

# 1.0 Purpose

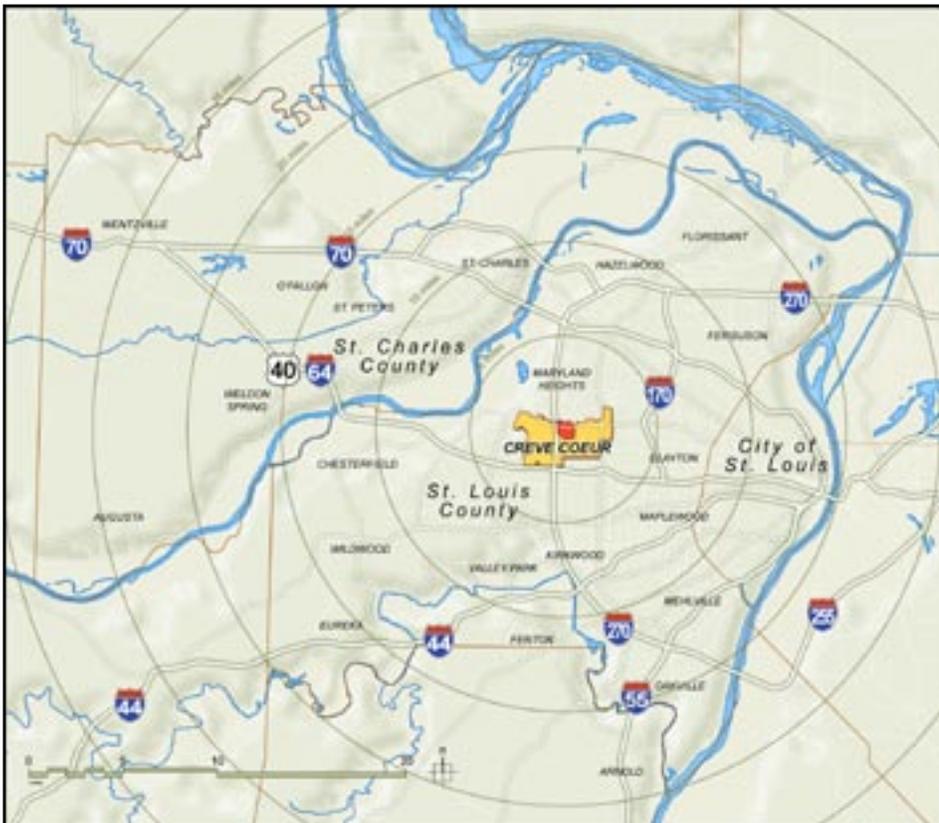
At the crossroads of Olive Boulevard and Interstate-270, the Central Business District of Creve Coeur, Missouri, is located in the heart of St. Louis County. It represents a great opportunity to establish a new image for the city in one of the most affluent, central and vibrant locations in the region.

In April 2002, the City of Creve Coeur adopted the Comprehensive Plan. Together, with the Pedestrian Plan and Design

Guidelines, these plans set a standard for protecting community assets and strengthening community character. Among the numerous recommendations made in the Comprehensive Plan are several for the Central Business District. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan recommends the creation of a downtown (or town center) in the vicinity of the Olive-New Ballas intersection.

*“Creve Coeur does not have a downtown. There is no focal point to the community, and it therefore lacks a critical element of community identity. Having a pedestrian-friendly area where businesses, residents, government uses, and parks, coincided in a mixed-use environment would be a source of pride and identity to Creve Coeur.”*

— 2002 Creve Coeur Comprehensive Plan



**Central Location.** Creve Coeur is at the center of St. Louis County and easily accessible by I-270.

*“Establish a city center, with high-rise, multiple-use buildings containing a mixture of commercial, office, and residential uses; service commercial establishments such as cinemas, restaurants and lounges; and a community center with a library and meeting rooms and a community open space complex... By providing a city center, Creve Coeur will develop a sense of identity as well as establish a sound fiscal base for the community.”*

— 1969 Creve Coeur Comprehensive Plan,  
Principal Recommendations

In its efforts to implement the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission has undertaken this process to develop a plan for the focus area of the Central Business District. Although the Comprehensive Plan states that a “master plan or redevelopment plan” should be developed for the area (Comp. Plan, p. 81), the Planning and Zoning Commission chose to develop a land use plan in accordance with Chapter 89 of Missouri’s Revised Statutes. The decision to form a redevelopment area or to develop a redevelopment plan rests with City Council.

The Central Business District (CBD) Land Use Plan should not be construed as a redevelopment or a physical plan. The plan does not imply tacit support for the use of eminent domain or specific redevelopment authority.

As shown in the Recommendations section (Goal #1, Objective A) of this plan, the plan proposes the formation of a “grid” street system. While this measure remains a key component of the plan and the optimal scenario for traffic circulation, the plan does not support the taking of property as a way to accomplish the grid street system, particularly when city residents or businesses would be displaced.

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## **1.1 Basis for the Land Use Plan**

Over the last forty years, the Central Business District has evolved from a residential setting to an active commercial node along Interstate 270. In 1969, before I-270 was constructed, the city had the foresight to consider the creation of a downtown near Olive Boulevard and New Ballas Road. According to the 1969 Comprehensive Plan, one of the key recommendations was to “establish a city center, with high-rise, multiple-use buildings containing a mixture of commercial, office

and residential uses; service commercial establishments such as cinemas, restaurants and lounges; and a community center with a library and meeting rooms, as well as a community open space complex” (’69 Plan, p. XIV).

Following the recommendations of the ’69 Plan, parts of the CBD area were redeveloped from single family homes and low-intensity commercial buildings to large office developments, including the Creve Coeur Corporate Center and the CityPlace campus. The office developments drew more traffic and allowed the CBD area to mature into one of the largest office markets in the region with a daytime population of over 40,000 office workers.

In 1999, city leaders chose to revisit the city’s comprehensive plan and further develop planning considerations for the CBD area. By this time, planning concepts, such as “new urbanism,” had taken root in the planning ideology of suburban cities across the country. New Urbanism, which revisits urban themes established a century ago, identifies the repercussions that single-use office developments and auto-oriented retail developments have on traffic systems and the identity of a city. Along these lines, integrated mixed-use developments with an urban form were shown to have merit and solve the problems evident in suburbia as efforts to establish new urban developments across the country proved successful.

These considerations guided the development of the Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2002. According to the plan, “the area south of Olive Boulevard will be the primary center of the community, or town center, and will contain a mixture of public and private uses with an overall design that creates a symbolic focal point for the City of Creve Coeur (Comp. Plan, page 80).

Along with the adoption of the new plan, regulatory tools and guidelines were established to ensure that future development followed the vision established by the plan. These measures include Commercial Design Guidelines, the Pedestrian Plan, and the “build to” setback within the “CB” zoning district.

The commercial design guidelines promote high-quality building design that takes into consideration a building’s relationship between parking areas and the street. The pedestrian plan provides specifications for sidewalks and pedestrian avenues within commercial areas and discusses linkages between buildings, parking, and the street. The “build to” setback in the “CB” district requires buildings to be placed close to the street in order to allow an urban form to be introduced within the CBD area.

The 2002 Plan established a set of goals for the CBD area and called for the city to undertake a separate planning process for the “town center” area. To facilitate the eventual development of a downtown that achieves the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, the CBD Land Use planning process has been conducted to gain input from the community and continually maintain open communication.

It is anticipated that the current trend to redevelop the CBD will continue. The CBD Land Use Plan requires property owners who choose to redevelop to do so in a manner that fulfills CBD goals of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan:

*“The Central Business District will be the downtown for Creve Coeur. It will contain a mixture of retail, office, residential, institutional, public, and civic uses. It will be a place that people can travel to, either by car or by foot, to engage in multiple activities such as living, working, shopping, dining, entertainment, recreation,*

*and conducting civic business. It will be the “place to be” – a place that people gravitate towards and a place for public gatherings and celebration. The Central Business District will have a pedestrian scale and will be linked to the rest of the City as the heart of a citywide network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.”*

—2002 Creve Coeur Comprehensive Plan,  
CBD Vision

The CBD Land Use Plan is not a redevelopment plan; it is a tool for the City of Creve Coeur to ensure that if and when a property is redeveloped, it happens in a way that contributes to building a downtown over time. Additionally, by establishing predictability for the downtown area, it is a protection for existing property owners and residents that ensures that when neighboring properties are redeveloped they will conform to high standards of quality.

As a community-based plan, which was not conducted with the collaboration of prospective developers or investors, the overall goal of the effort was to establish a framework to guide redevelopment of the CBD as a downtown for the City of Creve Coeur.

## 1.2 Planning Process

The Creve Coeur CBD Land Use Plan was prepared and approved pursuant to Chapter 89 (Zoning and Planning) of the Missouri Revised Statutes, with the guidance of the AICP Code of Ethics, and under the direction of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

### Participants

Creve Coeur residents, business owners and property owners actively participated in each phase of the CBD Land Use Plan process. Additionally, personal inter-

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views were conducted with individuals representing the St. Louis business and development community. These individuals were identified as possessing insight into the Creve Coeur market but were not necessarily CBD stakeholders.

The City of Creve Coeur administered the project through the Planning Department. City planners guided the planning process with the Planning & Zoning Commissioners.

A team of four consulting firms collaborated with the city on the CBD Land Use Plan, contributing specific professional expertise as necessary. These firms provided the following services: physical planning and urban design, market research and analysis, traffic engineering, and transportation mobility planning.

### Activities

The planning process was conducted in four phases – Discovery, Ideas, Refinement and Delivery –over a six-month period. Five parallel tracks span these phases and describe the activities and work products that contribute to the final

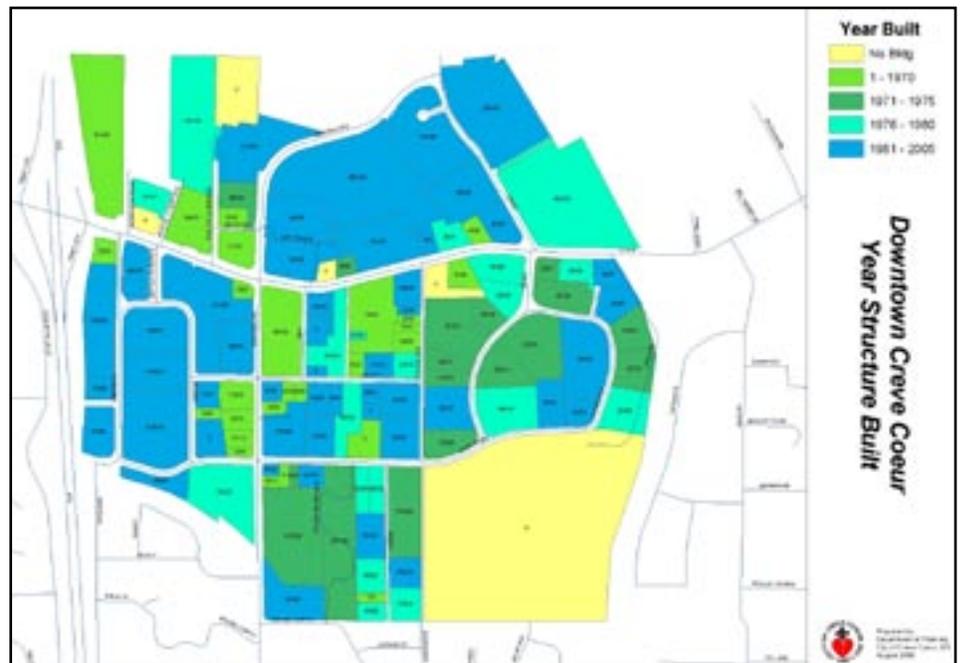
CBD Land Use Plan. The objectives of each track are summarized below.

**Site Inventory and Analysis.** The planning consultants conducted an analysis of the physical attributes of the CBD and its context within the City of Creve Coeur and St. Louis County. The site analysis incorporated infrastructure, development patterns, physical conditions, occupancy, traffic, circulation and access, photo inventory, perception and environmental attributes.

The planning consultants also reviewed a database and maps of CBD property characteristics, which were provided by city planners. The information includes land use, square footage of buildings and properties, the ages of structures, floor area ratio, site coverage, available parking spaces, and the height of structures. The site inventory and analysis is included in the “Surveys and Studies,” on file in the Planning Department.

**Market Analysis.** The planning consultants performed a market analysis to determine the broad potential for development opportunities of various land uses

**Year Built Pattern.** Although many of the structures in the CBD were constructed since 1981, the pattern reveals a number of older (pre-1970) structures south of Olive, between Old Ballas and Decker Lane. Most of the Executive Office Park was constructed in the 1970s.





*Public Open House. Open communication with the residents of Creve Coeur was maintained with numerous open houses and focus groups.*

including residential, office, retail and entertainment opportunities. The market analysis provides a conservative estimate of potential density and mix of uses in the CBD area and was conducted in order to provide the city with an expectation of sustainable development. The market analysis is included in the “Surveys and Studies,” on file in the Planning Department.

**Traffic Analysis.** The planning consultants conducted an analysis of existing traffic conditions in the CBD area in order to determine potential impacts of future development on the street system and to recommend methods of improving traffic flow and circulation and methods to avoid further congestion of the Olive Boulevard corridor. The consultants also provided guidelines and best practices for street operations within a downtown environment. The traffic analysis is included in the “Surveys and Studies,” on file in the Planning Department.

**Public Engagement.** In coordination with city planners, the planning consultants conducted an extensive public engagement process. The process began with the development of the “Public Engagement Approach and Activities” which was created to lay out steps that would be undertaken to notify and involve the community in the development of the plan. The process also provided objectives of each activity.

The public engagement process involved five open house events, five focus group sessions, and two public hearings. As laid out in the public engagement process, property owners, residents, and business owners were notified of the activities through mailings, signs, the “Creve Coeur Newsletter,” the “Creve Coeur Insider” (the business newsletter), the city’s web site, and press releases.

Documents concerning public engagement, including open house presentations, meeting summaries, and correspondence, is included in the “Surveys and Studies,” on file in the Planning Department.

**CBD Design Scenarios.** Upon conclusion of the market and traffic analyses, the planning consultants explored design scenarios associated with the square footage of buildings and uses identified in the market analysis and traffic circulation opportunities (grid street system) supported by the traffic analysis.

The design scenarios follow principles of creating a town center or downtown form without respect to existing development and were developed only as an exercise of understanding the relationship between market, traffic, and design possibilities in the planning area. The design scenarios were included in public presentations and are included in the “Surveys and Studies,” on file in the Planning Department.

**Implementation Strategies.** The planning consultants identified several opportunities for implementation that can be undertaken by the city upon the conclusion of the CBD planning process. This step was undertaken in order to strengthen recommendations within the plan to the extent that is appropriate within a land use plan.

The strategies include a review of tools provided by the state that can be used to finance infrastructure improvements, including Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Community Improvement District (CID), and Transportation Development District (TDD). The potential use of any of the tools rests with the authority of the City

Council and is not specifically proposed in the plan, as demonstrated in the introductory paragraph of the Purpose section.

The strategies also include specific changes to the city’s zoning code that would remove regulatory impediments to creating a town center or downtown development and would add language that would create a regulatory environment that promotes such development. Since the process for amending the city’s zoning ordinance involves the Planning and Zoning Commission, specific changes are recommended in the plan.

The implementation strategies are included in the “Surveys and Studies,” on file in the Planning Department.

**Neighborhood and Business Areas.** The Central Business District is just east of the Olive Boulevard - I-270 Interchange.

