

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The I-270/Highway 367 Corridor Study is an analysis of two major highway corridors in northeast St. Louis County. County Councilman Michael O'Mara requested the study as a result of several factors: 1) citizen concerns of proposed rezonings; 2) the planned reconstruction of Highway 367 north of I-270 and its anticipated effect on surrounding properties; 3) the presence of large tracts of undeveloped land that offer development potential; 4) several retail centers are vacant and underutilized; and 5) the Confluence Greenway initiative is developing new open space and tourism opportunities along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers.

The study was led by the St. Louis County Department of Planning with assistance from the St. Louis County Economic Council. An Advisory Committee made up of individuals representing municipalities, community groups, residents and institutions helped guide the work of St. Louis County staff.

Development History

Residential development in the study corridors began in the 1950s, expanding northward in the 1960s and 1970s. Commercial development followed residential growth, with a majority of retail and business projects being completed from the 1960s to the 1980s. More recent commercial growth has occurred in the West Florissant Avenue/I-270 area. Tax increment financing (TIF) was used to promote retail centers including Clocktower Place, North County Festival, and the Crossings at Halls Ferry. The transition of certain commercial properties from their original uses to alternatives uses, such as churches, and increases in retail vacancies are trends of concern.

Transportation Plans

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) will rebuild Highway 367 north of I-270 beginning in 2005. The new highway will have grade separated intersections at Dunn, Redman, Parker and New Jamestown Roads. The existing outer roads, Lusher Road and Benham Road, will become one-way north and one-way south respectively. Bridge replacements on Highway 367 at Chambers Road, Coldwater Creek and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks are already in progress. The entire project is scheduled to be complete in 2008. St. Louis County is expanding Bellefontaine Road to include a center turn lane, curbs, gutters and sidewalks. This project is anticipated to be complete in Fall 2004.

Other Area Plans

A number of plans are already in place in portions of the I-270 and Highway 367 corridors. The City of Bellefontaine Neighbors Comprehensive Plan calls for commercial development at the southwest corner of I-270 and Highway 367. The Ferguson Vision 2015 Plan recommends expansion of existing business areas along Pershall Road and West Florissant Avenue. The Confluence Greenway project has created a concept plan for a greenbelt with bicycle and pedestrian trails and a nature interpretive center along the Mississippi River. The Spanish Lake Community Area Study and the Old Jamestown Area Community Study both call for improving the appearance of these two northeastern communities, focusing on high-quality development to create jobs and services for area residents.

Market Analysis

Development Strategies, Inc., a St. Louis-based real estate consulting firm, was hired by St. Louis County to perform a market analysis of the I-270 and Highway 367 corridors. Development Strategies recommended a concerted action plan to bring about redevelopment and reinvestment in those portions of the study area that are obsolete, dysfunctional and in poor condition. Target areas included the southwest quadrant of I-270 and Highway 367, the former GEM store on Dunn Road, the large collection of commercial uses on Dunn Road between Old and New Halls Ferry Roads, and the mostly vacant land near Kenran Industrial Drive south of I-270 off Lilac Avenue.

General Policy Recommendations

Issues of general concern for the entire study area include beautification, code enforcement, community identity and watershed management. Reinstitution of signage as part of an “Adopt a Road” program for St. Louis County arterial streets is suggested, as well as continuing MoDOT’s citizen involvement in the aesthetic improvements for Highway 367. Code enforcement is recommended for key problem sites within the corridors: the vacant GEM store and the vacant Target store (both on Dunn Road), Afshari Centers VIII and XXV, the Lewis & Clark tower and the vacant National grocery store (both on Highway 367), and the vacant Builders Square store on West Florissant Avenue in Ferguson.

The rich history of the area, including its connection to the Lewis & Clark expedition, should be recognized in naming future developments and redevelopment projects. Efforts to promote tourism based on the historical and natural features of the study area will be aided by efforts of the Confluence Greenway project and the Metropolitan Park and Recreation District. Ensuring that new development and redevelopment efforts do not harm local watersheds is another goal of the study. A cooperative effort among many organizations including the Metropolitan Park and Recreation District, RegionWise and StreamTeach, Inc. is in progress to preserve and enhance the Watkins Creek watershed that lies within the study area.

Guidelines for Subareas

The I-270/Highway 367 Corridor Study area has been divided into six subareas for the purpose of describing land use and policy recommendations.

Subarea 1 – I-270/Lilac Avenue

Future development should contribute to the improvement and signalization of the I-270/Lilac Avenue intersection; promote open space along Watkins Creek; assemble industrially-zoned properties to allow for a unified commercial or residential redevelopment east of Lilac Avenue; maintain green space on both sides of I-270 at the entrance to Missouri.

Subarea 2 – I-270/Highway 367

Pursue development of a business park at the southwest corner of I-270 and Highway 367; maintain existing State of Missouri uses southeast of I-270 and Highway 367; accommodate the future expansion needs of Christian Hospital Northeast; demolish and redevelop the GEM store site for residential or educational use.

Subarea 3 – I-270/West Florissant Avenue/Old Halls Ferry Road

Redevelop Afshari Center VIII using TIF or an appropriate economic incentive; rehabilitate and expand businesses along Pershall Road; assemble parcels along Dunn Road between Old and New Halls Ferry Roads for redevelopment of obsolete and vacant properties.

Subarea 4 – North Highway 367

Encourage quality commercial development at the intersection of Highway 367 and Highway 67 (Lindbergh Boulevard); study road and trail connections between Fort Bellefontaine West County Park and Fort Bellefontaine County Park (formerly Coldwater Creek Park) at Missouri Hills; open these publicly-owned lands for recreational use.

Subarea 5 – Highway 367/ Parker Road/Redman Road

Improve the condition of the Paddock Forest and Mayfair Plaza shopping centers with the possible use of economic incentives (TIF, Transportation Development District); focus on neighborhood and highway service uses for redevelopment at Redman Road and Highway 367; utilize St. Louis County's Planned Commercial District zoning to control uses and coordinate development.

Subarea 6 – South Highway 367

Promote redevelopment of retail centers on the western side of Highway 367 at Chambers Road using economic incentives; encourage Bellefontaine Neighbors and Moline Acres to carefully review new developments for architecture, aesthetics and landscaping; seek a grocery store tenant for the shopping center north of Chambers Road on the east side of Highway 367.