

STUDY SESSION
Comprehensive Plan Update
Session Number One
CITY HALL, Fifth Floor
6801 Delmar Blvd., University City, Missouri 63130
Monday, November 13, 2023
5:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Study Session of the City Council of University City held on Monday, November 13, 2023, Mayor Terry Crow, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Stacy Clay; (*excused*)
Councilmember Aleta Klein
Councilmember Steven McMahon
Councilmember Jeffrey Hales
Councilmember Dennis Fuller
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also in attendance were City Manager, Gregory Rose; City Attorney, John F. Mulligan, Jr., Director of Planning and Development, John Wagner, Senior Planner, Mary Kennedy, Peggy Holly, and Ellen Hartz of the Planning Commission.

2. CHANGES TO REGULAR AGENDA

None

3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Rose stated the Planning Commission adopted the City's Comprehensive Plan on October 6th. And tonight, he has asked Dr. Wagner to brief Council on this Plan for the purpose of providing guidance and insight.

Process Highlights - Dr. Wagner

The Plan builds on existing work and broad community involvement.

- Strong Plan Commission leadership
- Department leadership input
- Synthesized previous work & incorporated plans; (2040 Vision, Economic Development Strategy)
- Multifaceted public engagement
- Support and constructive feedback from Boards & Commissions

Unique Plan for University City

- Articulates specific actions the City should take to realize the community's vision
- Responds to challenges and opportunities
- Incorporates contemporary best practices in planning & land development

Action Items Have Broad Support From the Community - Chapter 3

- Presented to City Council in July
- Addressing the history of segregation
- Planning for land uses in flood-prone areas
- Proactively addresses vacancy and property maintenance

- Strengthening Olive Blvd.
- Promoting walkability and safety, and many more things

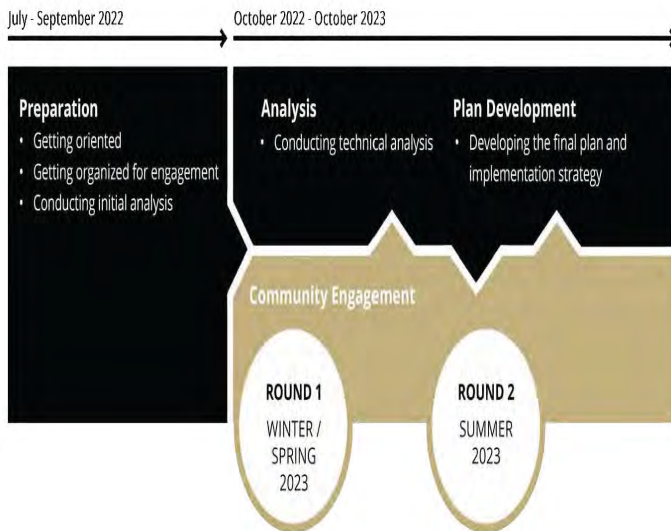
Plan Commission actively engaged other Boards & Commissions and Community Leaders

- Incorporated direct feedback
- Endorsements to-date:
 - Park Commission
 - Commission on Senior Issues
 - Library Board
 - Green Practices Commission
 - Urban Forestry Commission
 - Commission on Stormwater Issues

Future Character and Land Use Sets the Foundation for Future Code Changes

- Character-based approach; (Chapter 4)
- Draws on plans and research since the last plan was adopted in 1999 and updated in 2005
- Provides guidance on potential future zoning & other code changes (traffic, building, etc.)

First two stages: Community sets vision; Works with experts to form the plan



Approximately 600 surveys results were received.

Discussion of Plan Content and Implementation - Ms. Kennedy

Managing Implementation

- All of the policies and programs outlined in the plan will require Council input and action
- Monitor regularly for performance and relevancy
- Collaborate on implementation with individuals and organizations in private, public, and civic sectors
- Updates should be considered at least every 5 years but can be sooner

Integrating Into City Operations & Processes

- Regulatory updates; zoning, traffic, property maintenance codes, and floodplain management
- Development approvals
- Capital improvement budgeting
- Annual strategic planning
- Private development decisions
- Economic incentives
- Future partnerships

Implementation Matrix identifies lead coordinators and timelines

- Most actions require further Council input/action during implementation (i.e., code updates)
- Metrics will be developed when implementation begins
- Lead coordinators will identify funding sources

Specific Actions Assigned to City Council

(Timeframe = Short term (S); Medium (M); Long term (L); Ongoing (O))

Code	Action	Timeframe	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities
C.4.1	Realign citizen opportunities for government participation and engagement with the priorities of the comprehensive plan.	S	City Council	City Manager's Office, Board & Commission Chairs
C.4.3	Establish a volunteer Community Leadership or Neighborhood Liaison program.	M	Dept of Planning & Development, Police Department	City Council, Boards & Commissions, Communications Manager

Code	Action	Timeframe	Lead Coordinator	Supporting Entities
F.4.2	Leverage the expertise in University City's boards, commissions, task forces and authorities through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Conducting a review of all City boards and commissions to ensure adequate, but not duplicative, responsibilities and sufficient staffing capacity. ii. Developing and implementing formal training programs for board, commission, and council members. iii. Creating a forum for regular communication among boards and commissions to address long-term issues that impact multiple boards or commissions. 	S	City Clerk	City Manager's Office, City Council, Boards & Commissions, City Staff Liaisons

Mr. Rose asked Dr. Wagner how he would like to proceed with any questions or comments from Council? Dr. Wagner stated they can be addressed at this meeting or submitted by November 20th.

Next Steps - Dr. Wagner

- **NOVEMBER 20, 2023** – Submit requested changes to staff
- **NOVEMBER 27, 2023** – (Study Session); discuss and consider requested changes
- **DECEMBER 6, 2023** – Plan Commission discusses and considers requested changes by Council and votes to recommend an amended plan
- **DECEMBER 11, 2023** – City Council vote on plan approval

- **DECEMBER 2023** – Share plan document broadly by posting on websites, sending emails with links, printing hard copies
- **JANUARY 2024** – Move forward with implementation, develop metrics to monitor performance

Chairperson Holly stated it has been no small task to wade through the 157 pages of this plan and make decisions on the things this community cares about. So, she would like to thank Council, the Plan Commission, the community, and the City's boards and commissions, for all of their hard work.

She stated as a part of the planning process the Commission engaged a broader section of the community to be a standard part of the process.

Citizens showed up at workshops, completed surveys, and provided vital feedback and directions.

Many of the City's boards and commissions provided written comments and endorsements; Urban Forestry, Green Practices, Senior Commission, Parks, Historic Preservation and the Library Board. And the Former Mayor, Shelley Welsch, sent the Commission a letter endorsing their plan.

Chairperson Holly stated the Plan Commission spent a year before any work began on a visioning process. Because the goal was to ensure that this was not just about zoning, but a comprehensive plan that addressed every aspect of the City. It recognizes where we are today, as well as the changes that have occurred since 2005. A list of the references utilized during the development of this process will be provided to Council. So, a tremendous amount of accolades and recognition goes out to her colleagues who spent two years of their time working on this plan.

Finally, special thanks go out to the City staff, Mary Kennedy and John Wagner for their remarkable work in assisting the Commission with addressing all of the issues that were identified.

Chairperson Holly stated the theme of the Comprehensive Plan is universal; everyone loves living in U City, but believes there is a need to deal with two specific concerns:

- The City's history of racial segregation and what that has meant in terms of opportunities, and Issues associated with flooding

Discussion

- Are there topics in the plan you'd like additional material on?
- What is important for successful implementation?
- Are council priorities aligned with the implementation timelines?
- What key topic(s) were you expecting the plan to address? Did you find it?

Councilmember McMahan stated Council leans on the Plan Commission a lot and is eternally grateful for all of the work they have performed. He stated he is torn between the overarching goals; which he has no qualms with, and the details. Because what he is trying to wrap his head around is the process that will be utilized to implement each aspect of this plan, so you can see exactly what direction it's going in.

Councilmember McMahan stated an example of what he perceives to be two dueling ideas is the development of walkable areas and different types of housing. Since the City has not been successful in establishing an In-Fill Review Board, how would you balance these two goals while also making sure that the character of a neighborhood remains intact? Which one comes first? Dr. Wagner stated although everything is not qualitative, the metrics will have to come first. So he believes that things will kind of happen simultaneously.

Councilmember McMahan stated the influx of developers within this community seems to be ongoing, so how will we ensure that they are adhering to this plan? Dr. Wagner stated staff will have to provide them with the standards for developing that project. Councilmember McMahan stated he likes the objectives of the Plan, but believes there needs to be adequate mechanisms in place to make sure it does not get put on a shelf. Dr. Wagner stated while there is no doubt that from time to time it will be necessary to make amendments, he believes the metrics will be that mechanism because they have been designed to ascertain the direction of the plan and sustain progress five years down the road.

Councilmember Fuller thanked the Commission for sitting down with each member of Council, individually, to garner their input.

He stated the concerns expressed by Councilmember McMahon also went through his mind; especially since the last update of this plan was almost 20 years ago. Therefore, before putting this plan into action he would like to make the following suggestions:

- That a comprehensive review of each section, along with a plan for implementation, be conducted on an annual basis;
- That a representative from all of the pertinent boards and commissions be included in this annual review or be required to conduct a separate review with the Plan Commission on an annual basis,
- That an all-inclusive review be conducted every three or five years

Councilmember Fuller thanked everyone for their hard work and for meeting with each of Councilmember separately in this process. He stated that he believes that a review process of this nature would be beneficial to make sure that all of the hard work conducted by this Commission will not be in vain.

Councilmember Hales asked Mr. Rose about his experience with the execution of comprehensive plans? Mr. Rose stated the most important factor is having a clear understanding of what is included in the plan. For instance, this plan references some things like the Stormwater Master Plan that at this point, has not been created. He also believes there has to be an appreciation for the fiscal impacts related to infrastructure and regulatory guidance like a change in the City's land use. Mr. Rose stated typically, each section of the plan is reviewed to identify those areas believed to contain the most significant components; i.e., those having the greatest financial impact. And in this case, he thinks staff has allotted enough time for that review to be undertaken.

Mayor Crow wished Ms. McQueen a happy birthday. He stated recently, the two largest landowners within The Loop transferred their properties to new owners. So, after reviewing the list of commissions that participated in this plan, he was curious to know whether the Plan Commission and/or staff has had any conversations or outreach with the LSB, or any of the land/business owners in The Loop? Chairperson Holly stated the Commission has spent time talking about this plan with the LSB on multiple occasions. And very early on, they assigned one of their members to be a part of the Advisory Committee. So, they have been tied to this effort since day one.

Councilmember Klein thanked the Commission for developing such an amazing plan. She then asked whether the inclusion of private developers and businesses in the plan's goals was related to an invitation for them to participate and strike a balance that would encourage future investments, or if it was simply more about compliance? Dr. Wagner stated while invitation is a good word, it's actually a little bit of both. Compliance will be key for reworking the Zoning Ordinances, but there is also a need for them to be somewhat inviting because if zoning becomes an impediment, developers may not view building here as a worthwhile opportunity.

Mayor Crow stated the trench warfare conducted over and over again by this Commission provides Council with a level of comfort that is immensely appreciated. Because as you've probably sensed by now, there does not appear to be a great deal of variance between the goals established by all parties. So, to everyone on the Planning Commission, Advisory Board, and staff, we can't thank you enough for the exceptional work product you've put together.

Mayor Crow then asked if there were any specific areas staff and/or the Commission would like Council to spend time on at the next Study Session?

Dr. Wagner stated if Mr. Rose agrees, he would like to focus on the fiscal impacts of the plan and any additions submitted by Council between now and then.

Mr. Rose stated he certainly thinks the fiscal and staffing impacts of the plan are two areas being proposed that he would like to make sure Council is fully aware of.

Commissioner Hartz stated in response to Councilmember McMahon's comments about the opportunity for developers to get ahead of the plan, that's simply not going to happen.

Because based on the City's chain of command, all developers must first come before the Planning Commission; which is pretty tough. And if they pass that hurdle, the plan is then submitted to Council for approval. So she does not think this should be a major concern.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Crow encouraged his colleagues to submit their questions or comments to staff by November 20th. He then thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the Study Session at 5:39 p.m.

LaRette Reese,
City Clerk, MRCC

2023 University City Comprehensive Plan – Additional Resources

Reference Documents

- University City Community Vision 2040 Roadmap Report, July 2022
- Economic Development Strategy (2021)
- St. Louis County Action Plan for Walking and Biking Plan (2021)
- University City Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2013)
- Olive Boulevard Design Guidelines (2009)
- University City Sustainable Development Guidelines (2019)
- North Central Neighborhood Plan (2002)
- Northeast Neighborhood Plan (2002)
- Centennial Greenway Plan (2006)
- University City Parks Master Plan (2008)
- University City Urban Forestry Strategic Plan (2009)
- Sustainability Strategic Plan (2011)
- Delmar Loop Area Retail Plan & Development Strategy (2011)
- STL 2030 Jobs Plan (2021)

Additional reading

- Mapping Decline, Colin Gordon (Book)
- Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World, Henry Grabar (Book)
- Arbitrary Lines: How Zoning Broke the American City and How to Fix It, M. Nolan Gray (Book)
- Reassessing the Property Tax, Christopher R. Berry¹
- An Evaluation of Property Tax Regressivity in St. Louis County, Missouri, Center for Municipal Finance, Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago²
- The Trap of Triage: Lessons from the “Team Four Plan”, Patrick Cooper-McCann³
- Race, Ethnicity, and Discriminatory Zoning, Allison Shertzer, Tate Twinam, and Randall P. Walsh⁴
- “Saving” the City: Harland Bartholomew and Administrative Evil in St. Louis, Mark Benton⁵
- The Great Real Estate Reset: A data-driven initiative to remake how and what we build, Christopher Coes, Jennifer S. Vey, and Tracy Hadden Loh, The Brookings Institution.⁶
- The Modern American Family: Key trends in marriage and family life, Carolina Aragão, Kim Parker, Shannon Greenwood, Chris Baronavski, and John Carlo Mandapat (Pew Research Center)⁷
- The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment, Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence F. Katz⁸

Websites:

Opportunity Insights, Raj Chetty: <https://opportunityinsights.org/team/raj-chetty/>

Parking Reform Network: <https://parkingreform.org/>

References

- ¹ Berry, Christopher R., Reassessing the Property Tax (March 9, 2021). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3800536> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3800536>
- ² Draft paper: https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/voices.uchicago.edu/dist/6/2330/files/2019/04/Prop-Tax-St.-Louis-New-Data-3620_CB.pdf
- ³ Cooper-McCann, P. (2016). The Trap of Triage: Lessons from the "Team Four Plan". *Journal of Planning History*, 15(2), 149-169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538513215602026>
- ⁴ Shertzer, Allison, Tate Twinam, and Randall P. Walsh. 2016. "Race, Ethnicity, and Discriminatory Zoning." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 8 (3): 217-46. DOI: 10.1257/app.20140430
- ⁵ Benton, Mark. (2017). "Saving" the City: Harland Bartholomew and Administrative Evil in St. Louis. *Public Integrity*. 20. 1-13. 10.1080/10999922.2017.1306902.
- ⁶ Article series available at <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-great-real-estate-reset-a-data-driven-initiative-to-remake-how-and-what-we-build/>
- ⁷ The Modern American Family: Key trends in marriage and family life (Pew Research Center), September 2023: [How the American Family Has Changed | Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/family/2023/09/07/modern-american-family/)
- ⁸ Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2016. "The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Experiment." *American Economic Review*, 106 (4): 855-902. DOI: 10.1257/aer.20150572