“To design a street according to its intended use is a reasonable but uncommon practice.”

Harland Bartholomew
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Appendices

A—Mapping
B—Demographic Information
C—Charrette Presentations and Polling
D—Consultant White Papers
Overview of The Great Streets Initiative

Streets are public space.

Therefore, in 2006, East-West Gateway Council of Governments launched the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative to expand the way communities think of their streets. Rather than viewing a roadway solely as a means to move cars and trucks efficiently, the goal of the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative is to work with communities to define a more comprehensive vision for significant streets. Often, our roadways do not easily accommodate their range of functions or the array of people using them. By changing the planning approach, however, they can become vibrant, attractive, and refreshing social places.

A strong process is as important as the end product. Working with the community to define the vision, a diverse team of consultants bring technical data and experience to the community’s local knowledge. Through the course of this discussion, a mix of development, transportation, environmental, and governance strategies is developed to help the community achieve their stated goals.

The process for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Great Streets project was tailored around a four day long, on-site workshop. This is an efficient way to repeatedly gather community input as options are considered and refined into final recommendations.

The end product provides the City of St. Louis with specific guidance to achieve its goals for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

<table>
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<th>Great Streets:</th>
<th>Streets are public space. They should be engaging.</th>
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<td>• Are great places</td>
<td>Start with the desired vision for the place, then develop a transportation network to support it. The two are entirely linked. When addressing either, consider the other.</td>
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<td>• Integrate land use and transportation planning</td>
<td>A range of people use a given roadway. Balance transit, pedestrian, cyclist, &amp; driver, priority to fit the need.</td>
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<td>• Accommodate all users &amp; all modes</td>
<td>A healthy local economy attracts investment and lasting stewardship. It also supports adjacent neighborhoods.</td>
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<td>• Are economically vibrant</td>
<td>An attractive refreshing environment working in concert with natural systems is lasting and reflects local identity.</td>
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<td>• Are environmentally responsible</td>
<td>Great Streets review others’ efforts and lessons learned, adapting, where appropriate, successful ideas.</td>
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<td>• Rely on current thinking</td>
<td>Bring a range of technical abilities to the table and combine it with local knowledge from the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop collaboratively</td>
<td>Linking measurable goals to project priorities helps guide decision making throughout a planning process.</td>
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<td>• Are measurable</td>
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Past Great Streets Projects

Pictured below are some of the previous Great Streets Initiative projects. As can be seen in the photographs, these streets are multimodal and vibrant, incorporate systems and materials that work with the local environment, and are attractive, unique places to be. For more information about the Great Streets Initiative or any of the projects that have been completed, go to www.ewgateway.org.

East-West Gateway has created a Digital Design Guide that is available online. This guide allows users to examine various elements and processes that can make a street a stronger asset to the neighborhoods that surround it. Communities throughout the region are encouraged to incorporate these elements into their projects.

To learn more about the characteristics found in great streets, as well as the design and process issues involved, the Digital Design Guide can be accessed at www.greatstreets-stl.org/.

*South Grand Avenue, St. Louis, MO*

*Page Avenue, Pagedale, MO*

*Natural Bridge Road, North St. Louis County, MO*

*Grand Center, St. Louis, MO*
Introduction

This report was the result of a highly collaborative process that involved numerous community constituents, regional planning partners and agencies, and a very capable team of consultants. The endeavor was distinguished by a spirit of common cause, respect and professionalism. Relevant history and data were balanced with real aspirations and goals in a very productive conversation. Appendix C, containing presentations and polling results compiled during community workshops, presents a partial record of this conversation. Necessary adjustments to this plan over time should respect and maintain this high level of collaboration and technical and professional input. The people of the neighborhoods surrounding Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive will expect it, and even small adjustments that fail to consider the range of related issues can create problems down the road.

This document borrows significantly from white papers (see Appendix D) written by consultants on the project team. While these white papers contain a great deal of analysis and detail, this report itself only includes the barest core content from them. Reading each of the four white papers will provide significant additional information that is essential to fully understanding this document and its recommendations. The authors of the white papers reviewed and provided edits to this report to ensure that the message and content is consistent with their individual work. Though drafted by East West Gateway staff, authorship should be considered shared by the project team.

Utility of this Document

The intent is for this document to be a concise practical tool for making Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive a great street. To that end, it defines the community goals that were identified through the engagement process, it records why various decisions were made, and clearly states the project team’s recommended strategies and next steps in order to achieve the goals.

The general vision and goals FOR the community came directly FROM the community and are considered core to all subsequent decisions and strategies in this document. Typically, adjustments to the specific plan and strategies become necessary over time, though they should always consider the vision and goals. When making any such adjustments, considering all related issues will minimize creating new problems while solving another.

All such documents have limitations. The local economy and market are dynamic, and typically after four or five years the market analysis needs to be revisited. While the land use goals drive most of the plan recommendations, property development generally falls within the private sector, limiting the City of St. Louis’ control and often the timing of implementing the plan. Also, it is impossible to predict all opportunities to coordinate plan implementation with related public and private projects. Opportunistically leveraging public resources this way can help advance the plan, but may lead to some seemingly odd temporary conditions where completed and pending work converge.

Various recommendations and tasks are identified, stating scope, schedule, budget, and responsible parties where possible.


**Context in Brief**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive is a critical boulevard for the City of St. Louis, and, due to its name, the street in St. Louis that both commemorates Dr. King and represents his legacy. It is a major City arterial, a neighborhood commercial district and a state highway. From the very beginning, the streetcar played an important role in St. Louis development. While Dr. Martin Luther King Drive (formerly Easton Avenue) functioned as a commercial street along its entire length, near the City Limits the street flourished as a major center of commercial and city life. The Wellston Loop, built around 1911 and located at the very western edge of the city’s limits, became one of the major transportation hubs in St. Louis. During the 1940s, four streetcar lines and three bus lines, carried some 40,000 passengers daily in and out of this area.

From the end of World War I to the 1950s, the area had achieved tremendous popularity as a shopping, business and transportation district where crowds would pour from the stores and mill about the terminal during the evening rush hour. According to one long-time resident, “There was nothing you couldn’t get in this area that you’d have to go anywhere else to get.”

The death of the City’s streetcar system in the 1960s, followed by the drastic cuts in bus service, strangled the economic vitality of the strip by eliminating surges of mass transit riders who fed the district’s commercial venues. The construction of Interstate 70 and Highway 40 moved much of the traffic to the north and south and encouraged the population that had once supported this vibrant commercial corridor to move westward along with the interstates. With suburban competition on the rise, the district’s merchants tried to remain competitive by providing modern shopping facilities, and ample parking and convenience features, such as back door entries. But even these actions failed to attract increasingly auto-oriented shoppers in the way that earlier businesses lured streetcar passengers. Race was also a factor in the area’s decline. Redlining, the practice of denying renovation loans in African-American neighborhoods, became a common practice, while some of the surrounding neighborhoods experienced population declines of nearly 40% as white flight was followed by middle class black flight.

Nearly a century has gone by since this corridor experienced its commercial zenith. In 1972, the street received its present name following the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. In its current state, Dr. Martin Luther King Drive is far from being the caliber of street meant to honor the legacy of the man for which it was named. Many of the buildings are empty, with tattered signage, boarded-up windows, and ad hoc renovations over the years. Without viable tenants, too many buildings have deteriorated to the point of collapse.

This stretch of Dr. Martin Luther King Drive was built on a pedestrian scale, its architectural mix of traditional styles and various attempts at 1950s modern-styled commercial buildings were designed to support a mixture of ground floor commercial with upper-story residential use. Unfortunately, with the shift to automobile travel and so many of the buildings now vacant, this commercial strip has lost much of its former vitality. Despite this structural and economic deterioration, the area has some bright pockets of hope. Arguably one of the brightest is the Arlington Grove Phase I mixed-use, mixed-income development which represents a new model of mixed-income housing for St. Louis by adaptively reusing a beautiful, historic landmark (Arlington School) as well as raising the bar for energy efficiency in affordable housing. The strong institutional presence of and continued investment by multiple churches and the Myrtle-Hilliard Health Center are also positive influences in the corridor. Many long-time businesses continue to thrive in the corridor and are making continued investments. New businesses are moving in and making improvements as well. A framework certainly exists, and there is a willingness from many community members and business owners to remake Dr. MLK Drive into the great street it once was.
Readiness for the Study

The City of St. Louis planning staff had identified the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor as a roadway that could benefit significantly from a multi-disciplined planning effort. Though decades of vacancy and deterioration are obvious along the commercial district and the neighborhoods on either side of it, recent substantial social and physical investments are reversing the sense of decay. Pockets of determined effort are making obvious progress revitalizing the area.

Not to be ignored is the area’s convenient access to many high quality jobs, career training, and regional destinations. The area’s origin as a transit hub resulted in very walkable neighborhoods. Additionally, recent nearby bicycle route facilities provide the neighborhoods with another layer of practical and recreational connectivity.

Early on, it was clear that some strategic organization, planning, and investments could assist current local efforts to develop a more vibrant economy and better serve the people who live, work, and worship here. Despite a history of skepticism and distrust, a collaborative process to define a vision, goals, and priorities for Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. has the potential to build common and lasting working relationships for the diverse local leadership. Individual efforts will always continue, but a collaborative framework would allow individual leadership access to a larger community context, improving their own efforts and highlighting common cause. The whole will be greater than the sum of its individual parts. With strong community collaboration, the Great Streets Initiative planning process and resultant recommendations may prove to be a practical tool to enhance community efforts.
The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive project area extends along MLK originating at Union Boulevard on the east end and terminating at Keinlen Avenue on the west end. With few exceptions, the north and south edges fall along the back of the property parcels along MLK Drive, however it is sometimes necessary to broaden the focus to consider a wider area and range of issues. This corridor, once a major transit hub, still enjoys good transit connections to major job centers such as Downtown St. Louis, Downtown Clayton, Lambert Airport, Mark Twain/I-70 Industrial Park, the Barnes-Jewish Hospital complex, Washington University, Saint Louis University and the future National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) site in North St. Louis.

At the western end of the corridor lies the Wellston Loop Station, a historic building with a rich history that is still a major activity center for the surrounding neighborhoods but is in serious need of renovation. A number of properties—both commercial and residential, have significantly deteriorated and require sizable investment to be restored. However, the area between Clara and Arlington, home of the Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church and the Arlington Grove mixed-use development, displays the positive influence of major reinvestment. Many other churches, institutional organizations, residents and business owners are active in the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods and are working to make positive changes along MLK Drive. The Study Team hopes this strategic plan can support their efforts and provide some common ground on which to move forward.
Existing Conditions—Overall Study Area Context

Land Use

Much of the original commercial building stock along the western end of the study area is either gone or vacant and rapidly deteriorating. Notable exceptions do exist, as some long-standing businesses continue to operate and several small newer enterprises scattered throughout serve local residents. The Wellston Loop is no longer the regional draw it once was, though the streets are not empty. Recently, the JC Penney and Wellston Loop buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and much of the commercial area is listed as an Historic District. In addition to acknowledging the historic value of the place, these listings make available financial tools and technical support for revitalization.

Several institutions anchor the corridor and a number of churches and a health clinic are well established and thriving. Newer developments near Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church include a mix of new and renovated housing, small business space, and a recent gas station and convenience store. More is planned. Friendly Temple, the largest private land owner in the study area, has been actively investing in the area for years. The character and function in this investment area stands in contrast to the decay long associated with the corridor.

A great deal of vacant land is distributed throughout the study area and much of it is owned by the City of St. Louis’ Land Reutilization Authority (LRA), as shown in Figure 8.2. Some of it has been claimed as parking to support local businesses. Most of it is simply green lots where buildings have been cleared and some areas in particular have become gathering spots for residents of the area.

Housing stock in the neighborhoods on both sides of the corridor is mostly single family detached homes with examples of small and larger houses, new, and old, starter homes and senior housing. Rental housing ranges from a few large buildings to a number of smaller multi-family walk-up units.
Market and Socio-economic

Market areas were defined to evaluate the socio-economic conditions in the neighborhoods surrounding the MLK corridor. The Primary Market Area (PMA) for the study area is defined by the St. Louis City limits to the west, Page Avenue to the South, Kingshighway to the east and Natural Bridge Road to the north. A broader Secondary Market Area (SMA) was established to evaluate the market potential for expanded commercial services. Both the PMA and SMA are shown in Figure 9.1.

The Market and Economic Development White Paper, which can be found in Appendix D, shows the PMA, when compared with the SMA, the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis Metropolitan Region, has some significant challenges.

- **Population Loss** - From 2000 to 2010, the PMA experienced considerable population loss, more than double that of the City of St. Louis. However, in the last five years the population appears to have begun to stabilize. Figure 9.2 illustrates these population changes.

- **Low Household Income** - The estimated median household income in the PMA is $20,648, which is about 42 percent lower than the City of St. Louis ($39,686) and 62 percent lower than the MSA ($54,317). Over half of the households in the PMA earn less than $25,000 a year and about 39 percent of households earn less than $15,000 a year.

- **Low Educational Attainment** - The PMA has the highest percentage of individuals with no high school diploma (23 percent) and high school only (35 percent), and the lowest percentage of individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher (10 percent) when compared with the other three analysis areas.

- **High Housing Vacancy Rate** - There are an estimated 7,550 housing units in the PMA with a vacancy rate of 36 percent. This is higher than the other three analysis areas as shown in Figure 9.3.

- **Low Median Home Values** - The PMA has a median home value of $66,638, followed by the SMA ($76,224), the City of St. Louis ($154,313) and the MSA ($187,166).
Though there are limited employment concentrations within the study area, public transportation offers direct access to the region’s top employment centers, including Downtown St. Louis, St. Louis University, BJC Healthcare, Washington University, Downtown Clayton, and the future National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA). Figure 10.1 shows how close these and other employment centers are to the study area.

![Employment Concentrations, 2015](image)

**Figure 10.1 - Employment Concentrations near the Study Area**

In addition to the socio-economic and demographic data, there are also qualitative attributes that contribute to or detract from the overall marketability of a corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods.

The MLK corridor has many strengths -

- **Access to Public Transportation and Employment Centers** - The study area is well-located with access to Metrobus and MetroLink, which connect to some of the region’s top employment destinations.

- **Access to Service Providers** - The study area has excellent access to healthcare services with Myrtle-Hilliard Davis Comprehensive Health Center located in the center of the corridor. There are also a number of organizations that provide educational, workforce development, and other community resources nearby.

- **Historic Building Stock** - Though many buildings are vacant or in significant disrepair, the historic character of the area offers some opportunities for public funding for historic preservation.
• **Wellston Loop Building** - Though it has limited market-based development potential, the Wellston Loop Building is a source of identity for the community and offers the opportunity for a vibrant public space.

• **Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church** - Friendly Temple is a primary anchor, activity center, land owner and investor in the corridor. Sunday services draw 3,500 people, about 65 percent of whom live outside the City of St. Louis. This not only increases pedestrian activity and safety in the area, but could create an opportunity for more retail development.

• **Arlington Grove** - This development provided much needed quality affordable housing and serves as a stabilizing presence that enhances safety and increases development potential of neighboring parcels.

• **Recent streetscape improvements** - The recent implementation of new pedestrian-scale street lighting has contributed to ongoing place making efforts and gives the community a sense of pride and progress.

• **Façade Improvement Program** - St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) continues to be active in the MLK Corridor with its façade improvement program, which can grant up to $50,000 for business façade improvements including window replacement, door replacement, storefront improvements and signage.

• **Promise Zone** - The MLK corridor is within the federal Promise Zone boundaries, which encompasses much of North St. Louis City and County and gives projects in the zone priority for grants and other funding from the US Economic Development Administration.

• **Anchor Retailors** - There are a number of family-owned businesses in the corridor that have been in business for decades and have long-standing roots and staying power in the community. These types of retailers, when working together, can be the pioneers of business expansion creating a unique retail identity for the corridor.

• **Arlington Grove Phase II Redevelopment Area** - In June 2013, the City of St. Louis designated the areas adjacent to the existing Arlington Grove development as the Arlington Grove Phase II Redevelopment Area, allowing for a ten-year tax abatement in the district, among other incentives, to encourage new development or redevelopment.

The MLK corridor also has some additional challenges -

• **Crime and negative perceptions** - Perceived and actual crime has a negative effect on the overall marketability of a community. Crime continues to be an issue in the neighborhood, much of it visible in the western parts of the corridor including illegal drug sales and prostitution.

• **The Corridor is Overbuilt** - The MLK corridor is overbuilt to support the area’s retail needs. There is a need to develop concentrated nodes of investment and promote interim uses like urban farming.

• **Lack of move-in ready retail spaces** - Weak market characteristics have contributed to significant vacancies, but in some cases, the dilapidated conditions of many of the buildings have also created a market barrier for those who would be interested in doing business in the corridor if there were available spaces.
- **Housing Affordability** - Given income levels and property values, in most cases, developing new housing is not feasible without subsidy, or attracting higher-income households.

- **Lack of Revenue-Generating Properties** - The most prominent uses along the MLK corridor are either vacant or tax-exempt service providers limiting revenue generation from creating tax districts in the near term.

- **Proliferation of Liquor Stores** - Just over 10 percent of retail businesses in the PMA are liquor stores, compared to only about 1.5% citywide indicating a need to diversify the retail offerings.

A visual assessment of the properties in the corridor and an analysis of property tax records and Costar database information resulted in Figure 12.1, showing properties that are—

- Ripe for Development — underutilized or vacant properties that are ripe for redevelopment (shown in Blue)
- Possible Opportunity Site — somewhat stable, but possibly not being used to the fullest potential (shown in Green)
- Firm — stable or newly constructed with no need for intervention or investment (shown in Gray)

![Figure 12.1 - MLK Corridor Reinvestment Site Analysis](image-url)
Transportation
The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor is well-connected within the St. Louis region with ample transit access and strong road connections to many of the region’s employment centers as well as to the regional freeway system.

Five Metrobus routes serve the corridor providing access to jobs in multiple job centers within the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis Metropolitan Region as well as access to the MetroLink light rail system. These bus routes, shown in Figure 13.1, are vitally important as 25-50% of households in the corridor do not own a vehicle. These bus routes include—

- #13—Union—serves Union/I-70 Industrial Park, BJC Medical Campus/Cortex, and Forest Park and connects to the Central West End MetroLink Station
- #16—City Limits—serves the Riverview Transfer Center, Forest Park, Washington University and connects to the Delmar, Skinker and Shrewsbury MetroLink Stations
- #30—Soulard—serves Downtown St. Louis, Anheuser Busch, Union Station, Tower Grove Park, and connects to the Rock Road, Union Station, and Shrewsbury MetroLink Stations
- #32—ML King-Chouteau—serves Downtown St. Louis and connects to the Rock Road, Union Station and Maplewood Manchester MetroLink Stations
- #90 Hampton—serves the Riverview Transfer Center, Forest Park, the Hampton Transfer Center and the Catalan Transfer Center and connects to the Forest Park MetroLink Station

Vehicle traffic volume and speed data was collected in three locations along the corridor. Overall, traffic speeds are in line with posted speed limits and volumes are low to normal for a 2 or 3 lane roadway as illustrated in Figures 13.2 and 14.1.

**Typical traffic volumes for various roadway types** -

- 2 – Lane Road: Under 15,000 vpd
- 3 – Lane Road: 10,000 to 20,000 vpd
- 4 – Lane Road: 15,000 to 30,000 vpd
- 5 – Lane Road: 20,000 to 45,000 vpd

*Figure 13.1 - Regional Connectivity*

*Figure 13.2 - Typical Traffic Volumes for Various Roadway Types*
Crash statistics were obtained from the Missouri Highway Patrol website. A total of 118 crashes, 34 injury crashes, 1 roadway fatality and 5 crashes involving bicycles or pedestrians occurred in the corridor over the three-year period between 2012 and 2015. These crash locations are shown in Figure 14.2 with areas of concern highlighted in yellow.

Primary areas of concern include—
- The signalized intersection at Goodfellow (highest crash location in the corridor)
- The signalized intersection at Kienlen (second highest crash location with injuries)
- The combined stop-controlled intersections of Clara, Burd, and Belt (high crash rate when combined)
- The signalized intersection at Union (high crash location with injuries)
- The signalized intersection at Hamilton (Significant crash rate with injuries)
The August 2014 “Strategic Highway Safety Plan for the City of St. Louis, Missouri” provides the following roadway safety improvement recommendations for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive: Seatbelt Enforcement, Aggressive Driving Enforcement, and Young Driver Licensure Enforcement. In addition, this study recommends implementation of a “Stop-Controlled Intersection Package” at the intersection of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. and Belt Ave. This package includes “STOP AHEAD pavement markings, reflective sign post sleeves and LED-outlined STOP signs at select sites.

Pedestrian counts were collected with video counters at two locations. Both of these locations experienced peak pedestrian traffic on Friday and Saturday (April 8 and 9, 2016). One counter, located at 5879 Dr. MLK Jr. Drive, observed over 200 pedestrians per day on Friday and Saturday and between 100-150 pedestrians per day on other days of the week. The second counter, located at 5736 Dr. MLK Drive, observed over 100 pedestrians per day on Friday and Saturday and between 15-75 the other days. Field observations during Sunday morning revealed peak pedestrian traffic near Friendly Temple and significant conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians. Friendly Temple manages these conflicts by employing two crossing guards. However, a better circulation plan during Sunday services could improve vehicle traffic flow and reduce conflicts between automobiles and pedestrians.

While sidewalks are present throughout the corridor, other amenities that make walking comfortable and enjoyable are not. Trees and street furniture are minimal through most of the corridor and many areas could benefit from enhanced pedestrian crossings across Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.

Dr. MLK Jr. Drive is identified as a shared route in the Gateway bike plan, and is currently marked with sharrows in the study area. Goodfellow Blvd. is also designated as a shared route north of MLK. Nearby Union Blvd. has designated bike lanes due to a recent road diet project. Based on community feedback, we understand that adding bike lanes on the corridor is not a priority.

Currently, the Ruth Porter Mall is the closest extension of the St. Vincent Greenway to the study corridor. It is just over a half mile from the study corridor via Etzel Avenue. A new park on Etzel, funded through GRG, is planned for the near future. The trail runs from Skinker on Etzel to Blackstone and south to Forest Park. The connection on Skinker to the St. Vincent Greenway near the University of Missouri in St. Louis is in the design phase currently, and planned for construction in 2018. The Ruth Porter Mall extension is a great pedestrian and bike connection for residents of the MLK neighborhoods to access Forest Park and the Delmar Loop. It also provides a connection to the Loop Trolley and Metro-Link stations.
Environmental

Impervious Surfaces
An analysis of existing pervious and impervious surfaces was completed showing that approximately three quarters of the land within the study area is not pervious—mostly pavement and rooftops. In such urbanized areas this would typically be higher, though in this case it is not surprising due to the high number of empty vacant lots in the corridor. The study team did observe that some grassy lots have pavement below shallow soil where grass is growing. The more impervious area there is, the more likely flooding will occur during heavy rains. Currently, flooding does not appear to be an issue, though care should be taken as redevelopment occurs to minimize the load on the storm sewer system.

The Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) has an 11-acre detention basin north of the project area near Natural Bridge and Union in the Harlan-Baden Watershed. This facility is designed to fill during large rain events and drain gradually into the sewer system to relieve flash flood inundation within the sewer system. This will avoid standing water that breeds mosquitos or presents safety hazards to residents. A number of sewers in the surrounding area are being rerouted to that location to help reduce the amount of runoff heading to the treatment plant.

Utilities
Local utility companies Ameren, Laclede Gas and the Metropolitan Sewer District were interviewed to obtain information regarding issues and future projects. Detailed information from those interviews can be found in the Environmental Infrastructure White Paper in Appendix D.

Vacant Buildings
As previously discussed, the study area has a high percentage of vacant buildings and lots. A blighted building visual summary was completed to classify existing building stock according to its estimated stability. Staff identified buildings that looked vacant and made a visual determination regarding the condition and then ranking each from 1 to 5, with 1 being stable and requiring minimal investment and 5 being a hazard or requiring significant investment. Figure 16.1 shows this inventory. Engineering analysis will be necessary to confirm the findings.

Building Condition 1

Figure 16.1 - Vacant Building Condition Summary

Building Condition 5
Tree Canopy

Street plantings are almost non-existent along the corridor. The few existing street trees are generally located in small rectangular openings in the concrete sidewalks near Friendly Temple. Tree species that have been planted adjacent to the street include a few Bradford Pear trees and Chinese Elms. Most of the trees show signs of environmental stress and are unlikely to fully mature. This lack of shade is an issue due to the urban heat island effect which results from large areas of impervious surfaces like asphalt roads and concrete sidewalks absorbing heat from the sun and then gradually releasing that heat overnight. Research shows that the heat island effect can make an urban area 3 to 5 degrees hotter at night leading to increased electrical loads for cooling and increasing water consumption. Street trees can reduce the negative impact of the heat island effect through shade and through transpiration (cooling of the air temperature from evaporation of the water in the tree).

North of the MLK corridor, in the vicinity of the intersection of Clara Avenue and St. Louis Avenue, an organization called Fresh Coast Capital is developing a tree farm on several blocks of vacant land. The tree farm will grown Poplar trees that will be harvested for production of plywood and other wood composite materials. Entrepreneurial endeavors to plant trees like the Fresh Coast Capital development should be investigated for vacant properties adjacent to MLK Drive. The trees will help improve soil and air quality and provide a productive use for vacant land.

Crime

Another issue brought up by many residents and business owners was crime. People generally do not feel safe and secure in much of the area surrounding the MLK corridor and feel this is a major obstacle to revitalization. The presence of crime, or the perception of it, is likely keeping people from visiting area businesses and institutions. Some factors the study team observed or were told about that contribute to this feeling of insecurity are people gathering or loitering at various places, inadequate lighting at night, vacant storefronts, hidden places, and illegal transactions. During the workshop, the planning team found that the perceptions of insecurity changed depending on the location along the study corridor. For example, workshop attendees reported feeling safer in the area around Friendly Temple, Arlington Grove and the Myrtle-Hilliard Davis Health Center, suggesting that reinvestment and purposeful activity contributed to a feeling of safety.
Existing Conditions - by segment

For analysis, the corridor was broken into five land use segments (see Figure 18.1). These segments include:

- **Wellston Loop**— from Keinlen to Hamilton
- **Goodfellow West**— from Hamilton to Goodfellow
- **Goodfellow East**— from Goodfellow to Clara
- **Central**— from Clara to Semple/Belt
- **East Block**— from Semple/Belt to Union

**Wellston Loop**

Despite the large amount of vacancies and deterioration, this segment is still an iconic center for the neighborhood. This area is dominated by commercial development, though some buildings have residential on the upper floors. West of the Wellston Loop Building, the character is more auto-oriented with parking lots in front of buildings that are set back further from the street. Building continuity and occupancy are strongest in this westernmost part of the segment. East of Hodiamont, many vacant buildings are in serious disrepair.

The signalized intersection at Keinlen has the second highest number of crashes and injuries in the entire MLK corridor, however, when compared to other similar signalized intersections, the crash data is not atypical.

Pedestrian facilities are sufficiently sized and located to handle the busy pedestrian activity. Recently installed pedestrian lighting on the south side of the road was not functioning at the time of this study. Street trees and sidewalk furniture are insufficient.

Following is a list of the primary needs in the Wellston Loop Segment.

- Stabilize and develop the Wellston Loop Building and immediate surrounding area
- Reinforce existing activity and business clusters near Wellston Loop Building and Hamilton Intersection
- Reuse the underutilized but sound JC Penney Building
- Stabilize or remove deteriorated buildings
- Use vacant sites between Hodiamont and the western boundary of the historic district
- Examine the signalized intersection at Keinlen to determine safety improvements that may be needed
- Address personal safety and security concerns in this part of the corridor through better lighting and curbing illegal activity.
**Goodfellow West**

This segment continues the pattern of one-story commercial buildings and two-story mixed-use structures. The original commercial character of this segment is especially apparent near the Hamilton intersection, but the buildings here are in particularly poor condition. Despite the serious building deterioration, this area still continues to offer important neighborhood services. The segment is entirely within the National Register Historic District and there are a number of historically significant buildings present. There is also a large vacant site on the southwest corner of MLK and Laurel Street.

From a transportation system perspective, the misalignment of Hamilton Avenue creates a safety issue, as demonstrated by the high number of crashes (11) and injuries (3) in that location. In addition, the intersection at Goodfellow has the highest number of both crashes (25) and injuries (6) in the entire corridor and needs to be adjusted to ensure safety and compatibility with all modes of transportation.

Following is a list of the primary needs in the Goodfellow West Segment.

- Stabilize or demolish deteriorating facades, with a priority to stabilize Silberstein store (5801 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.)
- Reconstruct and expand grocery/convenience store at 5870 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.
- Rehabilitate sound Kinsey and Cann Buildings (5857 and 5867 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.) and Althaus Building on the northwest corner of Goodfellow
- Improve the Hamilton intersection and clear the collapsing structures on the east side of Hamilton
- Improve the Goodfellow intersection
Goodfellow East
This area is characterized by one and two-story mixed-use buildings with second-story residential over commercial, and single-story retail buildings. Blackstone Avenue marks the eastern edge of the historic district where there are several buildings of special architectural importance, though their conditions are poor.

There are also several areas of reinvestment in this area. Opportunities for this segment include continued commercial investment, infill development and stabilization of historic facades for future uses. Additionally, Blackstone Avenue, if continued north of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr., provides a possible entrance to a new infill neighborhood that could be built on a number of LRA-controlled parcels along Theodosia and Cote Brilliante Avenues. The Cardinals Care Field, a baseball practice field funded by the St. Louis Cardinals, is located just south of the MLK corridor on Clara. This community asset could be better connected to and better served by local transportation facilities.

Following is a list of the primary needs in the Goodfellow East Segment.

- Encourage infill development of vacant sites, especially on larger sites along Theodosia and Cote Brilliante Avenues and between Clara and Goodfellow
- Create better visibility and connection to Cardinal Care Park, especially for areas north of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.
- Stabilize and maintain historically important facades between Blackstone and Shawmut on the south side of MLK.
Central
This segment is the investment anchor of the MLK study area where the street frontage is fully developed. Included in this segment are the Myrtle-Hilliard Community Health Center, the Arlington Grove Phase I mixed-use development, the Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church campus, and a newer gas station/convenience store. A combination of church-related evening and weekend activity, medical/social service weekday activity and residential investment make this segment a candidate for some additional new retail and service development.

There is substantial activity surrounding these facilities, peaking on Sunday mornings when thousands of people attend services at the church. This heavy influx of traffic produces conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, complicated by several offset intersections and unexpectedly frequent stop signs on MLK Drive.

Following is a list of the primary needs in the Central Section:
- Encourage commercial development near newer development and major destinations
- Develop traffic flow/management plan to alleviate pedestrian/vehicle conflicts near Friendly Temple campus
- Reconfigure Friendly Temple’s surplus parking lots to create a more effective use
- Improve the alignment of offset intersections, shown in Figure 21.1, and add enhanced pedestrian crossings between Clara and Semple

Figure 21.1 - Multiple offset intersections near Friendly Temple

East Block
This area is characterized by civic uses such as the William’s Temple Church and Neighborhood Outreach Center, but also includes residential and commercial uses. Two dilapidated houses, one with serious fire damage need to be demolished as soon as possible. There is also significant vacant land in this segment including the two lots on the corners of Union.

Following is a list of the primary needs in the East Block Segment:
- Demolition of dilapidated houses
- Reuse/Develop vacant Union Blvd. corners
- Clean-up small auto salvage sites
- Improve the Union intersection

Williams Temple Church
The Planning Process

In order to best organize, consider, and address such a wide range of related issues, this process for this project centered on a four day long charrette. This French term refers to an open cart historically sent around by the Académie des Beaux Arts in Paris to collect design students and their final projects. The students piled in and intensely, collaboratively putting the finishing touches on their work to be presented upon their arrival at the academy. The term now refers to the last minute flurry of activity developing public presentations based on a full day’s collaborative work.

During the MLK charrette, a project team comprised of four distinct yet related professions considered the corridor through a series of specific focus groups, interviews, and public meeting/feedback sessions. The project team worked on site at 5736 Dr. MLK Drive, away from the distractions of other work, immersed in a collaborative working environment. As the team addressed the various challenges and opportunities along MLK, every conversation included market, environmental, land use, policy, and transportation perspectives. The recommendations considered and advanced by the team represent collective thinking.

Significantly, the charrette process includes extensive and repeated conversation with people from the neighborhood. The team of professionals have extensive training and experience in their fields. However, the only way for them to understand MLK is to talk with a wide range of people from the area. Community input came in the form of various focus group discussions, interviews with key individuals, and three public meetings. The four day charrette efficiently integrates the technical expertise of the project team with the local knowledge of those who live, work, and play here. Public input continued throughout the event, and repeated community feedback about specific issues and strategies allowed the project team to abandon or refine ideas quickly.

St. Louis City planning staff coordinated and facilitated all community outreach, including invitations and notifications, scheduling interviews, and hosting the charrette workshop. The various consultants and East West Gateway staff collected and reviewed area data, conducted preliminary interviews prior to the charrette, and participated fully in the four day event. After the charrette, the consultants each produced a white paper focused on their respective disciplines within the project study area. Once complete, EWG staff drafted this strategic planning report for the City of St. Louis. All white papers and the strategic planning report were reviewed for comment by City of St. Louis staff, EWG staff, and each of the four consultants to ensure accuracy and consistency.
The consultant team spent several weeks preparing for the charrette workshop, collecting data and reviewing recent and current planning efforts within the community. They worked collaboratively on site for the four day charrette workshop, participating in all interviews, focus group meetings, and public meetings. Then, each consultant developed a white paper on their respective discipline about the MLK corridor and provided input and edits for the final plan document.

Community engagement was organized to help get the project team familiar with the study area prior to the charrette workshop in order to make the community interaction and planning process appropriate and efficient. The interviews and focus groups were meant to provide the team with both general and specific input. The public meetings were largely meant to identify priorities and gauge preference or tolerance for various strategies.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY OF ST LOUIS</th>
<th>EAST-WEST GATEWAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipal staff help define the project area and scope, provide match funding, and facilitate all community outreach, including providing the space for the charrette workshop.</td>
<td>East-West Gateway staff helps define the project area and scope, provides funding, manages the project consultants, and drafts the final report.</td>
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<tr>
<th>MARKET</th>
<th>LAND USE</th>
<th>TRANSPORTATION</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>A Market Analyst/Planner assesses the existing market trends and context of the area and provides specific strategies for developing and maintaining a vibrant local economy suited to the neighborhood.</td>
<td>An Urban Planner / Designer assesses the development history and patterns of the area, as well as the governance and ordinance context, then highlights specific recommendations to achieve land use and place making goals.</td>
<td>A Transportation Planner considers the existing facilities along a roadway and balances them against the needs of the expected mix of travelers (walk, bike, bus, car, truck, etc.). Then, recommendations are made to best accommodate them and support the desired community goals.</td>
<td>An Environmental Planner (often a landscape architect) studies local environmental and utility conditions and makes recommendations to work with the local ecology and enhance the public, outdoor environment for people.</td>
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The consultant team spent several weeks preparing for the charrette workshop, collecting data and reviewing recent and current planning efforts within the community. They worked collaboratively on site for the four day charrette workshop, participating in all interviews, focus group meetings, and public meetings. Then, each consultant developed a white paper on their respective discipline about the MLK corridor and provided input and edits for the final plan document.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>INTERVIEWS</th>
<th>FOCUS GROUPS</th>
<th>PUBLIC</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prior to the charrette workshop, the project team spoke with key community members, including the Alderman, municipal staff, business leaders, and residents.</td>
<td>During the charrette workshop, the design team met with specific groups such as local business people, property owners, first responders, neighborhood representatives, city / county transportation staff, etc.</td>
<td>Three public meetings were held during the charrette workshop to ensure that the project team focused on the community priorities and worked to refine desired strategies for the corridor.</td>
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Engagement

During the course of the MLK Great Streets Project, the planning team reached out to key community members and the general public to gather information about the study area and feedback on the process and its outcomes. The project team spent about two months gathering data in all discipline areas, which gave a good technical representation of the corridor. However, no one knows an area as well as the residents and business owners who live and work there. Input and feedback from them is crucial in framing a solid plan.

In the weeks prior to the charrette, the project team held several preliminary interviews to gage how well their understanding of the corridor meshed with perception and reality. These interviews included –

- Pastor Michael Jones, Senior Pastor, Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church
- Jeffrey Boyd, Alderman, 22nd Ward
- Michelle Peterson & Andrew Turnage, St. Louis Development Corporation (Neighborhood Business Specialists)
- Andrew Raimist, Author, Wellston Loop - Family Reunion and Lecturer, Washington University School of Architecture

During the charrette a number of focus groups were conducted to further gather information in key areas regarding the MLK Corridor. These Focus Groups included –

- Commercial Development
- Community Development
- Institutions
- City of St. Louis Departments
- Transportation

The project team also spoke with representatives from Ameren, Laclede Gas and the Metropolitan Sewer District to coordinate any current or future plans with the utilities in the area.

Finally, there were three open houses held during the charrette. These were opportunities for the public to provide input and direction for the project team. The team opened each evening meeting with a presentation and ended with keypad polling and discussion. (Note: there was no keypad polling in the third meeting, due to the length of the discussion.) Each evening meeting had a unique agenda and served a distinct purpose in the development of the recommendations for MLK Drive.
Meeting #1 was an opportunity for the project team to present the existing conditions based on all the data that had been gathered, discuss initial thoughts regarding a vision for the corridor and gather feedback to ensure the project was on the right track. Thirteen people attended and participated in keypad polling. A copy of the presentation and the keypad polling results can be found in Appendix C.

Meeting #1 Findings –
- Safety & Security (real and perceived) are primary issues
- MLK should be a beautiful street
- The area needs quality affordable housing
- New housing & businesses are great, but the existing housing and businesses need support too
- Need more community spaces

Meeting #2 gave the project team a chance to present some ideas for addressing the major issues and concerns that had been defined in the MLK corridor. These ideas were presented and feedback was gathered to determine if the team was on target and to measure public support. Seventeen people attended this meeting. The presentation and keypad polling results from Meeting #2 can be found in Appendix C.

Meeting #2 Findings –
- The most pressing issue in the Wellston Loop area is crime
- Most people feel safe around the Friendly Temple area
- Street lighting is inadequate in many parts of the corridor

Meeting #3 focused on the recommendations the project team determined best to move forward as part of the MLK Drive Great Streets Strategic Plan. The project team presented recommendations to a group of 33 people and gathered feedback on the recommendations through extensive discussion. Overall, the recommendations were well-received. A copy of the Meeting #3 presentation can be found in Appendix C.

Meeting #3 Findings –
- The area needs a grocery store where quality fresh food can be purchased
- Crossing MLK at Clara is dangerous. Many children cross there heading to Cardinal Cares Park
- Need a central information source to connect people and businesses to the support programs they need
- Residents feel Friendly Temple needs a better parking strategy on Sunday mornings
Project Goals

Through the planning process a number of goals, identified below, informed the specific strategies outlined on the following pages.

- **Preserve the important historic legacy of the corridor.** Begin by identifying specific buildings that should be preserved, then work toward stabilizing and preserving these historic facades for future uses. Continue offering incentives to existing business owners as well as drawing new investors into the community.

- **Coordinate the efforts of those working to improve the area.** There are a number of efforts that have taken place or are underway to improve the areas surrounding Dr. MLK Jr. Drive. While some of them do coordinate, many do not. It would be immensely beneficial to work together toward a common goal.

- **Repopulate the neighborhoods around Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.** Quality, affordable, owner-occupied, housing is needed. However, any new housing developments must respect and sustain the investments that existing residents have made in their homes, building a high quality new neighborhood around them.

- **Establish low-cost, productive short-term uses for vacant land in the corridor.** Uses like gardening, urban agriculture, parking and recreation can temporarily put vacant land to productive use until further investment can be made.

- **Improve the image and perceptions of the MLK corridor.** There are both perceptions and realities concerning crime and security in the area. Efforts should be made to remedy the real crime issues and improve the image of the area by making it a safer, more attractive place to live, work and do business.

- **Improve access to nearby regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities.** Better connecting to nearby greenway networks will provide residents with another viable travel option and recreational facilities that are attractive to new home buyers.

- ** Beautify Dr. MLK Jr. Drive.** The street that bears the name of such an important historic legend should have a beautiful appearance. Adding elements such as trees, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities will create a more functional and enjoyable atmosphere befitting of the great man for whom this street bears its name.
Corridor Plan - Overall Strategies

Land Use

- **O1 - Maintain current incentives for commercial rehabilitation and business assistance along the MLK corridor.** The current façade program and historic building credits should be continued and can be leveraged to make investments more viable.

Market

- **O2 - Form organization or strategic partnerships to develop a unified voice/mission for MLK and maximize limited resources.** There are many positive efforts currently underway in and around the MLK corridor and a number of people and organizations are focused on making positive changes in the area. Unfortunately, these entities are not necessarily communicating or partnering with one another, and the efforts are not focused on a common cause. A multitude of benefits could result from these entities working together collaboratively. A dedicated Community Development Corporation (CDC) or similar organization can often balance housing, economic development, and social service needs in a community, and also act as a conduit for public, private and philanthropic funds. This type of comprehensive organization would be immensely beneficial to the MLK corridor, however, given limited resources, in the near term, a formal partnership of the existing stakeholders should be an initial step.

- **O3 - Develop a special district to generate local tax revenue for future investment.** Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) can generate a pool of tax revenue to be reinvested in the corridor and have been established in commercial corridors throughout the St. Louis region. Additional sales and/or property taxes are levied to support district-wide initiatives or amenities such as dedicated district staff, streetscape improvements, marketing, events, and additional security or trash pick-up. Initial revenues, though modest, could be used for visible improvements on the corridor.
• **O4 - Develop programs and resources that support entrepreneurs and the local business community such as a business incubator.** Incubators supply local businesses with financial and educational resources they need to grow and focus on start-up businesses, which bring additional commercial activity to the corridor. A site such as the JC Penney Building could be a potential space for such a project.

• **O5 - Attract a quality neighborhood grocery store that sells fresh foods.** This should be a market with affordable quality fresh produce, meats, and other foods and should be located in an urban, transit- and pedestrian-oriented manner, but also serve automobile traffic. The economy of the area may not support a traditional grocery store at this time, however a short-term alternative could be expanding healthy food options at existing markets and stores.

• **O6 - Increase pedestrian activity and attract visitors with public markets or other community events.** Public markets can function as small business incubators and can have a regional draw, stimulating more spending in the community. Flea markets, farmer’s markets and arts & crafts fairs can operate in existing indoor or outdoor spaces. Such events can also improve perceptions and the community’s identity.

• **O7 - Make more retail spaces move-in ready to attract new businesses in the corridor.** The relatively few move-in ready storefronts in the corridor make it difficult for a new business to move in due to the high costs associated with substantial rehabilitation of existing structures.
Transportation

- **O8 - Upgrade signal equipment and connect to the City Network.** The traffic signals vary in their technology—some being more modern and others being somewhat outdated. A study should be conducted to determine which signals are still warranted and if any could be discontinued. All signals should be upgraded or replaced and connected with the City’s fiber-optic network for better coordination.

- **O9 - Add Bump-outs at signalized intersections and crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety.** Bump-outs are important for pedestrian safety. They visually and physically narrow the roadway and shorten crosswalk distances. They limit the time a pedestrian is in the roadway and provide a visual cue to motorists to slow down.

- **O10 - Install edge-line striping throughout the corridor to differentiate the parking lane from the driving lane.** This striping visually narrows the roadway for motorists, which assists with lowering speeds. It also clearly delineates the parking lane from the driving lane, so that when cars are not parked, the roadway doesn’t feel so wide.

- **O11 - Install enhanced pedestrian crossings.** Upgrade existing crosswalks throughout the corridor to continental crosswalks, which provide a stronger cue to motorists, and install mid-block crossings between Hodiamont & Hamilton, and at Blackstone Ave., Burd Ave., Belt Ave. Pedestrian crossings can be further enhanced through signage, flashers, or rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB).

Environmental

- **O12 - Clean up garbage along MLK and address blighted buildings that are beyond repair.** These two items go hand in hand since there seems to be an increased presence of garbage around many of the blighted buildings. Efforts should be made to demolish buildings that are too far gone to be rehabilitated and clean up the surrounding garbage.

- **O13 - Plant trees.** The MLK corridor has very few trees. This corridor is heavily walked and a major transit corridor. Trees provide much-needed shade in the summer heat, reinforce a safe pedestrian zone, and, when properly installed, their root systems absorb a large amount of storm water runoff. They also can lower energy costs and make the street more attractive. Species selection, tree well conditions (1000—1500 cubic feet of viable soil), maintenance, and coordination with the corridor’s signage are key considerations for a successful street tree program along the corridor.
- **O14 - Improve safety & security.** An overwhelming issue we heard from many residents and business owners was regarding safety and security - real and perceived - and that crime is a problem in the area, particularly prostitution and illegal drug sales. Security cameras are being installed this summer, which should help, but other strategies should be pursued by the City of St. Louis and the neighborhood organizations surrounding the MLK corridor. Strategies might include additional police presence and law enforcement, private security that could be provided through a CID, neighborhood watch programs, and police substations or safety call boxes.

- **O15 - Get the street lights on along MLK.** In the near term, some of the street lighting was not working along MLK. This should be addressed as quickly as possible, as adequate lighting plays a major part in how safe an area feels. There are duplicate lights — both very tall pedestrian lighting and auto-oriented cobra-head lighting — in much of the corridor. In areas, cobra-head lighting was not removed when the pedestrian lighting was recently installed, and during this study effort much of the pedestrian lighting was not working. The pedestrian lights, if properly maintained, offer sufficient, if not greater lighting along the corridor. Removing the cobra-head fixtures and poles is recommended along MLK.

- **O16 - Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) when redeveloping properties within the corridor to properly address and improve storm water management.** These can include things such as amended soils, which MSD has suggested might be best in this particular area, rain gardens, additional street trees, and preserved open space.

- **O17 - Perform an engineering assessment of at-risk buildings in the corridor.** Engage a structural engineer/architect to perform an engineering assessment on the buildings in poor condition in the corridor. This assessment should include prioritizing buildings that are owned by LRA or are of high architectural value. The end product will include feasibility, scope, and budget for stabilizing deteriorating buildings. Refer to Figure 16.1.
Wellston Loop
VISION: Revitalize Wellston Loop as an important and productive public space with activity that extends into the surrounding neighborhoods. Stabilize and begin the upgrade of the immediate Wellston Loop area, from Hodiamont to Kienlen and some adjacent sites. This is the area of greatest activity, but also causes the greatest level of insecurity.

- **WL1** - Ensure the Wellston Loop Station building is stabilized in Fall 2016 with a minimum $260,000 grant from CDBG, priming it for future restoration to its former glory. Parlay this effort into redevelopment plans for the site (WL2).
- **WL2** - Seek investors or private philanthropic funding to fully restore the Wellston Loop Building and site. This restoration could be the catalyst that starts other redevelopments in this area including the surrounding Wellston Station Plaza and Katz Lawn and Marketplace. The size and economics of the Wellston Loop building may not lend itself to an investor approach, but a non-profit solution could work well. The occupant / use of the building should embrace its history as an iconic hub for the community.
- **WL3** - Create a pedestrian-oriented plaza along the former Hodiamont streetcar right-of-way. This plaza would connect residential development south of Wells to MLK and could acknowledge local history with pavement patterns that express the route of the removed streetcar tracks and overhead suspended lighting.
- **WL4** - Implement urban agriculture. There are several parcels in the Wellston Loop segment where urban farms or gardens could be feasible to make short-term productive use of vacant land.
- **WL5** - Convert the parking lot at Hamilton and Theodosia into a hardscape paved children’s park. This could include a playground, skate park, tricycle track, chalk area, and other fun and creative spaces. The property is apparently owned by the City Treasurer’s Office.

- **WL6** - Implement the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Park concept, as envisioned by Beloved Streets of America. Long term maintenance program and

- **WL7, WL8, and WL9** - Stabilize historic structures and facades where feasible and possible. Suggested buildings include the Kresge Building, King’s Food Market, and 5901 Dr. MLK Jr. Drive.

- **WL10** - Demolish buildings that cannot be saved.

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**Goodfellow West**

- **GW1** - Realign the intersection at Hamilton. This realignment will eliminate the current awkward and hazardous offset intersection. See Figures 19.1 and 32.1. The project will provide a small green space and a more generous and safer pedestrian crossing. In addition, signals should be upgraded and pedestrian crossings enhanced with bump-outs and continental crosswalks. This realignment includes demolishing the badly deteriorated building at 5895 Dr. MLK Jr. Drive for green space or future development.

- **GW2** - Upgrade the intersection at Goodfellow. This intersection should be upgraded to include bump-outs and continental crosswalks. Signals should be upgraded to improve timing and detection, and a leading pedestrian interval could be used to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and turning vehicles.

- **GW3** - Encourage eventual residential infill development to follow the Blackstone Ellipse Neighborhood development (discussed in the Goodfellow East segment) of the vacant properties (approx. 27 lots) along Theodosia between Hamilton and Goodfellow.
Goodfellow East

VISION: Bring new people to the neighborhood and honor those who have stayed and invested with a distinctive new residential community that builds on the strengths of existing homes.

- **GE1** - Extend Blackstone Avenue north of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. and break up the long block between Goodfellow and Clara. See Blackstone Parkway in Figure 33.1. Create a new enhanced pedestrian crossing at MLK Blvd.

- **GE2** - Develop the Blackstone Ellipse Neighborhood as “Phase 2” of the Arlington Grove Development. Quality affordable housing is needed in the community, but it is important to support the existing residents who have been living in and maintaining their homes in the community as well. This new neighborhood concept would extend west from the existing, successful Arlington Grove Phase I development and infill approximately 50 vacant lots that are currently owned by LRA and are within the Arlington Grove Phase II Development Area. The Blackstone Ellipse project should also provide support for the existing homeowners in the area to keep and improve their properties. A more detailed description of this new neighborhood can be found in the Land Use and Development White Paper. SLDC expressed interest in issuing a development RFP for this site using tax abatement.

- **GE3** - Improve the link between Cardinals Care Field and its adjacent playground to Dr. MLK Jr. Drive. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. The first would be straightening the offset intersection at Clara to provide an enhanced pedestrian crossing with a path leading to the playground and ball field. Another solution, described further in the Land Use and Development White Paper in Appendix D, would require a cooperative project with Murray’s Auto Body to expand the existing playground to the west for the length of the ball field.

- **GE4, GE5, and GE6** - Stabilize buildings and preserve facades. Key locations to begin improvements in this segment include the following properties. A complete list of buildings can be found in the Land Use and Development White Paper found in Appendix D.
  1. The Kinsey Building (5857-5865 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.) is a two-story row house configuration with individual entries and the Cann Building (5867-5877 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.) provides apartments over storefronts. These two buildings are flanked to the east by relatively sound businesses and their re-occupation could help anchor this block. Their rehabilitation could include adding garages off the alley and enclosed individual courtyards for each unit to create a product that may be more marketable.
  2. 5706 and 5716 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. These two buildings are among the most significant building facades and are expressions of the Arts and Crafts movement. Both are LRA-owned and in desperate need of stabilization.
  3. The Althaus Building (5801 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.) and the Schneider-Becker Building (1485-1493 Goodfellow Blvd.). Both buildings are important to defining the intersection and should be stabilized and protected from further deterioration while waiting for eventual reuse.
**GE7 - Connect the MLK Corridor with Ruth Porter Mall.**

Currently, the Ruth Porter Mall is the closest extension of the St. Vincent Greenway to the MLK corridor. The study team recommends connecting the proposed Blackstone Ellipse neighborhood to Ruth Porter Mall by designating Blackstone Ave. south of MLK to Etzel as a quiet street. Quiet streets have low traffic volumes (under 2,000 vehicles per day), minimal heavy vehicles, and low traffic speeds (20 mph or less). These streets provide comfortable, attractive, and safe conditions for all types of cyclists, including children, without the use of special bike lanes or other facilities. These streets often occur in residential areas. Traffic calming measures can be used to support and maintain low traffic volumes and speeds on these streets. This designation would provide a valuable enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connection for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods to access Forest Park, the Delmar Loop, Washington University, and Cortex. It also provides connections to the Loop Trolley and MetroLink stations.

**Central**

**VISION:** Continue neighborhood investments and institutional growth, taking advantage of the market created by people traveling to major neighborhood destinations and improving the experience of those people when they visit.

- **C1 - Realign the intersection at Clara.** This awkward, offset intersection experiences heavy pedestrian traffic due to its location near the Cardinals Care baseball field and the Crown Convenience Store, which are both located on the south side of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. Realigning this intersection will improve pedestrian safety and alleviate driver confusion.

- **C2 - Consolidate the multiple stop signs between Clara and Semple.** The study team observed many drivers running stop signs in this area likely due to the high number of them and their erratic and unexpected locations. This creates a challenging environment for pedestrians trying to cross MLK Drive.

- **C3 - Close the south Burd Avenue approach.** Burd is another offset intersection that adds confusion to the traffic control inconsistencies and makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross MLK Drive. Once Burd is closed, Friendly Temple’s parking lot can be accessed from Wells. No parking spaces would be lost.

  *(NOTE: Consolidating the multiple stop signs and closing South Burd will be most effective if done together and will need to be coordinated with a circulation plan for Friendly Temple.)*
• **C4 - Install center median with pedestrian refuge islands and mid-block crossings.** The area between Clara and Semple has been the location of the most recent developments along the corridor and, as such an important anchor, needs to function well as a pedestrian-friendly environment, while still moving motorists safely and efficiently. Installing center medians would provide additional safety for pedestrians while slowing vehicle traffic and could also include landscaping further enhancing the appearance of the corridor.

![Figure 35.1 - Multiple Improvements (C1-C4) on MLK between Clara and Semple](image)

• **C5 - Demolish the fire-destroyed house where Stewart Place dead ends south of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.** This building is a safety hazard because of its key location fronting Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. and because it is an informal gathering place for area residents.

• **C6 - Encourage Friendly Temple to take advantage of development opportunities on its various properties, particularly the large site on the north side of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. at Arlington Avenue and the parking lots on the south side of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr.** Both sites offer ideal locations for neighborhood retail/commercial infill development. The study team would encourage the church to pursue these development opportunities and develop these sites in an urban format that fits with the walkable character of the rest of the MLK corridor.

• **C7 - Encourage Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church to improve parking and traffic flow for Sunday crowds.** The parking lots north of Friendly Temple are poorly oriented and underutilized. Employing retail parking strategies where parking aisles lead toward the building’s entrance along with additional landscaping and lighting could encourage churchgoers who currently park along Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. To use these north lots. In addition, churchgoers should be encouraged to use back-and side-streets to access the north parking lots, removing additional traffic from MLK and improving both vehicle flow and pedestrian safety.

![Figure 35.2 - Proposed Friendly Temple Sunday Service Circulation Plan](image)
East Block

VISION: Create a strong interface between Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. and emerging trends to the east, including the future NGA project, Grand Avenue revitalization and Downtown St. Louis growth.

- **EB1 - Improve the Union intersection.** There is excess pavement at this intersection due to a road diet being implemented on Union south of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. Reconfiguring this intersection could make pedestrian crossing safer by using bump-outs, enhanced crosswalks and leading pedestrian intervals. Improvements should also be made to signal timing and detection.

- **EB2 - Attract new commercial development at the Union/MLK intersection.** The two vacant properties north and south of Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. just west of Union are prime sites for auto-oriented redevelopment. While the lot on the north side currently serves as informal parking for churchgoers of Williams Temple on Sunday, a more formalized parking lot with a fence and landscaping would better preserve an important corner.

- **EB3 - Add Streetscape treatments and special identification of the business cluster at the Arlington Avenue intersection.** Placing a commercial front on a potential office building on the Friendly Temple development site and focused commercial storefront rehabilitation at this intersection could help reinforce modest public realm enhancements.

*Figure 36.1 - Union Intersection at Williams Temple—Enhanced Parking, Crossings, and Access Control

*Figure 36.2 - Typical Streetscape and Sidewalk Treatments*
Priority Efforts

To evaluate and prioritize the various recommendations across the entire study area, the crude ranking system, shown in Figure 38.1, can help illustrate some priorities, though it cannot take into account all relevant variables. When possible, opportunistically coordinating with other related investments that may pop up can leverage efficiency and cost savings. Private or related developments along the corridor should comply with or (at a minimum) not preclude implementation of the plan over time. Additionally, any of the scores in any of the categories can change with time or circumstance, with resulting changes in “priority”. One evaluative category, “Ease of Implementation”, is not meant to discourage implementing difficult tasks. Rather, it is simply meant to highlight tasks that are relatively simple to accomplish. Progress can be made and momentum can build.

This ranking system is imperfect and meant to be used as a loose guide, not strict rules for implementation.

The tasks are labeled by location (overall project area or segment area) and are loosely scored based on the breadth of their impact, community desire, and ease of implementation.

The last column estimates a target timeline for implementation: short term (1-3 years), mid term (3-7 years), long term (7-15 years). Some tasks may best be combined with private or related developments along the corridor and have an “opportunistic” designation. Some of the short term tasks are foundational and would be helpful, or possibly essential, to completing subsequent tasks. Formalizing a district or management structure falls into this category.

“\textit{You don’t have to move to live in a better neighborhood.}”

Richard Arrington, former Mayor of Birmingham Alabama
### MLK Great Streets
#### Recommendations Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Economic Benefit</th>
<th>Transportation Benefit</th>
<th>Place Identity Benefit</th>
<th>Environmental Benefit</th>
<th>Community Desire</th>
<th>Ease of Implementation</th>
<th>Term (Short, Mid, Long, Opportune)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1st Tier</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>C5</td>
<td>Demolish House at Stewart</td>
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<td>Form Community Organization (SOCO)</td>
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- **O** = Overall project area
- **WL** = Wellston Loop
- **GE** = Goodfellow East
- **GW** = Goodfellow West
- **C** = Central
- **EB** = East Block

**Figure 38.1 - Recommendation Priority Ranking**

Short term = 1-3 years
Mid term = 3-7 years
Long term = 7-15 years
Opportunity - Combine with related investments
• C5 - Demolish house at S.E. corner of Stewart. Coordinate with City’s Building Division to raze the collapsing structure. Property owner appears non-responsive. Prioritize demolition due to safety hazard. Funding may come through City budget. *(duration—3-6 months, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff / Alderman)*

• O15 - Get the street lights on. Work with Ameren (responsible for power to fixtures) and City Streets Department to identify problem and develop resolution. If duplicate systems (old cobra heads and new ornamental fixtures) contribute to the problem, remove cobra head poles/fixtures if eastern segment (without cobra heads) of new lighting is sufficient *(expected cost—$0, duration—6-12 months, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff / Ameren)*

• WL2 - Restore Wellston Station Building. SLDC to seek investors or private philanthropic funding to fully restore the Wellston Loop Building. The size and economics of the Wellston Loop building may not lend itself to an investor approach, but a non-profit solution could work well. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—TBD, responsible party—SLDC/City of St. Louis staff)*

• GE2 - Blackstone Ellipse, Phase 1. St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) to issue development Request for Proposals, using the established tax abatement for the area. Use concept plan to clarify expectations / requirements. Select developer. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—2-5 years, responsible party—SLDC/City of St. Louis staff/Ameren)*

• GE7 - Connect to Ruth Porter Mall. Work with City Streets Department / coordinate with Great Rivers Greenway (GRG) staff for consistent signage and markings. *(expected cost—$5-10k, duration—6-12 months, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff / Alderman)*

• C7 - Friendly Temple traffic flow plan. City staff to coordinate with Friendly Temple and adjacent property owners to finalize and implement access and circulation plan for services and events. *(expected cost—$TBD, duration—3-6 months, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff / Alderman / Friendly Temple)*

• O1 - Maintain current incentives. City staff to continue existing programs. As a formal district is established, monitoring / administration of these programs can be enhanced by district staff *(expected cost—$0, duration—ongoing, responsible party—City of St. Louis business district staff / future district staff)*

• C6 - Friendly Temple development opportunities. Coordinate with Friendly Temple to encourage future development consistent with the plan and walkability goals. *(expected cost—$0, duration—ongoing, responsible party—Alderman / future district staff)*

• O13 - Plant trees and landscaping. Engage landscape architect / urban designer to develop specific plan for overall corridor, including species selection, planting bed design, and maintenance program. Trees to be planted by City Forestry Department. Do not install landscaping before a funded maintenance strategy is in place. Ideally, design and maintenance are responsibilities of a formal local business district *(design budget—$25-50k, design duration—3-6 months, construction cost TBD—STP or TAP $ should be sought as part of a greater streetscaping / crossing improvement plan, responsible party—future district staff / City staff)*

• O14 - Improve safety and security. Residents / businesses can coordinate with Police Department to establish local watch program. Also, a local district can contract supplemental security tailored to the needs of the area. *(expected cost—$TBD, duration—ongoing, responsible party—residents and business owners / future district staff)*

• O16 - Implement Best Management Practices when redeveloping. Coordinate with MSD and property developers to meet or exceed local regulations for stormwater and environmental BMP’s as both private property and public right of way investments are made. *(expected cost—varies, duration—ongoing, responsible party—developers, future district staff)*
• **WL5 - Parking lot Children’s park.** Engage landscape architect / coordinate with City Treasurer’s Office to convert the lot to a shared parking / active hardscape park.  *(scope, schedule, and budget to be determined, responsible party—Alderman / City of St. Louis staff)*

• **C2 - Consolidate stops between Clara and Semple.** Coordinate with City Streets Department and Friendly Temple traffic flow / circulation plan to simplify / remove stop sign locations. Coordinate this with the Friendly Temple traffic flow plan. *(expected cost—$0, duration—1-3 months, responsible party—Alderman / City of St. Louis)*

2nd Tier

• **O12 - Clean up garbage and address blighted buildings.** Ideally, an established local district would contract for litter removal. Otherwise, property owners and business operators will need to address this individually. In addition to those included in the engineering assessment and stabilization efforts, the remaining empty or dilapidated structures should be retained when possible to support corridor renovation efforts. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—ongoing, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff, property owners, and formal district)*

• **WL4 - Implement Urban Agriculture.** Coordinate with vacant property owners, Rise, Gateway Greening, and local institutions to clarify scope, implementation, and management of interim farming on currently underused property. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—3-6 months, responsible party—Alderman / future district staff / City of St. Louis staff)*

• **C4 - Install center medians—Clara to Semple.** Coordinate with City Streets Department and affected property owners. Do not landscape medians without a funded maintenance program in place. *(expected cost—see Transportation white paper, page 21 (appendix D), duration—5-10 years, responsible party—Alderman / City of St. Louis Streets Department)*

• **O7 - Make retail space move-in ready.** Future local district staff and City Neighborhood Business staff will coordinate City, state DED, and Federal programs with funding sources as an organizational tool for property / business owners. *(expected cost—match available resources, duration—2-4 years to establish—then ongoing, responsible party—future local district staff / City of St. Louis/SLDC staff)*

• **O10 - Install edgeline striping.** Delineate parking and travel lanes, City Streets Department staff can do this. *(expected cost—$25-50k, duration—1-2 years, responsible party—Alderman / City of St. Louis staff)*

• **O17 - Engineering assessment of at-risk structures.** Engage a structural engineer / architect. Prioritize buildings owned by LRA or of high architectural value. This work will clarify feasibility, scope, and budget for stabilizing deteriorating buildings. *(expected cost—dependent on scope, duration—1-2 months each, responsible party—Alderman, City of St. Louis staff, SLDC)*

• **GE5 - Stabilize 5706 and 5716 Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. buildings.** Use engineering assessment to determine scope and budgets. Coordinate with LRA / property owner. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—6-18 months, responsible party—SLDC or future local district staff)*

• **C3 - Close segment of Burd.** Coordinate with Friendly Temple to vacate the half block of the street. Coordinate with access management and any property redevelopment plans. *(expected cost—$50k, duration—1-2 years, responsible party—Friendly Temple / City of St. Louis staff)*

• **EB2 - Attract new development at Union.** Coordinate with Williams Temple and other property owners. Encourage any redevelopment site work to be consistent with concepts for improved pedestrianism and site access shown on page 36. *(expected cost—$0, duration—ongoing, responsible party—Alderman and City of St. Louis staff)*
• **O6** - Public markets and community events. Future local district staff to coordinate and market events. Coordinate with property owners and local institutions. *(expected cost—varies, duration—ongoing once district is established, responsible party—local district staff and local institutions)*

• **GE3** - Improve access to Cardinals Care Park. Coordinate with the property owner and City's Streets and Forestry departments. Link should be a natural extension of the Clara intersection realignment / improvement. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—1-2 years, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff)*

• **O3** - Form a business district (CID). SLDC to assist local business to define district boundaries, responsibilities, and corresponding revenue sources. Use state DED procedural / informational resources to establish district. This task is foundational to implementing many other strategies in this plan. *(expected cost—$0, duration—1-3 years, responsible party—local business community / SLDC)*

• **O5** - Attract a quality grocery store. Use market information in this report and track nearby grocer activities. Engage regional and existing local grocers to improve existing or develop new stores. *(expected cost—staff time, duration—1-3 years once CID in place, responsible party—Local district staff/Alderman)*

• **WL1** - Stabilize Wellston Station building. Currently under contract. *(expected cost—$260k, duration—6-12 months, responsible party—SLDC staff)*

• **WL10** - Demolish buildings that cannot be saved. Use the engineering assessment. Only raze buildings presenting imminent public danger. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—3-6 years, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff)*

• **GW2** - Upgrade Goodfellow intersection. Coordinate with City Traffic, Streets, and Forestry departments for signal, striping, and landscaping improvements. *(expected cost—see Transportation white paper, page 19 (appendix D), duration—1-2 years, responsible party—Alderman and City of St. Louis staff)*

• **GW3** - Blackstone Ellipse Phase 2 on Theodosia. Coordinate with SLDC and the development RFP for Phase 1 to develop a development RFP for this phase. Issue this after Phase 1 development rights have been awarded. *(expected cost—staff time, duration—1-2 years, responsible party—SLDC staff / Alderman)*

• **GE1** - Extend Blackstone Avenue. This can be done in conjunction with, or prior to developing the Blackstone Ellipse Phase 1. Two private (apparently vacant) properties and LRA owned property will need to be acquired. Coordinate with City Streets Department and Blackstone Ellipse Phase 1 redevelopment concept. *(expected cost—included in site redevelopment, duration—3-6 years or with Phase 1 redevelopment, responsible party—developer or City of St. Louis staff and Alderman)*

• **GE4** - Stabilize Kinsey and Cann buildings. Use the engineering assessment. Front primary structures appear more stable than small single story sections along rear. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—1-2 years, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff or future local district staff)*

### 3rd Tier

• **EB1** - Improve Union intersection. Coordinate with property owners; City Streets, Traffic, and Forestry departments; and Great Rivers Greenway. *(expected cost—see Transportation white paper, page 22 (appendix D), duration—5-10 years, responsible party—Alderman and City of St. Louis staff)*

• **O8** - Upgrade signals/Connect to network. Coordinate with City Traffic Department *(expected cost—$150-200k to connect, equipment - TBD, duration—3-5 years, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff)*

• **O9** - Add bump-outs at signalized intersections. Coordinate with City Streets, Traffic, and Forestry departments; and affected property owners. See the Transportation White Paper in Appendix D for information on options. *(expected cost of study—$20 or $200k per intersection, duration—3-5 years, responsible party—Alderman, City of St. Louis staff, and future local district staff)*
- **O11 - Install enhanced pedestrian crossings.** Coordinate with City Streets and Traffic departments. *(expected cost—$15-25k each, duration—2-4 years (full implementation), responsible party—Alderman and City of St. Louis staff)*

- **WL6 - Build Legacy Park.** Assist local interest in determining a budget and identifying funding to construct the park. In the meantime, ensure the property is maintained. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—TBD, responsible party—Municipal staff, formal district, Beloved Streets)*

- **C1 - Realign the Clara intersection.** Coordinate with affected property owners and City Streets Department. Engage engineer for design and construction documents. See Transportation White Paper in Appendix D for specific recommendations. *(expected cost—$650k plus land acquisition, duration—3-5 years, responsible party—Alderman and City of St. Louis staff)*

- **WL3 - Pedestrian Plaza along Hodiamont.** Coordinate with property owners. Engage landscape / urban designer for design, construction documents, and maintenance program. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—5-10 years, responsible party—local district)*

- **GW1 - Realign Hamilton intersection.** Coordinate with property owners and City Streets / Traffic departments. *(expected cost—$750k plus right of way acquisition, duration—7-10 years, responsible party—Alderman and City of St. Louis staff)*

- **O4 - Business incubator project.** Work with owner of JC Penney building or other potential spaces. Coordinate with local, state, and federal programs and funding sources. See the Market White Paper in Appendix D for specific information. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—3-5 years, responsible party—future local district staff and SLDC)*

- **WL7 - Stabilize the Kresge Building.** Work with property owner/use engineering assessment to determine scope and cost. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—1-2 years, responsible party—future local district)*

- **O2 - Form a Community Development Corporation (CDC) or create a local coalition to address housing, quality of life and economic development issues in surrounding neighborhoods.** Existing churches and neighborhood groups should collaborate to enhance their community support activities. Refer to strong local examples (Rise, Beyond Housing, etc.) to clarify mission, structure, and role to serve the expanse of neighborhoods flanking the corridor. Will likely need consultation support to establish legal non-profit status and institutional partnerships for functional capacity. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—1-3 years, responsible party—existing local institutions)*

- **EB3 - Streetscape elements at Arlington.** Incorporating trees and site furniture into the expansive sidewalks will require coordination with the City Board of Public Service and property owners. City staff can develop the plan or a landscape architect / urban designer can be engages. City staff can implement the improvements. Do not implement without a funded maintenance program in place. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—3-5 years, responsible party—City of St. Louis staff and property owners)*

- **WL9 - Stabilize 5901 MLK (Beloved Streets building).** Coordinate with property owner. Use engineering assessment to determine scope and budgets. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—1-3 years, responsible party—owner and City of St. Louis staff)*

- **GE6 - Stabilize Althaus and Schneider-Becker buildings.** Use engineering assessment to determine scope and budget. Coordinate with property owner. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—1-3 years, responsible party—owners and City of St. Louis staff)*

- **WL8 - Stabilize King’s Market Building.** Use engineering assessment to determine scope and budget. Coordinate with property owner. *(expected cost—TBD, duration—1-3 years, responsible party—owners and City of St. Louis staff)*
Potential Funding Sources

The resources to advance and implement the various strategies in this report will come from a variety of sources. There is no single pot of money to make all of these things happen.

City of St. Louis leaders and staff should examine these potential tools and determine the viability of each in helping to provide additional funds for Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. improvements in the future. In addition to the funding categories identified below, the City of St. Louis may explore a variety of funding sources at the federal or state level in order to provide resources to complete various improvements along Dr. MLK Jr. Dr. over time. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) provides a variety of funding for streetscape and transportation projects through the resources of East West Gateway Council of Governments. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) are other likely sources of funding for corridor improvements. The potential to secure funding through these resources is dependent on a variety of factors, including the pool of available money, and the funding formulas used to rank applications made by local jurisdictions.

Community Improvement District (CID)

A CID can finance a wide array of public improvements and services that can enhance the district. A CID can be established by a government entity or a non-profit and requires the approval of a petition signed by either the property owners that collectively own at least 50 percent of the assessed value in the proposed district, or a total of more than 50 per capita of all owners of real property within the proposed district. The petition must outline a five year plan that describes the purposes of the proposed district, the services it will provide, the improvements it will make and an estimate of the costs of the project. Once the petition is filed, the governing body of the particular municipality in question must hold a public hearing and approve the creation of the proposed district by ordinance.

In contrast to a Neighborhood Improvement District, a CID is a separate legal entity, and operates distinct and apart from the municipality that creates the district. The CID may finance improvements through the imposition of 1) special assessments for those improvements that specifically benefit the properties within the district, 2) property taxes, or 3) a sales tax up to a maximum of one percent. A CID may finance the costs of a project through the charging of fees, rents, and charges for district property or services, or grants, gifts, and donations. A CID may also issue bonds, notes, and other obligations in order to fund improvements.

A CID may finance the following types of improvements within its boundaries:

- Pedestrian or shopping malls and plazas
- Parks, lawns, trees, and any other landscape improvements
- Convention centers, arenas, aquariums, avianaries and meeting facilities
- Sidewalks, streets, alleys, bridges, ramps, tunnels, overpasses and underpasses, traffic signs and signals, utilities, drainage, water, storm and sewer systems and other site improvements
- Streetscape, lighting, benches or other seating furniture, trash receptacles, marquees, awnings, canopies, walls and barriers
- Telephone and information booths, bus stop and other shelters, rest rooms and kiosks
- Music, news and child care facilities
- Lakes, dams and waterways
- Paintings, murals, display cases, sculptures and fountains
- Parking lots, garages or other facilities
A CID may also provide a variety of public services, including the following:

- With the municipality’s consent, prohibiting or restricting vehicular and pedestrian traffic and vendors on streets
- Operating or contracting for the provision of music, news, child-care or parking facilities, and buses, minibuses or other modes of transportation
- Leasing space for sidewalk café tables and chairs
- Providing or contracting for the provision of security personnel, equipment or facilities for the protection of property and persons
- Promoting business activity, development and retention
- Providing or contracting for cleaning, maintenance and other services to public and private property and persons
- Promoting tourism, recreational or cultural activities or special events
- Providing refuse collection and disposal services
- Contracting for or conducting economic, planning, marketing or other studies

**Neighborhood Improvement District (NID)**

A Neighborhood Improvement District is a geographically bounded area within which certain public improvements are financed by a city through the issuance of notes or bonds, which are in turn repaid by levying assessments against the properties within a NID. NIDs offer distinct advantages in executing economic development for a city and a particular district.

Because the city in question issues general obligation bonds, the public improvements associated with the NID can be financed at lower interest rates. Second, a NID can be established and an assessment imposed without a city-wide election. Third, a city may group two or more NID projects together into one bond issue in order to further reduce financing and project costs. Finally, the NID Act in Missouri allows for a fairly broad range of public improvements to be financed without a requirement that the area be considered to be “blighted” in order to be included in a NID designation.

Under the Missouri NID Act, eligible improvements and costs may include streets, lighting, parks and recreational facilities, sidewalks, utility service connections, sewer and storm water systems, flood control works, off-street parking structures, bridges, overpasses, tunnels, and “any other public facilities or improvements deemed necessary by the governing body of the city or county”. The NID Act also allows for certain incidental costs to be financed, such as land acquisition and engineering, legal, and financing fees and costs.

The act also carries provisions for maintenance of the public improvements during the term of the bonds or notes pertaining to the improvements. NIDs can be established by either 1) a petition of at least two-thirds of the owners of record of all of the real property located within the proposed NID district, or 2) by the City submitting a question to all qualified voters residing within the proposed NID at a general or special election called for the purpose of approving bonds associated with the NID.

NIDs carry some distinct advantages compared to TIF in Missouri. Whereas TIF is financed by limited obligation bonds, the general obligation bonds issued as part of NID deals allow for lower interest rates. Whereas TIF requires a blight designation for the affected district or area, NIDs do not carry such requirements. Another distinction between NID and TIF is that, in the case of TIF, property owners or developers do not pay anything initially for the publicly financed improvements but are ultimately responsible to the bondholders if the tax revenue generated by the improvements is insufficient to make the payments. In contrast, under NID, property owners pay up-front for public improvements through assessments over and above any property or sales taxes they already pay, but the municipality is ultimately responsible to the bondholders if property owners are unable to make the necessary payments.
Enhanced Enterprise Zones (EEZs)

The Enhanced Enterprise Zone Tax Benefit Program, sponsored by the Missouri Department of Economic Development, provides various tax credits to new or expanding businesses in a Missouri Enhanced Enterprise Zone. These zones are specific geographic areas designated by local governments that must be certified by the Department of Economic Development. The program offers state tax credits, accompanied by local real property tax abatements, to eligible businesses in the EEZ. To receive the tax credits, a business facility must provide for two new employees and $100,000 in new investments (in the case of a new or expanded business facility), or two new employees and $1 million in new investment (in the case of a replacement business facility). Companies receiving EEZ tax credits must provide health insurance to all full time employees in Missouri in order to qualify for the program. Eligible investment expenditures include the original cost of machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, land and buildings, and or eight times the annual rental rate paid for these items. Ineligible businesses for the EEZ program include gambling establishments, retail trade entities, educational services entities, religious organizations, public administration entities (governments), and food and drinking places.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF allows the use of a portion of local property and sales taxes to assist in the funding of redevelopment of certain designated areas in a community. Areas identified for TIF must be deemed to be part of a “blighted,” “conservation” or an “economic development” area. TIF essentially uses the additional sales tax revenue that is generated above and beyond the current level of revenue, as a result of a redevelopment, in order to fund a variety of project costs. Eligible project cost categories include professional services, land acquisition, rehabilitation of buildings, new infrastructure, and relocation of existing businesses or residents. Consideration should be given to the net benefit within a broad area so as not to use public subsidy with no net regional gain.

Chapter 353 Tax Abatement

The State of Missouri offers a Chapter 353 Tax Abatement as an incentive that can be used by cities to encourage the redevelopment of blighted areas by providing real property tax abatements. Under this program, an “Urban Redevelopment Corporation” must be organized pursuant to the Urban Redevelopment Corporations Law in the state of Missouri and the area designated for tax abatements must be deemed a “blighted area” under state law.

Under the program, tax abatements are available for up to 25 years. During the first 10 years, the property is not subject to real property taxes except in the amount of real property taxes assessed on the land, exclusive of improvements. During the next 15 years, the real property may be assessed up to 50 percent of its true value. Payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) may be imposed on the Urban Redevelopment Corporation by contract with the city. PILOTs are paid on an annual basis to replace all or part of the real estate taxes that are abated.

In areas that are challenged by economic decline or blight, the Chapter 353 provisions provide an additional tool for local governments to provide incentives for economic redevelopment.
**Sales Tax Reimbursement Agreements**

The State of Missouri allows Sales Tax Reimbursement agreements as a funding mechanism to fund infrastructure associated with new developments. Under these agreements, municipalities have the ability to annually appropriate the increase in sales taxes created by new private capital investment to offset a portion of project investment costs. Under this type of agreement, a portion of City sales taxes captured from the increased sales generated by the project would be reimbursed to the developer or company for eligible expenses.

This provision, then, helps to provide an incentive for redevelopment or new development along corridors such as Dr. MLK Jr. Drive. The state has laid out a number of criteria that must be followed or satisfied in order to allow for a Sales Tax Reimbursement Agreement.

- The applicant must demonstrate that the project would prevent a significant loss in existing sales tax revenue or make a significant contribution to the overall health and wellbeing of the local economy.
- The project must show a clear demonstration of the public purpose and the economic benefit provided through the agreement and how the agreement would further the city’s economic development goals.
- The application must show that the project would not occur “but for” the incentives offered. The incentive should make a difference in determining the decision of the particular business to expand or remain in the city and it must be proven that this would not have otherwise occurred without the availability of the sales tax reimbursement.
- The firm that would benefit from the sales tax reimbursement must show its financial stability and capacity to complete the project.
- The application must ensure that the city or any other taxing jurisdiction affected by the incentive is not receiving less total sales tax revenue from the property than was received prior to the granting of the sales tax reimbursement provision.
- The sales tax reimbursement is generally not allowed to extend for greater than ten years.

**Additional Funding Sources for Greenways**

In addition to the normal tools in Missouri such as NIDs, CID, TDD, and TIF, the City of St. Louis may wish to consider additional funding strategies identified to provide for greenway enhancements. These additional strategies may include but not be limited to the following:

- **Bond Referendums for Greenways**—Communities across the nation have successfully placed on local ballots propositions to support greenway development, ranging from small towns to larger cities. For example, a few years ago residents in Casper, Wyoming passed a greenway bond referendum to provide for the first three miles of a local greenway.

- **Greenway Trust Fund**—Many communities around the country have created trust funds for land acquisition and facility development. A trust fund may help in acquiring parcels that would otherwise be lost if not acquired by private sector initiative.

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** - The US Department of Housing and Urban Development provides states with annual direct grants that are then awarded to local communities in part for park and greenway projects.