

**STUDY SESSION**  
**Permanent Structures in Front Yards**  
**&**  
**Comprehensive Plan Update - Session Number 2**  
CITY HALL, Fifth Floor  
6801 Delmar Blvd., University City, Missouri 63130  
**Monday, December 11, 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, December 11, 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  
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, and Planning Commission Chair, Peggy Holly.

**2. CHANGES TO REGULAR AGENDA**

None

**3. PERMANENT STRUCTURES IN FRONT YARDS**

Mr. Rose stated Council is being asked to provide direction regarding the execution of codes governing permanent children's recreational equipment in front yards.

Dr. Wagner stated this discussion has to do with the items pictured in the front yard of 1457 Forest Green Court. Under Zoning Code Section 400.1040(a) (2), children's recreational equipment is permitted within the rear yard setback only.

So, the question being posed to Council is: are these two playhouses located in the front yard "*structures or portions of structures*" within the meaning of the Zoning Code?

- If they are not deemed to be structures or a portion thereof, then there is no setback violation in the front or rear yard.
- If they are considered structures, then they would not be permitted in the front yard.
  - To prohibit such items from being located in a front yard, a Zoning Code Text Amendment
  - would be required.

Mr. Rose stated staff is seeking confirmation that their interpretation regarding this Section of the Code is consistent with the intent of this policy or direction from Council on how the Code should be interpreted.

Councilmember Smotherson posed the following questions to Dr. Wagner:

**Q. How is staff interpreting this Code?**

**A.** *Staff does not consider the two playhouses to be the type of structures identified in the Ordinance.*

**Q. Does that mean they would be permitted in the front yard?**

**A.** Yes.

Councilmember Smotherson stated that even though there are no specifications regarding front yards, the Code is pretty clear that children's recreational equipment is only permitted within the rear yard setback. And he believes it's worded that way because typically children's play equipment is located in a backyard. He stated in this case, the playhouses seem to be permanent, so according to the Code, they should be considered a structure. Dr. Wagner stated the uncertainty arises because, unlike a swing set, they are temporary in the sense that they are plastic and can be moved. Councilmember Smotherson stated the problem is that they are not being moved.

Councilmember Klein stated she does not think Council needs to start over-regulating its citizens. And telling them that they cannot put moveable structures in parts of their yard would be imposing too much control. She stated she thinks the spirit of the law is designed to generate good relationships among neighbors by providing them with the opportunity to work out any problems they might have. Not that the City should become the mechanism for resolving private disputes that are not prevalent throughout multiple neighborhoods. So, she does not believe Council's involvement in this isolated problem would be a good idea.

Councilmember Clay asked what an Ordinance regulating something like this would be comprised of? Dr. Wagner stated that he would have to work with Mr. Mulligan to develop the language and definitions for children's recreational equipment. Councilmember Clay stated there may be instances where certain types of equipment would be appropriate in a front yard so he does not think the regulation should be too restrictive. Dr. Wagner stated what he noticed in this particular case, is that when you step out of their back door the yard quickly begins to descend, making it somewhat difficult for them to utilize it for recreational equipment.

Mr. Rose stated he believes the direction would be for staff to draft a policy that identifies a comprehensive list of children's recreational equipment that should not be installed in a front yard.

Mr. Mulligan stated the context here is setbacks, and setbacks are linked to structures, which are defined in the Code as anything constructed or erected with a fixed location on the ground or attached to something having or requiring a fixed location on the ground.

Under this rule, you would normally not think of a plastic playhouse as being a structure. Therefore, if Council is interested in regulating this type of equipment you might consider doing so through the Property Maintenance Code. Here, you would need to define what shall not be on the premises, any prohibited locations, and a period of time for how long these items can remain in those prohibited locations. So, if you decide to go down that road it would require some thought and perhaps, further discussions.

Councilmember Hales stated he searched the minutes to determine if he could find a reference to this type of policy question and was unable to find anything of this nature. But Mr. Mulligan's explanation altered his thought process to now believe that this is a slippery slope. There are all kinds of things in people's front yards; especially during this time of year. So, in his opinion, a complaint coming from one party, in one neighborhood, on one street, does not meet the threshold that should even warrant Council's intervention.

Mr. Rose stated the only purpose of this discussion was to obtain Council's guidance on whether staff should pursue the introduction of a code change that would clarify this issue.

Councilmember McMahon agreed with Councilmember Hales. When you start trying to define children's recreational equipment or what can and cannot be in someone's front yard, you will be going down a slippery slope. Some neighbors might take offense to bikes or skateboards left in the front yard. So, it's a personal preference, not a health and safety issue.

Councilmember Fuller stated that based on the definition of a structure these are clearly portable pieces of recreational equipment that are used in numerous City facilities; churches, clinics, and childcare centers. So, he thinks Council should be guided by the Code's definition.

Councilmember Smotherson stated what he would like to make clear is that this complaint is not just from one individual, but several elderly residents who have lived in this neighborhood for years; accepted and followed the rules, and simply want their new neighbors to follow those same rules. And even though he would agree that based on the Code's definition this equipment would not typically be construed as a structure, it is permanent because it has remained in this front yard for four years. He stated these are the issues he believes his colleagues are missing and that need to be addressed by clarifying this Section of the Code and enforcing it.

Mayor Crow stated he does not believe the Council is overlooking or missing anything; they are simply disagreeing with the proposition that this should be considered a structure. So, while you can certainly make an argument about permanency, most would probably say that a toy; no matter how long it sits there, is not permanent. Mayor Crow stated in his opinion, this is a dispute among neighbors that frankly, does not rise to the level of asking Council to expend City resources on.

#### **4. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE - SESSION NUMBER 2**

Mr. Rose stated this presentation is intended to be the final briefing on the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Dr. Wagner stated tonight's update will be focused on the following:

- Goals, objectives, and actions
- Character-based approach to land use
- Implementation
- Evaluating fiscal and staffing impacts
- Discussion

#### **Goals**

There are a total of 112 action items and 42 are discussed in the presentation.

#### **Goal A - Preserve and Enhance Great Places; 21 actions**

- Focuses primarily on physical development, existing character, neighborhoods, and sustainable development
- Community engagement and technical analysis findings:
  - ✓ Current zoning code focuses on the separation of uses
  - ✓ Disproportionate challenges with vacancies in the 3rd Ward
  - ✓ Tree canopy is strong in neighborhoods, weak in commercial areas
  - ✓ Older building stock
  - ✓ Impact of private subdivisions; helps preserve character and identity, but can contribute to a disconnected community

Mayor Crow asked if the disproportionate vacancies in the 3rd Ward referred to rentals or owner-occupied homes? Dr. Wagner stated this reference mainly refers to homes, but there are a few commercial areas along Olive. Mayor Crow asked if the homes were owner-occupied or rentals? Dr. Wagner stated they are probably leaning more toward vacant rentals.

**Action Step:** Use proactive measures to promote development that aligns with the plan

- 1) Update the zoning code to support the implementation of this plan.
- 2) Encourage mixed-use communities where people enjoy easy access to jobs and services in connection with the Future Character and Land Use map.

**Action Step:** Proactively manage vacancies

- 1) Prioritize City control of vacant parcels (those either suitable for development or those identified with potential to alleviate flooding) when possible, such as land banking.
  - ✓ *Infill development*
  - ✓ *Lot sales to property owners (Mow-to-Own program)*
  - ✓ *Reuse for stormwater mitigation (detention basins)*
- 2) Strengthen the City's existing vacant building registration program.

**Action Step:** Create attractive, cohesive, compact, and diverse residential areas throughout the City

- 1) Encourage residential infill and redevelopment to restore and/or create more vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.
- 2) Promote neighborhood activity nodes in parts of the city where there are currently not many.

**Action Step:** Remove barriers that limit vibrant commercial and mixed-use districts and support neighborhood-scale commercial

- 1) Revise car-oriented standards such as parking minimums, to encourage alternatives to car-based transportation, especially in higher-density, mixed-use areas.
- 2) Revise dimensional regulations (e.g., height, setbacks) and permitted uses in the zoning code to allow more compact development in mixed-use areas

### **Goal B - Advance Shared Prosperity; 17 actions**

- Focuses on access to economic and wealth-building opportunities, building on economic development strengths
- Community engagement and technical analysis findings:
  - ✓ Household incomes vary greatly by neighborhood
  - ✓ Stark disparities in residential property value
  - ✓ About 50/50 owner vs. renter population
  - ✓ Sales tax performance and residential population are related
  - ✓ Existing TIF districts are a great opportunity for making investments in the community

**Action Step:** Build upon existing development momentum

- 1) Focus development attention on the creation of catalyst areas; Markets at Olive
- 2) Facilitate and encourage mixed-use residential development across from Heman Park on the north side of Olive Boulevard

Mr. Rose stated he would like a clear understanding of whether this Plan prohibits rezoning the City-owned parcel at Olive and Midland, or prevents Council from pursuing some form of economic development? Dr. Wagner stated he believes that this parcel is listed on the Land Use Map as a green space. So, while the Comprehensive Plan is a stalwart guide, in his opinion, there is nothing in it that would prohibit Council from rezoning this parcel for development as long as it is not deemed to be in a floodplain.

**Action Step:** Leverage incentives to support desired economic development in key locations

- 1) Develop a transparent policy for providing municipal incentives that promote the goals of this plan
- 2) Improve the City's fiscal resilience by diversifying land uses and development

**Action Step:** Strengthen and support the labor force and entrepreneurship

- 1) Partner with national and regional workforce development agencies and the University City School District to implement workforce development strategies.
- 2) Improve the City's fiscal resilience by diversifying land uses and development

**Goal C - Connect Community; 22 actions**

- Focuses on improving mobility, walkability, social cohesion, and increasing civic involvement
- Community engagement and technical analysis findings:
  - ✓ The street grid was designed to support a larger population than we have today
  - ✓ 47% of traffic crashes on Olive result in an injury, compared to 27% in the rest of University City; work with MoDOT to create a Road Diet
  - ✓ Many gaps in sidewalk network and bicycle lanes/trails, but we have good plans to improve these networks
  - ✓ Transit routes have low-frequency

**Action Step:** Create "equity of mobility" within University City

- 1) Implement a street and sidewalk repair and improvement program
- 2) Identify and prioritize low-cost improvements at key locations that are currently unsafe for those getting around without a car
- 3) Complete the Centennial Greenway as a full contiguous trail through University City

**Action Step:** Encourage walking and biking as legitimate modes of transportation

- 1) Increase housing supply in locations with potential for good access by biking and walking so those without vehicles can live in areas already served by these modes
- 2) Create demonstration projects and events that showcase small-scale safety improvements

**Action Step:** Support and coordinate with regional initiatives that improve connectivity, including public transit

- 1) Collaborate with MODOT to reconfigure Olive Boulevard to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and an improved environment for businesses in the corridor

**Action Step:** Encourage civic participation, mentoring, and volunteerism

- 1) Create a youth involvement initiative to empower University City's youth in conjunction with U City schools, churches, and other community organizations
- 2) Establish a volunteer Community Leadership or Neighborhood Liaison program

**Goal D - Leverage Assets; 14 actions**

- Actions capitalize on the City's diversity, rich history, and amenities
- Community engagement and technical analysis findings:
  - ✓ Historic preservation efforts are concentrated in the southeast corner of the City
  - ✓ Most residents are within a ¼ mile of a U City park, and almost all are within a ½ mile, but there's a desire to provide more recreational activities evenly throughout the City
  - ✓ Community facilities are also located evenly throughout the City

**Action Step:** Enhance the community's parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of all residents.

- 1) Update the University City Parks Master Plan to include a maintenance management plan for parks, prioritizing strategic investment in maintenance, programming, and naturalized spaces
- 2) Create Safe Routes to Parks and Safe Routes to Schools plans to improve pedestrian and bicycle access

**Action Step:** Enhance the experience for visitors to University City.

- 1) Improve gateway locations and neighborhood nodes with landscaping, amenities, signage, public art, or other features; both ends of Olive & Delmar
- 2) Continue to expand and promote the Explore U City website, per the 2021 Economic Development Strategy

**Goal E - Strengthen Livability; 20 actions**

- Increasing and improving housing options across all neighborhoods, proactively addressing flood mitigation
- Community engagement and technical analysis findings:
  - ✓ Flood damage and risk threatens the livability of the community
  - ✓ Medium- to high-intensity land cover; (impermeable surface)
  - ✓ Existing property maintenance regulations need to be strengthened to improve livability
  - ✓ Activity nodes; (areas of small commercial activity that integrate amenities and services in neighborhoods) are cherished by the community, and there is a desire to plan for new nodes in neighborhoods that lack them

**Action Step:** Protect each neighborhood's distinctive character while supporting compatible new developments.

- 1) Evaluate short-term rental regulations; currently prohibited
- 2) Investigate establishing and/or supporting an existing community development entity(s) to address housing affordability, vacancy, maintenance, and stability in University City

**Action Step:** Promote housing variety and affordability to support a range of household types, lifestyles, and demographic group needs.

- 1) Develop and plan for allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- 2) Modernize or remove definitions of family or household relationships in the zoning ordinance to reflect changing household composition and lifestyles
- 3) Promote housing variety and affordability to support a range of household types, lifestyles, and demographic group needs
- 4) Protect non-homeowner citizens (renters) through such measures as:
  - ✓ *Improving the rental inspection program to ensure safe, habitable, and fair housing*
  - ✓ *Creating a renter protection program*
  - ✓ *Adopting a source of income discrimination ordinance*

**Action Step:** Address stormwater management through proactive, regional flood mitigation planning.

- 1) Discourage additional new development in flood-prone areas and restrict any new development within the floodplain
- 2) Incrementally convert high-flood risk areas into open spaces that are designed to accommodate stormwater, provided that maintenance and security can be addressed
- 3) Encourage the use of Low Impact Development (LID) strategies to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality
- 4) Consider requiring disclosure of flood history for rentals and home purchases, as suggested by SEMA, possibly as part of the occupancy permit

Mr. Rose noted that some of the language within this section seems to imply that the Mayor and Council will adopt recommendations from the Stormwater Commission and the Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Task Force, when in reality, neither set of recommendations have ever been presented to Council for review. Therefore, with the assistance of Mr. Mulligan, his intent would be to modify this language in a manner that does not anticipate Council's intentions, but assets their option to approve the recommendations once they have been presented for review.

Dr. Wagner agreed that the way the Comprehensive Plan is currently written presumes that the recommendations have already been adopted, and should be revised.

Mr. Rose asked Mr. Mulligan if Council could approve these modifications to the language when it considers the Plan Update since it was included in the original plan they adopted, or if there was a requirement for it to go back to the Planning Commission first? Mr. Mulligan stated the Charter does not prohibit Council from making recommendations or revisions to the Commission's approved Plan, but the best practice may be to send it back to the Plan Commission for further consideration.

Mr. Rose stated since there is no legal requirement, he intends to expedite the approval process by putting it on the Council's Agenda with a recommendation that they modify the language during their considerations.

Dr. Wagner asked Mr. Rose if he wanted to include these modifications with some of the other changes that have to be made by the Commission, like Olive/Midland? Mr. Rose stated that they could be. Dr. Wagner stated the intent is to conduct a virtual meeting with the Commission before Council's January 22nd Meeting.

Mr. Rose stated if it is acceptable to the Mayor and Council, his intent is to recommend that the Commission modify the language to reflect that Council can approve the Stormwater Master Plan and Task Force recommendations as presented.

Mr. Mulligan informed Mr. Rose that his recommendation should include the Flood Mitigation Plan; E.3.2, the Stormwater Master Plan; E.3.1, and the Task Force Plan; E.1.2.

Mr. McMahon stated he also noticed that Council is being asked to adopt a Source of Income Discrimination Ordinance. However, after the H.R. Commission presented its recommendation to Council the Ordinance was never introduced because of the pushback received from landlords who did not want to be told how they had to run their businesses. So ultimately, the process was circumvented.

Mayor Crow stated before any decision is made, a review of those meeting minutes might be helpful in adding a little background on this Ordinance.

#### **Goal F - Improve Collaboration; 18 actions**

- Improving effectiveness, collaboration, and communication within the government, with the community, and with external partners
- Community engagement and technical analysis findings:
  - ✓ U City has more boards and commissions than is typical for a City of its size
  - ✓ Enrollment in public schools reflects the City's racial segregation and can exacerbate inequities
  - ✓ A high amount of institutional, nonprofit, and governmental property ownership
  - ✓ Wash U is the largest property owner in U City by assessed value, but the University has a higher share of its landholdings in St. Louis City and unincorporated County

**Action Step:** Improve communication and cooperation with adjacent communities.

- 1) Collaborate with neighboring communities to strengthen connections and advance shared development opportunities along borders.

Dr. Wagner stated he and Ms. Kennedy have met with their counterparts in Olivette and Creve Coeur to talk about Olive Boulevard.

**Action Step:** Strengthen the partnership with The School District of University City to enhance the reputations of both the City and District.

- 1) Evaluate the assets and infrastructure of the City and The School District of University City to determine where resources can be leveraged by both
- 2) Establish a joint branding strategy for The School District of University City and the City of University City.

**Action Step:** Develop additional partnerships with Washington University to address areas of mutual interest.

- 1) Establish a more deliberate partnership with Washington University focused on strategic, mutually beneficial developments and investments in the Loop

**Action Step:** Improve intra-governmental coordination and cooperation.

- 1) Evaluate options for technology platforms to improve collaboration and sharing of information across City departments
- 2) Conduct a review of all City boards and commissions to ensure adequate, but not duplicative, responsibilities, and sufficient staffing capacity

Ms. Kennedy stated all of the items presented by Dr. Wagner referred to policies, programs, and potential projects the City could engage in to work towards the goals that were outlined. But another important component of a Comprehensive Plan is a future Land Use Map. This map creates a guide for the City to evaluate changes to the Zoning Code or the rezoning of specific properties to make sure it is moving in the direction agreed upon within the Plan. Another important component of development is the physical characteristics, which can have a significant impact on how people embrace that property.

### **Future Character and Land Use Map**

Future Character & Land Use Map is a tool for guiding future development:

- To assist the Plan Commission, Council, and staff will review development proposals so that future development conforms to the desired character in different parts of the City
- To provide guidance to developers regarding the City's expectations for quality and characteristics of development
- To provide predictability for residents, business owners, and others with respect to the kind of development they can expect to be approved by the City
- To provide a common, citywide understanding of *where* and *how* University City should change over time
- To serve as a foundation for zoning code changes and design guidelines, including the possibility of additional zoning standards that better regulate the physical form and the quality of the public realm

### **Land Use vs. Character**

#### **Land Use**

1. Focuses on uses; (residential, commercial, etc.), not type and quality of development
2. Building form, street patterns, and other aspects of the look and feel of places are not defined
3. Encourages a separation of land uses in the zoning code

#### **Character**

1. Reflects not just the use but also the qualities of a place; (look and feel)
2. Outlines the intent for how properties are treated; (building form, land uses, etc.)
3. Can be a basis for form-based standards in the zoning code

 ***The Loop is a great example of a mixed-use neighborhood***

 ***A form-based code focuses on character; i.e., size, setbacks, and architectural standards***



### **Same Land Use, Different Character**

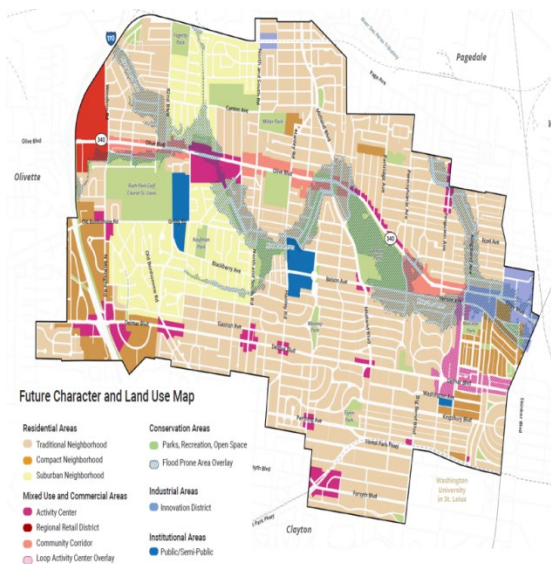
- Two images of multi-family developments with diverse character
  - ✓ One development is located closer to the street, allowing residents to feel a sense of connection
  - ✓ The other development is setback further from the street with a circular driveway which diminishes that sense of connection



### **Same Land Use, Different Character**

- Two images of office buildings with diverse character





## Displays existing land uses

- ✚ **Primarily residential, consisting of traditional, suburban, compact, and activity-center characteristics**
- ✚ **Within those character types is a description of the appropriate types of land uses, the form, and the quality of development that each area should take on**

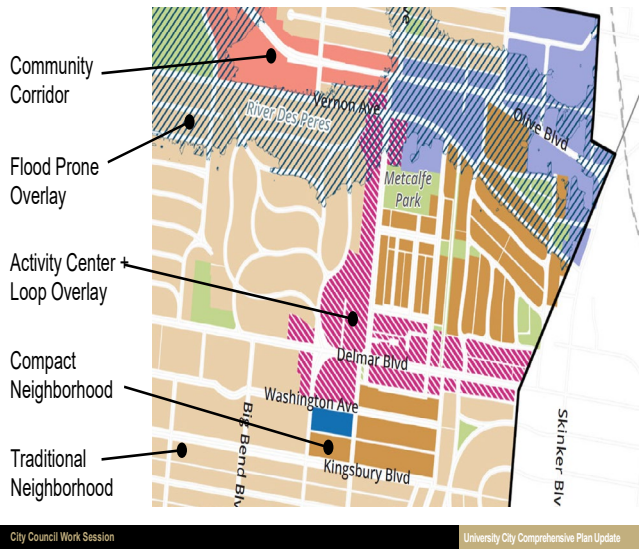
Mr. Rose posed the following questions to Ms. Kennedy:

**Q. Is this map recommending that the City rezone properties without the approval of property owners?**

**A.** *No, it does not recommend the rezoning of properties. Its purpose is to provide the City with a guide to determine whether a proposed rezoning for a permitted use reflects the intent of the Plan.*

**Q. Does the map propose zoning changes for any parcels along the Olive Boulevard Corridor that are a part of this Plan or future Zoning Code Updates?**

**A.** *No. The vast majority of land uses for Olive are commercial, with a few medium-density residential areas and mixed-use developments. The character types provide a better description of when these uses are appropriate.*



**Community Corridor:** A smaller scale commercial when compared to regional scale commercial districts like the Markets at Olive.

**Flood Prone Overlay:** Since existing buildings within this floodplain have significantly contributed to issues with flooding, the Plan recommends that the City use a sharper pencil when looking at future developments; perhaps, by developing higher standards than those currently being imposed by MSD.

**Loop Overlay:** The Loop overlay reflects a much denser environment than other mixed-use areas in the City, like the ones at Vernon and Midland.

**Compact Neighborhood:** A denser residential end-use, i.e., four-story apartments, duplexes, and 20 to 60-unit apartments.

**Traditional Neighborhood:** The vast majority of land use in the City reflects different needs for each resident, i.e., single-family homes, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units. The Plan recommends taking corrective measures to preserve these areas.

Ms. Kennedy stated even though they are places people love, streets like Delmar and North and South are non-conforming and do not reflect the City's character. The Plan recommends the need to strike a balance when attempting to achieve compliance with infill development opportunities and neighborhood nodes that are closer to the street, denser, have mixed-uses, and activity centers.

**Character types define dimensional qualities in addition to land uses**

**BUILDING BLOCKS**

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Height Range</b>     | 1-5 stories  |
| <b>Building Form</b>    | Variety of types from freestanding buildings to attached. Civic uses may have varying building form and placement to accommodate their functions.    |
| <b>Building Setback</b> | 0-10 feet (generally consistent within a block). Greater setbacks for civic uses are appropriate.  |
| <b>Open Space</b>       | Plazas, pocket parks, formal parks, trails, and greenways. Public realm (space between buildings and streets) acts as open space.                    |
| <b>Streets</b>          | Gridded street pattern with short, walkable block lengths and wide sidewalks; crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and other streetscape amenities. |
| <b>Parking</b>          | Shared surface parking located behind buildings; on-street parking.  |
| <b>Mobility</b>         | Walking, biking, transit, automobile   |

### **Traditional Neighborhood**

Photos of each character type can be found within the Plan

- Most prevalent character type
- Primarily single-family, but also incorporates “missing middle” along major corridors and near activity nodes
- Preserve existing neighborhood character
- Infill development must complement and enhance

### **Compact Neighborhood**

- Areas where denser residential exists; Avenir; Crown Center; senior living
- Loop - North & South Delmar & I-170
- Encourage more mixing of uses to improve walkability
- Primary uses: Multi-family, Specialty Residential; (Senior Living, etc.)
  - ✓ Allowing renters in high-quality residential developments can be beneficial to the City and business owners
- Secondary uses: Neighborhood Commercial

### **Community Corridor**

- Smaller-scale commercial development along Olive
- Provide services and amenities to nearby neighborhoods
- Promote connectivity and a more walkable pattern; Road Diet
- Primary uses: Community/Neighborhood Commercial, Office, Civic/Institutional
- Secondary uses: Multi-family, Open Space

### **Activity Center**

- Mixed-use areas that integrate places to live, work, and shop
- Existing: Loop, neighborhood nodes; (e.g., Delmar & Midland)
- Future: Olive (between 81<sup>st</sup> and Mt. Olive/Groby), Olive (north of Heman Park)
- Consolidate surface parking
- Improve connectivity

Ms. Kennedy stated although there is a desire to have them, these types of mixed-use areas were not integrated into existing neighborhoods located in the 3rd Ward. There is, however, a potential to use parts of Olive where the north and south connections are safe.

### **Flood Prone Overlay**

- Within FEMA floodplains or that have previously been prone to flooding
- Focus on policies, programs, and projects to reduce future flood risk
- Minimize new development
- Utilize low-impact development strategies

### **Loop Activity Center Overlay**

- Promote higher density, infill development, and redevelopment
- Buildings up to 10 stories

### **Framework Map**

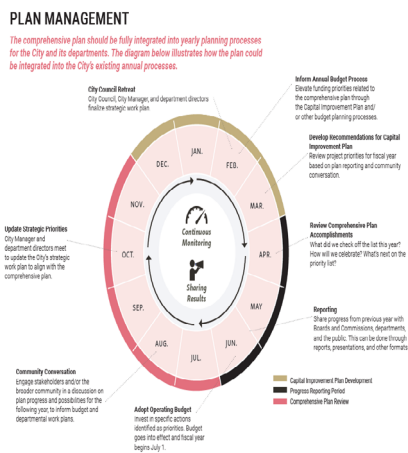
Separate from the Future Land Use and Character Map, this map takes two previously designed plans and prioritizes them along places that have existing activity centers.

1. Synthesizes previous pedestrian and bicycle plans
  - ✓ St. Louis County Action Plan for Walking and Biking; completed in 2021
  - ✓ U City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan; completed in 2013

2. Prioritizes routes that connect to important destinations
  - ✓ Schools
  - ✓ Neighborhood nodes
  - ✓ Parks
  - ✓ City Facilities
3. Complements the FCLU Map
4. Designed to guide Capital Improvement Plans

Ms. Kennedy stated despite the difficulties associated with a lack of existing commercial developments; this map also identifies potential neighborhood nodes north of Olive.

## Implementation



City Council Work Session      University City Comprehensive Plan Update

## How staff intends to look at managing the plan going forward.

Dr. Wagner stated the Commission and staff will develop a timeline for putting an Implementation Plan together.

## Evaluating Fiscal and Staffing Impacts

Dr. Wagner stated it is important that the fiscal impacts of the Plan be reviewed to make sure there are no surprises. So, he will be working with the City Manager to draft an RFP for a consultant to look at both issues.

Mr. Rose stated he intends to present the Comprehensive Plan to Council for final consideration after the revisions have been made by the Planning Commission. And whenever it is deemed necessary, a fiscal impact analysis will also be conducted on the Stormwater Master Plan, the Housing and Third Ward Revitalization Plan, and any new plans that come to fruition.

Councilmember Clay asked if staff had a sense of the population size this Plan is predicated on? Dr. Wagner stated this issue has come up numerous times, and generally speaking, he thinks it contemplates servicing the same population that exists today. Mr. Clay stated this Plan extends far into the future, and the one thing that concerns him is that as it moves forward there may be fewer people and fewer resources to draw from. Today, it's conceptual, and while U City seems to have leveled off, the truth is we are seeing precipitous drops in birthrates throughout the metropolitan area. So, that might be something to think about as you move forward into the implementation phase. Dr. Wagner stated there may be ways to address the so-called "silver tsunami", by looking at ways to keep our seniors in the community, either by living with their children or in a senior housing complex.

Councilmember Smotherson questioned whether the Plan provided any action steps on how to proactively manage vacant properties? An excellent example is the building that housed Seafood City; how long should we allow that to remain vacant? Dr. Wagner stated the Plan does not preclude Council from taking specific actions. And something he has thought about is strengthening some of the Ordinances to accelerate some of the actions that can be taken.

Ms. Holly stated the creation of this Plan has been the focus of the Plan Commission for two years. They are a dedicated group of remarkably intelligent and knowledgeable commissioners, who have spent a lot of time studying history, policies, and examples of best practices from successful communities around the country. So, after listening to some of the discussions about several of the overarching issues like demographic trends and long-term expectations, she would like to note a couple of things:

- The prior Plan adopted in 2005, talked very specifically about making major updates to the Comprehensive Plan every five years. It is time for an update.
- The prior Plan also encouraged new housing developments with mixed uses and supported pedestrian-oriented activities; which was Priority No. 4 on a scale of 1 to 4. And yet, in 2023, U City High School students told the Commission that it was not safe to bike to school because their streets were not user-friendly. The current Plan puts that goal squarely in front of the community. It's time for us to accept responsibility for a comprehensive view of our streets, transportation, and housing.
- By reviewing St. Louis County's current tax database the Commission learned that in 2022 mixed-use properties within U City were valued at approximately 40% higher than commercial properties on a per-acre basis. That led them to the conclusion that compact neighborhoods, community corridors, and activity centers proposed by the Plan have the potential to increase property values.
- The Commission also conducted significant research regarding the City's history of flooding. That research uncovered MSD's reports of flooding that went back to 1957, and presentations dating back to 2014 that were made to this Council. So, the addition of impermeable surfaces in close proximity to the River des Peres has put a lot of folks in the way of nature.

Ms. Holly stated the Plan is not perfect; it is not a revision of the zoning code, and it is not a simple restructuring of the 2005 Plan, it is truly comprehensive in the sense that it addresses traffic, parks, walking, cycling, stormwater, and zoning. But like any plan, it is only as good as the commitment to implement it. No one is clairvoyant, and the future will undoubtedly bring circumstances that no one today, could have foreseen. But that does not mean you should stop planning and striving to implement those plans. We do the best we can until we know better. So, it's time for U City to commit to implementing this Plan.

Dr. Wagner stated he is aware that the Land Use Map might be somewhat overwhelming, so if Council would prefer, he could look into getting a 3 x 4 foot copy that each member could hang on the wall.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Crow thanked everyone for this presentation and adjourned the Study Session at 6:26 p.m.

LaRette Reese  
City Clerk, MRCC