

3.0 Critical Issues

Planning and redevelopment in the CBD will not be a static, one-time event. Development of the proposed Creve Coeur downtown will happen over time and by multiple parties. As development pressures in the CBD 1 continue to escalate, continually changing conditions will pose a variety of opportunities and challenges.

The scarcity of contiguous development parcels and high cost of land assembly virtually ensure that an incremental approach by numerous developers will be necessary for creating a downtown neighborhood. Therefore, it will be important to remain focused on achieving overall goals in spite of ever-changing conditions.

Initially, however, the existing conditions of the CBD can be described by the following critical issues, summarized under four categories: issues from the 2002 Comprehensive Plan and the three issue areas addressed during the CBD Land Use Plan process, physical, economic and traffic. Although there is overlap in several of these issue areas, it is valuable to evaluate them independently. In addition to the critical issues identified for the CBD, a summary of comparable projects identifies a number of precedents – desirable and undesirable – that Creve Coeur can learn from.

3.1 2002 Comprehensive Plan Issues

In the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, six issues were identified through the public engagement and planning process:

- Relief of traffic congestion
- Residential protection
- Creation of a walkable and bikeable community
- Creation of a town center
- Incorporation of parks, trails and greenways, and
- Business creation

Comments from the 2005 public open houses and focus group discussions confirmed that these issues were still valid and constitute the reference point for developing the CBD Land Use Plan.

Relief of Traffic Congestion. Any new development within the CBD area will likely generate more traffic. The town center can mitigate increased traffic and potentially reduce congestion by developing a gridded street pattern, providing transportation mode alternatives, supporting shared uses of parking facilities and encouraging a compact, walkable environment.

Residential Protection. The prospect of creating a new downtown for Creve Coeur is essentially the creation of a new neighborhood. Not only does it add to the residential base of the community but it also enhances property values, neighboring

The development of a town center can have a positive impact on sales tax revenue for the city.

— CBD Land Use Plan Focus Groups

residents and quality of life for existing residents, including Old Ballas Village and the condominiums and apartments along Coeur de Royale Drive and Sarah Lane.

Creation of a Walkable and Bikeable Community. An urban form is inherently one that provides mobility options, accommodating walkers, drivers and riders, but does not compromise the safety and comfort of walking for efficient movement of cars. Bicycles can co-exist with cars when urban streets are designed for appropriate speeds, directions, widths and intersections.

Creation of a Town Center. As the heart of the community, the town center – as defined through the public participation process – will be a neighborhood of its own and will house many of the commercial, service, retail and civic needs of Creve Coeur’s residents. Furthermore, within the town center, there may be a hierarchy of space, function and civic activity.

Incorporation of Parks, Trails and Greenways. Due to the scarcity and high

value of property in CBD, it is not anticipated that developing large areas of public open space will be feasible. However, small parks, with connections to bike and trail facilities should be provided, perhaps in compensation for increased density or height. Similarly, although space is generally not available for greenways, the public realm that includes all streets and sidewalks can be conceived of and developed as green corridors that encourage intensive recreational use.

Business Preservation. The CBD is likely to remain a desirable location for businesses. One challenge for the CBD is to preserve existing businesses as the district redevelops, and rents inevitably increase. Although this plan cannot address tenant issues directly, it is anticipated that redevelopment in CBD will provide more leasable commercial area and, as a neighborhood town center, should offer a wide variety of tenant spaces, including opportunities for restaurants, retailers, and various office establishments.

Public Parking. Creative solutions for parking include small public lots located to the rear or sides of buildings.

[Westin Town Center, Westin, Florida]



3.2 Additional Planning Issues

Through analysis and study of the CBD area, the planning consultants identified other issues pertaining to the potential redevelopment of the CBD area. The issues include challenges associated with physical, economic, and traffic aspects of the CBD area.

Physical Issues. Creve Coeur’s CBD is located at one of the most desirable locations in St. Louis. This high-profile location, at the I-270-Olive Boulevard interchange, should garner strong interest from potential investors, developers and tenants. Olive is the primary east-west corridor through Creve Coeur and bisects the CBD. Most of the development within the CBD is accessed directly off Olive or



New Ballas Road.

CBD Area 1, between Olive, New Ballas and Old Ballas Roads, is the potential location of the proposed Downtown Creve Coeur. Covering approximately 45 acres, it is roughly square and about a five-minute walk from one side to another. Office and retail developments surround the downtown site on each side except for a portion of the south (medium density residential) and the southeast (golf course), indicating minimal potential land use conflicts.

Olive Boulevard generally follows a ridge between gently sloping creek valleys. Although there are patches of very steep (>20%) slopes within the CBD, the downtown area is relatively flat and has some of the least complicated conditions for construction. There is very good visibility from Olive and New Ballas and with the completion of the new I-270 interchange at Olive, Interstate access is exceptional.

Existing land uses in the downtown area are predominantly commercial with retail along Olive and New Ballas. A stable residential development, Old Ballas Village, is south of Studt Road and a new mixed-

use development (Kings Landing) at New Ballas and Old Ballas is under construction. While there are approximately 40 parcels in the area, the owners of condominiums increase the total number of property owners to approximately 100.

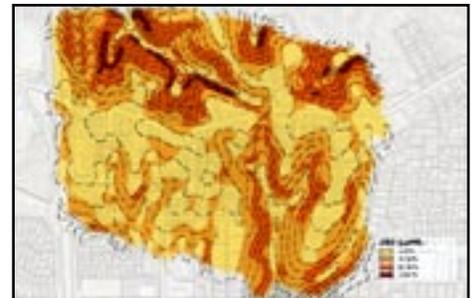
Economic Issues. The market analysis drew conclusions from economic data as well as from interviews conducted with individuals familiar with the local real estate and property development climate. There is strong consensus that Creve Coeur will remain a strong location for major market activities in the years to come. In spite of the sluggish regional office market, Creve Coeur is well positioned to recover.

Its proximity to Missouri Baptist and St. John's Hospitals will continue to make it an attractive hub for doctors' offices and medical labs. Additionally, the recent Battelle Institute study, commissioned by the RCGA designated Creve Coeur as the center of one of four biotechnology industry clusters in the St. Louis region. With proximity to Monsanto, the Nidus Center incubator and the Danforth Plant Science Center, Creve Coeur's downtown area has a strategic advantage over other suburban locations for office and R/D lab

Opportunities and Constraints. A series of analysis diagrams describe the challenges and potential opportunities for redevelopment within the Central Business District.



Circulation Issues



Slope and Topography Issues



Watershed and Landform Issues



Access Issues

uses related to the burgeoning plant and life sciences industry.

Although the retail market in St. Louis County is generally saturated, there appears to be a niche market that could serve the affluent residential and daytime workforce population of Creve Coeur. A mix of

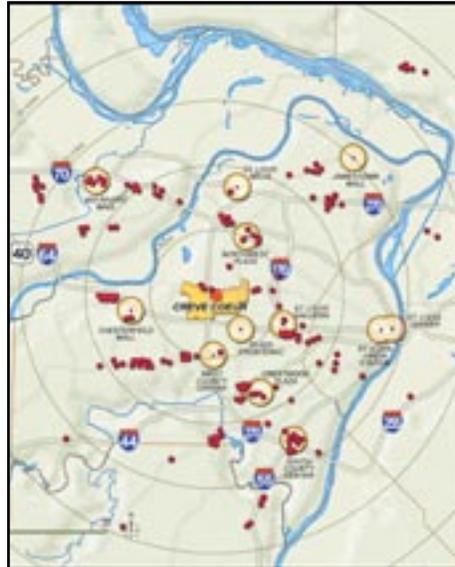
retail and entertainment, an urban setting for example, would provide a market that currently has very little competition in this part of the region.

As the demographic trend of an aging residential base continues, there is expected to be a higher demand for upscale condominium housing and senior housing as existing residents begin to down-size. Clustered in a downtown setting, these residential opportunities are made more attractive by having close proximity to retail, services, restaurants, entertainment and public space. In turn, residential close to these commercial uses contributes to a larger potential consumer base.

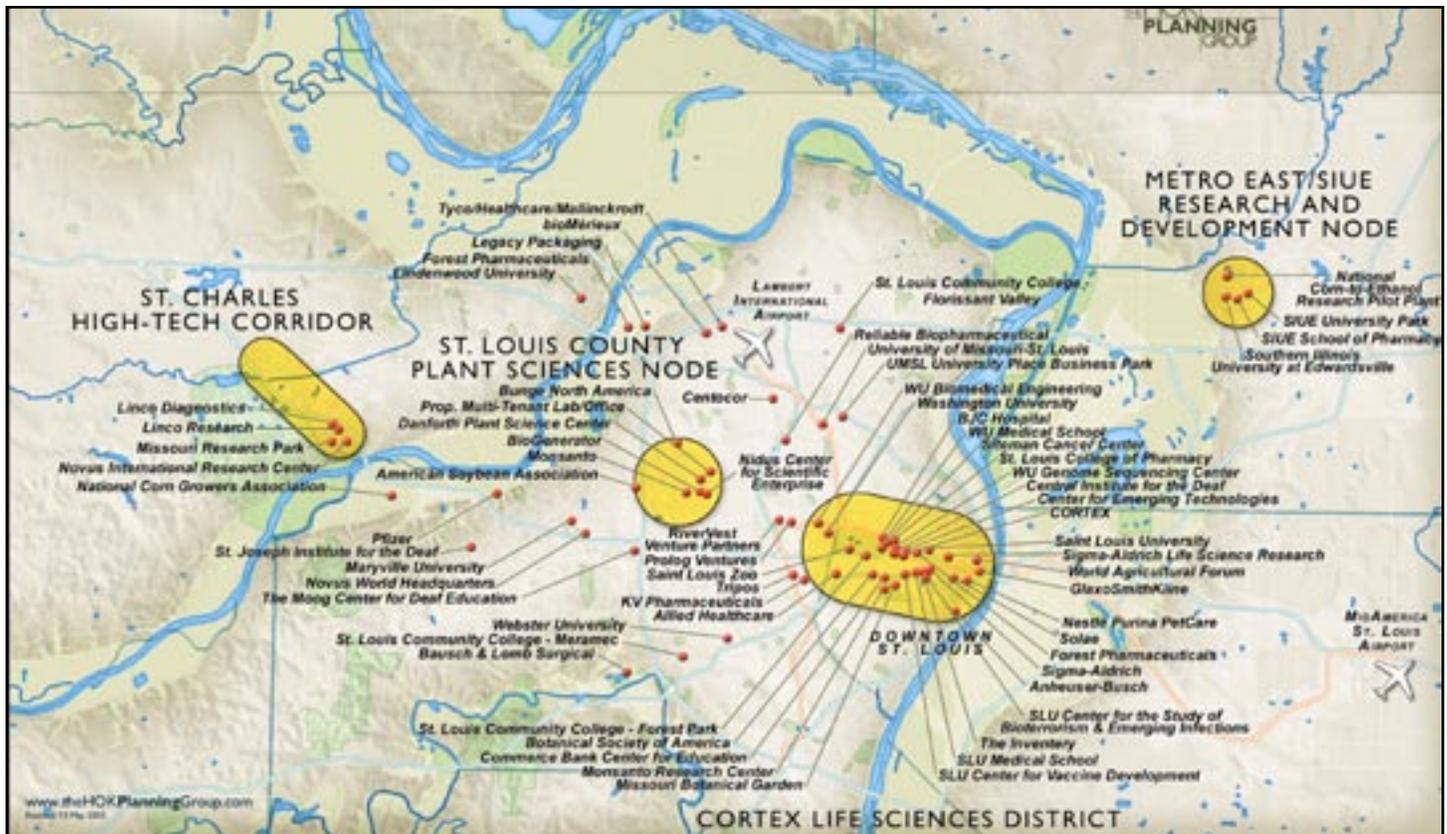
The Market Place. Located in the heart of St. Louis County, the Creve Coeur area currently indicates a gap in regional shopping centers.

The BioBelt. Creve Coeur is a regional node of biotechnology, plant and life science economic activity.

[The BioBelt, 2005 RCGA]



Traffic Issues. Olive Boulevard is responsible for great opportunities as well as daunting challenges. It is a well-traveled road that carries a lot of traffic. Although this can benefit retail sales, it causes congestion, detracting from the quality of life for residents.





Transportation Network. *Creve Coeur's successful location is also a cause of its biggest challenge: traffic congestion.*

Major improvements are currently under way along the Olive corridor. The transportation improvement plan is enhancing the physical character of the boulevard and relieving congestion bottlenecks, particularly at the I-270 interchange. The intersection of New Ballas and Olive is problematic with bad congestion throughout much of the day.

In addition to high traffic volumes, the physical pattern of streets and developments along the Olive corridor contribute to the longstanding congestion problem. The corridor follows a typical suburban development pattern: side streets, loop roads and frontage parking lots are almost all accessed by Olive. Very few reliever streets provide alternatives to Olive. Urban density with a lack of an urban street grid has resulted in very bad congestion.

Transportation in this particular location in St. Louis County is predominantly served by vehicular traffic. Currently, there are very few mode options available which contributes to the congestion problem by disproportionately overburdening vehicular modes. A future MetroLink corridor is planned approximately one mile north of Olive and may present opportunities for bus feeder line and local circulators

that could connect to the regional system. Similarly, Downtown Creve Coeur could benefit from bicycle and pedestrian connections, for recreation and as a transportation alternative, to the proposed Centennial Greenway that is being planned to connect to Creve Coeur Park in Maryland Heights and Forest Park in St. Louis.

Downtown will contain a mix of land uses that will create activity beyond the workday and on weekends. These activities will not generate significant traffic to conflict with existing peak traffic congestion.

— CBD Land Use Plan Focus Group

3.3 Comparable Projects

Town centers, downtowns and central business districts around the country can provide valuable lessons on what works and what does not. Creve Coeur can learn from other communities' mistakes or emulate successes. And, equally important, the study of comparable projects continues a dialog with the residents of Creve Coeur about what is appropriate, desirable and achievable here.

St. Louis' older neighborhoods demonstrate numerous examples of vibrant downtowns, with the density and character that may be desirable in Creve Coeur. The challenge for Creve Coeur is to build a downtown from scratch, with the charm and energy of the University City Loop, the Central West End and Old Webster Groves.



Great Streets. *Wide sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking, narrow streets, small blocks and pedestrian scale architecture create great streets for retail, walking and entertaining.*

[Central West End, St. Louis]

The town center should be a destination place with cultural uses, featuring a theater, library, gallery or other entertainment venue that complements restaurants.

— CBD Land Use Plan Focus Groups

Although older downtowns and newer town centers are both useful to study, comparable project with conditions similar to Creve Coeur’s may be most applicable. Infill and “grayfield” developments, affected by multiple owners, incremental phasing and existing site context, share many of the same critical issues as Creve Coeur. Among the many precedents presented in Part IV of the CBD Land Use Plan, the following are notable for their similar conditions and for creative solutions.

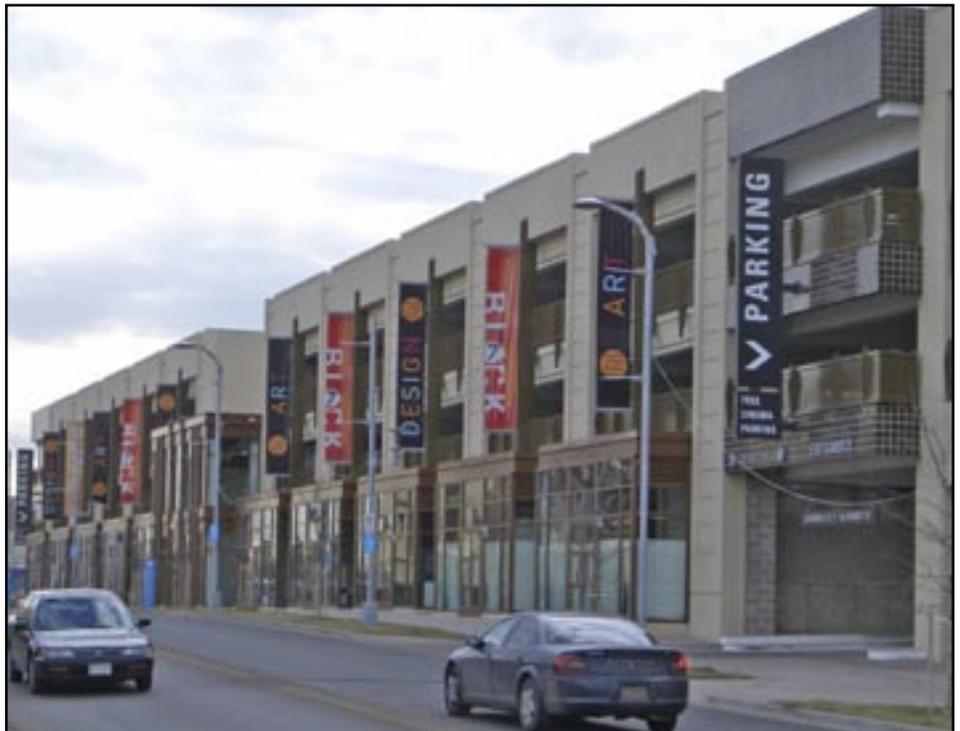
Belmar – Lakewood, Colorado. In an affluent suburb of Denver, a struggling shopping mall on a 104 acre site was razed for a mixed-use urban redevelopment. With the form of a traditional downtown, the site includes over 700 residential units, 665,000 square feet of retail and 184,000 square feet of office. The parking strategy makes use of garages, surface lots and 350 on-street parking spaces. Contributing to the civic characteristics of the project, 10 acres have been allocated for public parks and open space.

Clarendon Market Common – Arlington, Virginia. Located at the crossroads of several major roadways and a Metro station, Market Common is an urban infill project that was sensitively integrated into an existing residential neighborhood. Covering only 10 acres, it combines 240,000 square feet of retail, 100,000 square feet of office and 390 residential units. The development pattern features a central common ground surrounded by commercial and a perimeter of residential that blends with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Southlake Town Square – Southlake, Texas. In contrast to the Creve Coeur CBD, Southlake is not an infill project. However, the design of the 130 acre development successfully created a mixed-use urban district with the character of a traditional “small town downtown.” Its form combines both a Main Street with a retail focus and a central park, suitable for public gatherings and community events. The project includes over 500,000 square

Public Parking. Structured garages provide urban areas sufficient parking while the ground floor is reserved for retail, enhancing the pedestrian environment and urban vitality.

[Belmar, Lakewood, Colorado]



feet of office, retail, entertainment and residential uses.

Although there are a number of town center projects currently in development or proposed throughout the St. Louis area, none has yet to evolve as a true mixed-use,

urban downtown. This represents a great opportunity for Creve Coeur to become the first success in the region, setting a benchmark for quality and vitality.



Private Parking. Structured garages below luxury residential provides necessary space while architectural features mitigate parking's aesthetic impacts.

[Pearl District, Portland, Oregon]