisory Committee meetings as well as two rounds of public workshops that helped to set priorities that defined a vision, goals and strategies, and that in later meetings helped vet specific design proposals. Electronic

polling was used to approve the vision, goals, and toolbox of design proposals, and again to vote on specific design alternatives (see appendix for full results). Working sessions with the Technical Advisory Committee were also held, and open houses with merchants and property owners opened up discussions about the concepts. The team also presented scenarios that would improve access from the corridor to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that Metro is planning for the corridor. These strategies were voted on in the CAC meeting and also presented to the TAC, and also to Metro and to Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) in a separate meeting.

In all meetings, there was very strong consensus on both broad and specific proposals, as described in further detail below.

3.2 BUILDING CONSENSUS

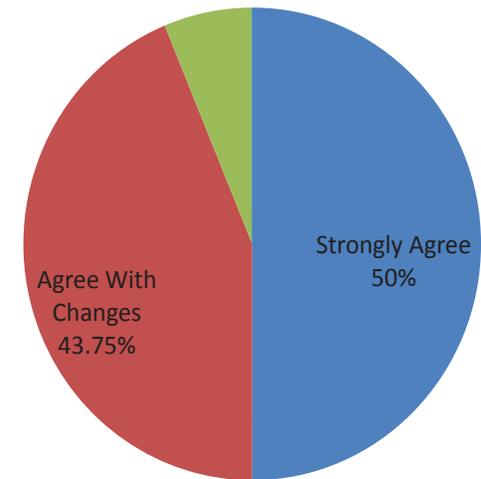
3.2.1 OVERALL VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Ninety-four percent of participants in the community meeting either “strongly agreed” or “agreed with changes” with the proposed vision statement and framework. Only minor changes were suggested. The overall goals were likewise approved nearly unanimously, with no changes.

3.2.2 SPECIFIC CORRIDOR SEGMENT STRATEGIES - LAND USE, IDENTITY AND IMAGE, MOBILITY AND ACCESS

The Vision Framework, presented in Chapter Four, divides the corridor into five separate segments for further study and design recommendations. Each corridor segment was presented separately with its own vision statement and strategies. Key proposals dealing with future land use were approved and helped set the framework for concept design.

Specifically, the team identified that segments 3 and 5 were ripe for major redevelopment, and which were the subject of further concept development as described below under section 3.2.4, Economic Development Concepts. It was agreed that the remaining three segments (1, 2 and 4) would retain their basic existing character. Segment 1 (North Gateway) has been recently redeveloped as a regional retail center and is likely to hold that course for the foreseeable future. Segments 2 (Green Boulevard) and 4 (Residential Avenue) are largely residential or institutional and participants agreed their character should remain more passive and green. Additional segment strategies for mobility and identity-image were also approved through the CAC and public meetings, and were therefore used to structure the recommendations in the Draft Master Plan.



Polling Question: Please indicate your level of agreement with the proposed vision and guiding principles

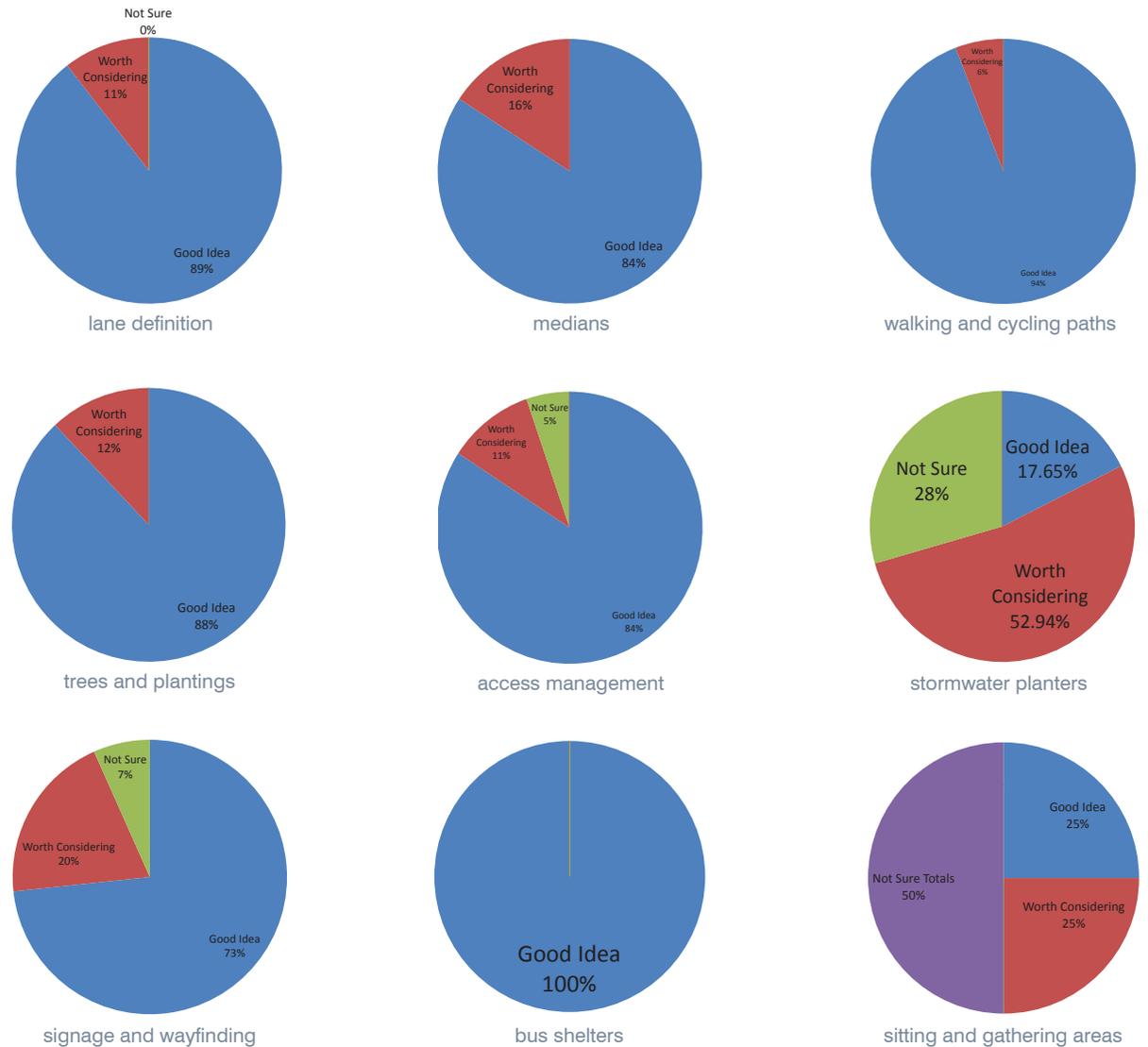
3.2.3 TOOLBOX OF DESIGN TECHNIQUES

The public and CAC reviewed a toolbox of techniques that the consultant team recommended using in the design of the corridor. This toolbox encompassed: Lane widths, access management, medians, crosswalks, sidewalks and walking paths, medians, crosswalks, sidewalks and walking paths, cycling facilities, street trees, lighting, stormwater planters, utilities, parking, zoning, placemaking, infill development, bus shelters, signage, and public seating and gathering areas.

There was overwhelming agreement in favor of the toolbox. Public meeting polling showed that on most of the toolbox items between 84% and 100% of people thought they were a “good idea.”

Only two tools in the toolbox raised some questions in the public meeting: the use of stormwater planters, which a majority said are “worth considering” but only 17% thought was a “good idea.” The main cause for concern was whether, over time, the planters would lose their aesthetic appeal because of poor maintenance. Sitting areas also raised some concerns, mainly because of the potential for them to be occupied by long-term residents. The team responded to this concern by limiting any recommendations to create new seating to busy activity hubs where visibility and onsite management would reduce any likelihood of negative behaviors.

POLLING QUESTIONS: PLEASE INDICATE YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR...



3.2.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Two land use and economic development alternatives were presented for both Segments 3 (near the intersection with Chambers Road in Dellwood) and 5 (at the south end of the corridor).

The preferred alternative for Segment 3 (Dellwood Town Center) was Alternative 2, the “Civic Center Focus,” which locates a cluster of civic uses (city hall, library, community garden) next to the existing Dellwood Recreation Center. This is complemented by housing and a retail component focused on the intersection of Chambers Road. It was preferred over Alternative 1 by a moderately strong margin: 86% strongly agreed with Alternative 2 versus only 63% for Alternative 1. The CAC and TAC felt the plan was both more feasible and more attractive because it was in a protected area away from traffic. The fact that there is a large developable piece of land next to the civic cluster (Springwood Plaza) also signaled to people that there was more potential to leverage private investment. The final concept is included in Chapter Five in section 5.5.4.



Segment 3 - Alternative 1: Chamber Road focus

Chambers Road intersection becomes the hub of the community with a concentration of commercial and civic uses (such as a new City Hall, potential library and early childhood center, with community garden) clustered around the intersection.



Segment 3 - Alternative 2: Civic Center focus

While the Chambers Road intersection is still the focus for commercial development (within the limits of market demand), the civic uses are grouped around the Dellwood Recreation Center. This creates a synergy between civic anchors, including Dellwood Park.



Segment 5 - Alternative 1: South Gateway

Development is relegated to the area around Maline Creek which, once restored, will be a high-quality green space. It will be an attractive setting for mixed-income and senior housing as well as adjacent commercial development on West Florissant Avenue.



Segment 5 - Alternative 2: South Gateway

The amount of housing and commercial that the market would support is spread more thinly across the South Gateway area, activating more sites and engaging more property owners. The amount of development on each parcel is smaller.

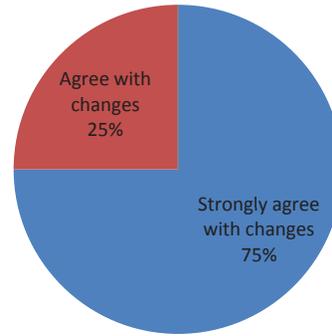
In Segment 5 to the south (South Gateway), the preferred alternative was Alternative 2: the Healthy Living Apartment Community. It was preferred by a very strong margin (75% strongly agreed with Alternative 2 versus only 14% for Alternative 1) because: it provides a stronger green link to the Maline Greenway; it provides more green buffer for existing homes; and the green space owned by Emerson is better engaged than the other alternative. Based on feedback, the plan includes a Phase 2 of development that would redevelop the Park Ridge apartments with mixed income residential, in the long term (see concept in section 5.7.4).

3.2.5 BUS RAPID TRANSIT ACCESS

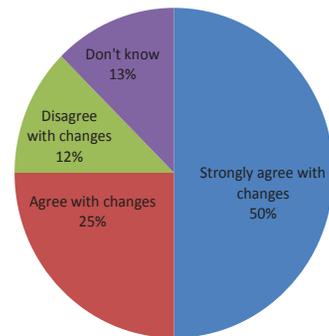
Bus Rapid Transit access scenarios were also considered by the Community Advisory Committee. The scenarios included the potential for adding a new BRT station in the North Gateway, or at least adding multi-modal access to West Florissant from the Transit Center. All members of the Technical Advisory Committee and CAC approved of these suggestions and both strategies are therefore included in the Master Plan (see section 5.3).

3.3 DEVELOPING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Based on the participation by the public in alternatives analysis, the team advanced the preferred concepts to draft the Master Plan. Certain toolbox elements received major adjustments, based on comments by project sponsors. Some of these were addressed by providing a range of design solutions within which the project could proceed, from a near-term alternative to a long-term vision. These concepts are fully described in Chapter Five.



Polling Question: Please indicate your level of support for additional access to the BRT Transit Center



Polling Question: Please indicate your level of support for a new BRT station in the North Gateway



Draft of the preferred alternative, Dellwood Town Center



Draft of the preferred alternative, South Gateway

