Technical Assistance Panel

MetroLink UMSL South Station
St. Louis, Missouri

Panel Recommendations
to CMT and Metro
April 2012

Urban Land Institute St. Louis

ULI St. Louis

The mission of ULI St. Louis is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

The Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program provides expert, multi-disciplinary advice to public agencies and non-profit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI St. Louis conducts TAP programs to offer objective and responsible advice on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide sponsoring organizations a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. ULI St. Louis members from across the region participate as panelists, volunteering their time and expertise to the process.

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UMSL South MetroLink Station

Introduction

At the invitation of Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) and Metro (the Bi-State Development Agency), ULI St. Louis was asked to form a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to address possible development around the UMSL South MetroLink (light rail) Station located on the campus of the University of Missouri–St. Louis (the University).

The primary stakeholders include representatives from the University of Missouri–St. Louis, the City of Normandy, Citizens for Modern Transit and Metro, and the study was underwritten by the Associated General Contractors. In assembling the stakeholders, one message was clear: all of the key partners and property owners are very interested in seeing development, particularly Transit Oriented Development occur around the UMSL South Station (the Station).

Panel's Charge

The Sponsors turned to the Panel for answers to the following questions:

1. Considering the parcels controlled by Metro, The City of Normandy, and the University of Missouri–St. Louis, what potential uses will attract development talent and investment capital to the site, building on the area's resident and daytime populations, and add value to the University, Metro, the City of Normandy, and surrounding neighborhoods? In addition, what niche market(s) should be considered and how can the niche(s) be tapped to focus and brand a differentiated identity for this area, such as the focus created at "The Loop"?
2. With two separate areas for development – the redevelopment property immediately east of the station, and the Wedge, identified in the Great Streets project for Natural Bridge Road, what is the best strategy for moving development forward – tying the parcels together or looking for two separate development opportunities with separate development profiles?
3. What potential incentives, i.e., physical infrastructure and financial incentives, could stakeholders, i.e., St. Louis County, City of Normandy, Metro, the University, and MoDOT provide to increase the location's desirability?

TAP Process

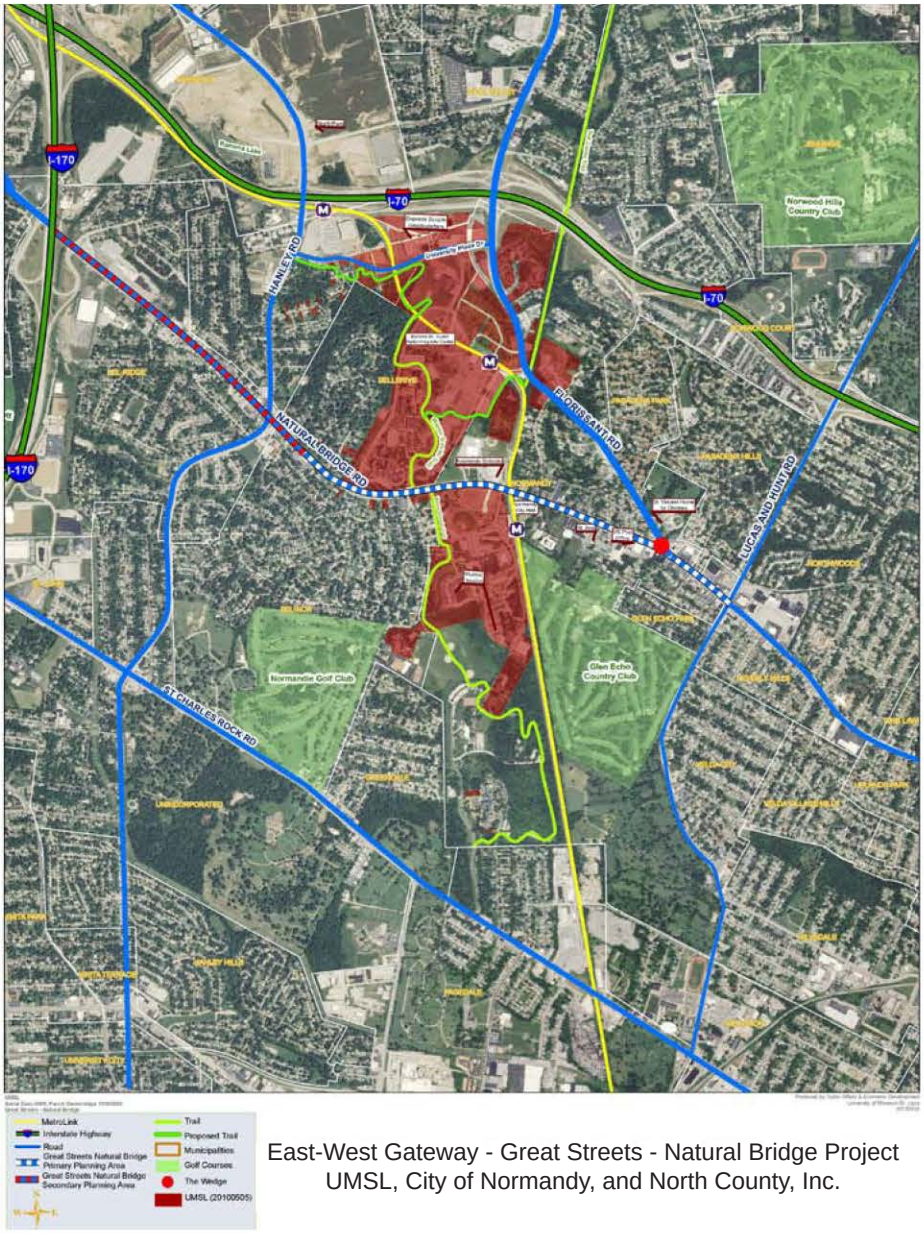
The TAP Panel, consisting of six professionals selected from the ULI membership base, represented the following skills and perspectives: construction, finance, real estate development, municipal and real estate law, community improvement district management, and urban planning.

On the day of the TAP, Panelists assembled at Glen Echo Country Club to receive a briefing from Betty VanUmm, Assistant to the Provost for Public Affairs and Economic Development for the University of Missouri–St. Louis, regarding developments to-date surrounding the UMSL South Station. The Panelists then partnered with the stakeholders for a tour of the development area and surrounding neighborhoods. Upon arrival at the Station proper, John McCarthy, Senior Project Manager for Jacobs Engineering Group, provided additional insights concerning improvements to the Station and other development considerations.

Throughout the morning and into the afternoon, the TAP Panelists conducted meetings with groups of stakeholders, including: the sponsoring organizations - Metro, Citizens for Modern Transit, and the Association of General Contractors; community leaders, elected leaders, and representatives from key community institutions, including the University, Express Scripts, and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; and real estate, economic development, and related professional advisors.

Following the stakeholder meetings, the Panel spent the remainder of the day processing the information and insights gathered from the meetings and reviewing the information and maps provided by the Sponsor. During this work session, drawing on the Panel members' professional expertise, the group further developed and explored the Sponsor's charge and formulated recommendations designed to help attract and facilitate desirable development.

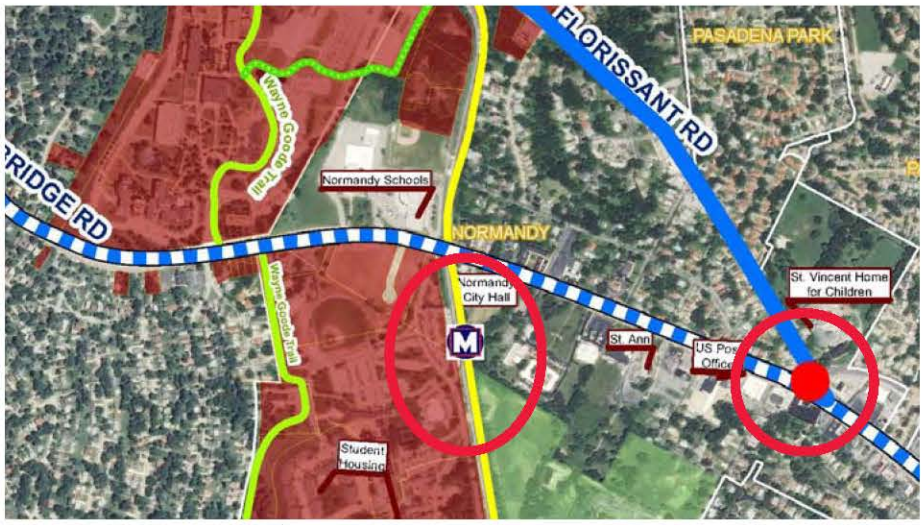
Great Streets Initiative



East-West Gateway - Great Streets - Natural Bridge Project
UMSL, City of Normandy, and North County, Inc.

To-date, a significant amount of study and planning has gone into supporting an effort to include the area along Natural Bridge, from Highway I-170 to Lucas & Hunt Road, in the St. Louis Great Streets Initiative. The goal of the Initiative is to trigger economic and social benefits by centering communities around interesting, lively, and attractive streets that serve all modes of transportation. For the study area, three attributes lend to the viability of Natural Bridge as a Great Street: developable land; a MetroLink station; and the proximity of Glen Echo Country Club. Through the work completed thus far for the Natural Bridge Great Streets project, a vision has been created for Natural Bridge – a vision for a boulevard like Wydown, in Clayton, Missouri, and a vibrant destination for commercial businesses.

As of the date of the TAP, funding was fully secured to support improvements to the portion Natural Bridge identified by the Great Streets Initiative. The stakeholders are now ready to focus on key components within the project area, such as the UMSL South Station, to spark development. The stakeholders see the Station as a possible catalyst for further development along Natural Bridge and along the entire Great Streets project area. The Great Streets project is a great first step in the revival of Natural Bridge and will encourage and promote balanced growth. The project will connect the UMSL South Station to the area surrounding the intersection of Natural Bridge and Florrisant roads, also known as the Wedge. The Great Streets plan turns Natural Bridge, from Hanley Road to Lucas & Hunt Road, back into a two-lane road and includes dedicated bike paths, jogging paths, and an “institutional corridor” linking the neighborhoods to the commercial corridor. There is also a roundabout planned for the intersection at the Wedge to facilitate better traffic flow.



UMSL South MetroLink Station & The Wedge

Key Partnerships

As noted, the stakeholders in the UMSL South Station, including the key institutional and municipal partners and property owners, are very interested in seeing Transit Oriented Development take place at this station.

University of Missouri – St. Louis

As a part of the University of Missouri system, the University of Missouri–St. Louis is a diverse institution with a global reach and growing enrollment. The University is an active partner in the St. Louis region, working with other educational institutions, such as Saint Louis University and Washington University, to share programs and corporate partners such as Express Scripts to add and refine programs impacting curriculum. Representatives indicated that the University is "always looking for partners" to expand its reach and programming. The University is also interested in expanding the number of students on campus and is interested in providing additional amenities to students in and around its campus.

The proximity of the University to the Station cannot be undervalued. The University serves as an institutional anchor in the community, provides a population (students, faculty, and employees) which uses the Station, and provides a built-in consumer base for uses considered for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) surrounding the Station. The University's schools of Business and Education also provide an interesting support network for potential uses within the TOD and serve as yet another asset to development at the UMSL South Station.

The University has demonstrated its development savvy by working to recruit Express Scripts to the area. Although several challenges were identified throughout the recruitment process, the University addressed and overcame those challenges and shaped a development package which included a close partnership between Express Scripts and the University. Through this partnership, Express Scripts is able offer courses and internships at the University which ultimately helps Express Scripts attract and retain talented employees. The University's library, the Touhill performance center, the University's research facilities, the UMSL bus line, and the diversity of the surrounding community and University population all combined to make the site attractive to Express Scripts and secure the development.

Express Scripts

Today, Express Scripts is an important corporate partner in the area. The 2,500 employees at the headquarters campus and the 1,500 additional employees at the NorthPark campus provide a market base for a number of potential uses in the development area, particularly at the Station. The employees are eager for additional restaurant options for breakfast and lunch near their workplace. It was also noted, however, that while MetroLink stations are easily accessible at Express Scripts, most employees travel from homes in neighborhoods not currently served by light rail and therefore drive to work.

City of Normandy

Mayor Patrick Green, representing the City of Normandy, made it clear to the Panel that the City is fully in support of development at the UMSL South Station. For Normandy, its City Hall sits on two acres directly east of the MetroLink rail line and slightly north of the Station. In support of development around the Station, the City has offered to sell the property on which City Hall sits and either relocate to another property within the City or, depending upon the final development outcome, lease space in the completed Station area development.

Mayor Green is also working with the mayors of the other municipalities along Natural Bridge to simplify zoning throughout the corridor. This simplification would reduce the barriers to development, regardless of municipality, and encourage development all along the corridor.

Glen Echo Country Club

Located to the south and east of the Station, Glen Echo Country Club is proximate to the Station and shares a property line along the western edge of one of its driving ranges. The Club is privately owned by individuals who are personally committed to the Club and who have an interest in supporting the surrounding neighborhood.

To promote the sustainability and future success of the Club, representatives are playing an active part in the development discussion around the Station and along Natural Bridge Road. The Club would like to see more upscale development in the area which might be attractive to current and potential club members. With many visitors to the Club using Highway I-170 and Natural Bridge Road, the Club has indicated a strong desire to create a new, identifiable, and significant entrance to the Club grounds from Natural Bridge – perhaps similar to the entrance to nearby Pasadena Hills. Finally, many Club members living in the City of St. Louis, University City, and Clayton might consider using MetroLink to access the Club, yet there is currently no direct access to the Club from the Station.

Sisters of the Good Shepherd

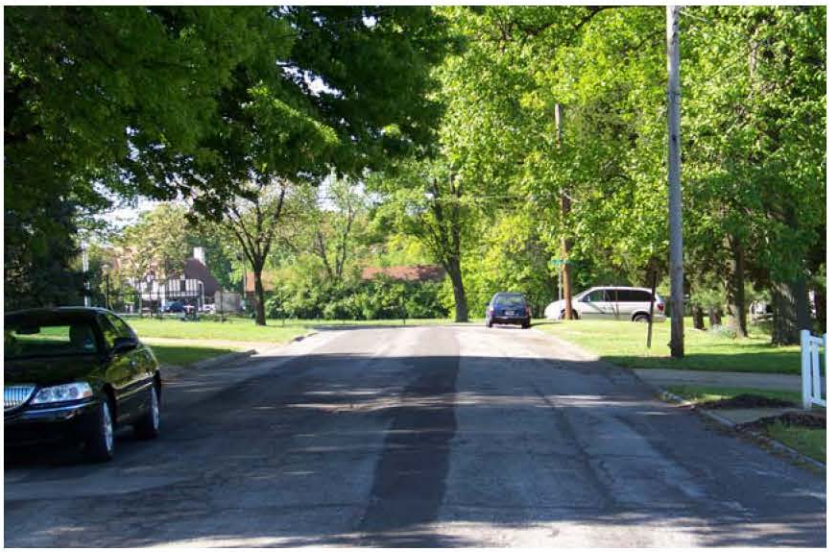
As a significant property owner near the Station, rep-

resentatives from the Sisters of the Good Shepherd were interviewed during the stakeholder meetings. The Sisters' property, given to the Order over 100 years ago, sits east of and adjacent to Normandy City Hall. The Order is relatively small in staff and residents at this location (fewer than 30 full-time residents) and provides retirement living and nursing services to retired Sisters and rehabilitation services to women seeking treatment for alcohol addiction. The Sisters have indicated that they are interested in gaining more direct access to the UMSL South Station and had previously enjoyed access via an informal path from their property to the Station from the east. The erection of a fence along the rail line has since blocked this access. When discussing the possibility of an easement to once again provide public access to the Station from the east, the Sisters expressed concern about the type, size, and placement of an easement and referred the question to a consultant with whom the Order has been working. The Sisters are not currently interested in selling their property, yet would like to "support development supporting Metro."

Surrounding Community

Natural Bridge Road, originally a plank road, was paved and widened to four lanes in the 1950's. With the construction of the interstate highway system, particularly the additions of Highways I-170 and I-70, traffic on Natural Bridge no longer necessitates four lanes. The wide lanes and light vehicular traffic combine to create the appearance of a somewhat abandoned area and businesses struggle to stay open.

Outside perceptions of the area are mixed. University leaders and members of Glen Echo Country Club shared with the Panel their struggle against perceptions of the neighborhood and surrounding area as "blighted." University students do not stay in the area after class, golf club members rarely stay to enjoy the dining benefits at the Club, and professionals working at nearby institutions do not linger at the close of the business day. All of these factors combine to leave the neighborhood and surrounding community relatively empty at night. Empty streets do not foster the sense of security needed to encourage people to stay at the end of the business day.



Oakmount Street looking south to Glen Echo Country Club

While the area enjoys a rich history, residents and community leaders want to make the area sustainable – a community where families will continue to stay for generations. The Mayor of Normandy noted, that many new families, however, have a difficult time understanding how the community will continue to grow and fit their needs in the future. New residents also noted the importance of public transportation in their decision to move to Normandy, including access to highways, MetroLink, and buses.

Throughout the stakeholder interviews, it was clear that the residents are proud of their community and enjoyed growing up and continuing to live in the various neighborhoods that make up the study area. It is a strong and stable community with many beautiful and well-maintained homes. (It is interesting to note that the entire city of Pasadena Hills, the most affluent African American city in the country, is on the national register of historic places.)

At the same time, many residents expressed disappointment that they were unable to enjoy such simple conveniences as local restaurants, proximate healthcare, and neighborhood grocery shopping. These services and many more businesses providing additional services to the area have either left or failed to thrive and have since closed.

The area supports a racially diverse population, another characteristic enjoyed and promoted by the resident stakeholders. They felt that the development which ultimately takes shape in the study area should support the diverse nature of the community. The diversity of the residents, their values, and their personal interest in seeing the area thrive are assets for development and should be leveraged.

The UMSL South Station

Located at the easternmost section of the UMSL South Campus, the UMSL South Station sits below-grade and south of Natural Bridge Road by approximately 400 feet. Buses serve the Station, helping facilitate transit ridership throughout the Normandy district.

The Station is somewhat remote and largely surrounded by the University. People using Natural Bridge Road – either in cars or on foot – are not able to see the Station from Natural Bridge and vehicular access is not obvious. As mentioned previously, the Station is also inaccessible from properties immediately east and requires passengers to enter via Natural Bridge and East Drive. Lacking even basic restroom facilities, the Station is very austere and does not encourage riders to linger. Currently, there are 680 parking spaces at the Station and excess parking capacity is the norm. One area resident noted that he "loves the stop because no one knows about it. [He] can pull right up, park, and hop on the train."

While basic transit connectivity exists via the existence of the UMSL South Station, rider connectivity to Natural Bridge Road and to the east needs to be enhanced to better support the community and Metro ridership. Through development at and around this Station, the Station will achieve greater visibility, and riders will have an increased sense of the built environment and a greater sense of security.

It is also important to note the benefit of the proximity of the University to the Station. Younger generations, particularly people under 30 years of age, value and use transit and are relying less and less on individually-owned automobiles. This creates potential for the Station and for transit going forward.

Through the Arts in Transit Program, a sculpture will soon be placed at the Station, adding to the visual interest of the station environment. The eventual development of the boulevard along Natural Bridge will also help make the surrounding environment more appealing.

It is also worth noting that the Great Rivers Greenway Trail and the St. Vincent's Trail will cross at the UMSL South Station and connect to the greater greenway trail traveling south to DeBaliviere in the City of St. Louis.

This Station continues to generate development interest, yet the stakeholders are looking for a catalyst development to spark broader interest and additional development in the area with the goal of creating a thriving business corridor connecting the Station site to the Wedge.

Challenges to Development

Demographics

One of biggest strengths of the study area – its diverse population of residents and students – might also pose one of its biggest challenges. With such a range of population including students, middle to upper middle class residents, an aging community, and larger lower-income surrounding communities, a single-use development might have difficulties gaining traction with one demographic without alienating others. One stakeholder asked, "Is it possible to create something attractive to all segments of the community population?"

Automobile-centric Design

"The campus was designed for the car," noted another stakeholder. While many students, faculty, and employees commute to the University via MetroLink, a much greater population arrives at the campus by car. To support development around the Station and to recognize the desire of the younger generation to use transit, further development in and around the University should take great care to include the pedestrian and bicyclist.

View of the University from the Station

Business

To-date, businesses operating along Natural Bridge have been left to succeed or fail without organized assistance. The market has driven the demand, much as it has in the University City Loop where a number of businesses have failed along the way. Alternatively, to help bolster the success of new development in the study area, stakeholders may want to consider deploying a more focused effort to attract and retain new businesses.

Perceptions

There are a number of municipalities surrounding the study area, but there is no sense of place. This is exacerbated by the lack of adequate signage or other visual cues that one has arrived in the City of Normandy. The study area has several "front doors" – Highway I-170, Lucas & Hunt Road, Florissant Road, Hanley Road, etc. – but a visitor is not made aware of arriving in Normandy. Unlike passing through the archway at BelNor, this area lacks a visual entrance or anchor. Without this visual marker or sense of identity, visitors may not even realize they passed through Normandy.

There are also perceptions of the larger area which may be working against future development. Many view North County as downtrodden, blighted, or unstable. For those who see this area as a part of that larger concern, branding or re-branding the area – and perhaps the surrounding community – should be considered.

The region's perception of transit is also problematic and over-simplified: many believe that those who use public transit do so out of necessity because they earn a lower income. Yet other major metropolitan areas enjoy populations which make constant use of transit regardless of income level. St. Louis residents need to understand that MetroLink can be an integral part of daily life and not something used just a few times a year.

The Wedge

Armed with neighborhood perspectives, historical information, and stakeholder input, the Panel was ready to directly address the questions posed to the TAP.

Land Use Ideas

The first question posed to the Panel related to land use: Considering the parcels controlled by Metro, The City of Normandy, and the University of Missouri–St. Louis, what potential uses will attract development talent and investment capital to the site, building on the area's resident and daytime populations, and add value to the University, Metro, the City of Normandy, and surrounding neighborhoods? In addition, what niche market(s) should be considered and how can the niche(s) be tapped to focus and brand a differentiated identity for this area, such as the focus created at "The Loop"?

Throughout the work day, the Panel heard from a vast array of stakeholders and asked each group and each individual what uses he or she might like to see at the site. Answers ranged as widely as the participants in the interviews and included ideas such as a grocery store, a conference center/hotel, a day care, a health clinic or medical facility, restaurants, retail, and housing (from student to senior, rental to for-sale). As one stakeholder noted, "It's a great place, but there are key characteristics missing – dining options, stores, groceries."

Grocery

The nearest grocery store is located over two miles away from the subject area in Cool Valley on St. Charles Rock Road, north of Interstate I-70. As the study area does not already present a property parcel of the size needed for a larger grocery store (similar to regional chains like Dierbergs or Schnucks), a smaller-scale grocery store (similar to Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, or Culinaria) would be a better fit for this site. While these smaller-scale concepts may be perceived as too high-end, an independently-owned IGA might work assuming a comfort level with the owner/operator.

Hotel/Conference

With the proximity of the University and Express Scripts and the latter's desire for additional meeting space and overnight accommodations, one might consider the addition of a combination hotel and conference facility on the site. At the same time, a conference center would not address the desire for more street-level activity in the area and may actually serve as a greater physical barrier (blocking access and sight lines) and psychological barrier between the Station and Natural Bridge to the east.

Day Care

Stakeholders from Express Scripts and the University expressed an interest in additional day care options in the area. Through its School of Education, the University provides high-quality programming and staffing, yet the current physical facility at the University is less than optimal. However, in discussions with developers who have previously courted day care providers and pre-primary schools, each noted that the location at or near the Station site would not provide the much-desired thoroughfare or highway visibility critical to support enrollment.

Healthcare

When Normandy Hospital left, it left a significant gap in healthcare services in the community, causing residents, students, and employees to travel outside the area for basic healthcare needs. Today, many residents with healthcare issues choose to delay treatment until the need becomes urgent, requiring emergency response services and thus placing significant stress on the system. Adding a TakeCare clinic or similar medical facility might alleviate some of these issues.

Housing

While the neighborhood is full of single-family homes, there might be an opportunity for housing which addresses other criteria not currently met by the existing housing stock. Many residents have lived their entire lives in the area. When the time comes that a homeowner can no longer navigate the stairs or maintain a home, there are few options for staying in the community. Senior housing would be a viable alternative and meet the needs of this aging population. There is an added benefit in placing senior housing near the University as the University offers free classes to individuals over the age of 62.

The surrounding neighborhoods are also full of older homes with very few alternatives for those interested in a new or newer home. Many would-be home buyers are simply not interested in the charm of an older home or may not be able to manage the additional maintenance an older home often requires.

Student housing was also considered, however the University indicated that expansion space currently exists on the campus and thus has no need to secure additional student housing off campus. At the same time, if the university would consider moving some student housing off campus and closer to the Station, the Station could be a

valuable amenity for the students, and the proximity of the student population could add a significant catalyst to other potential uses.

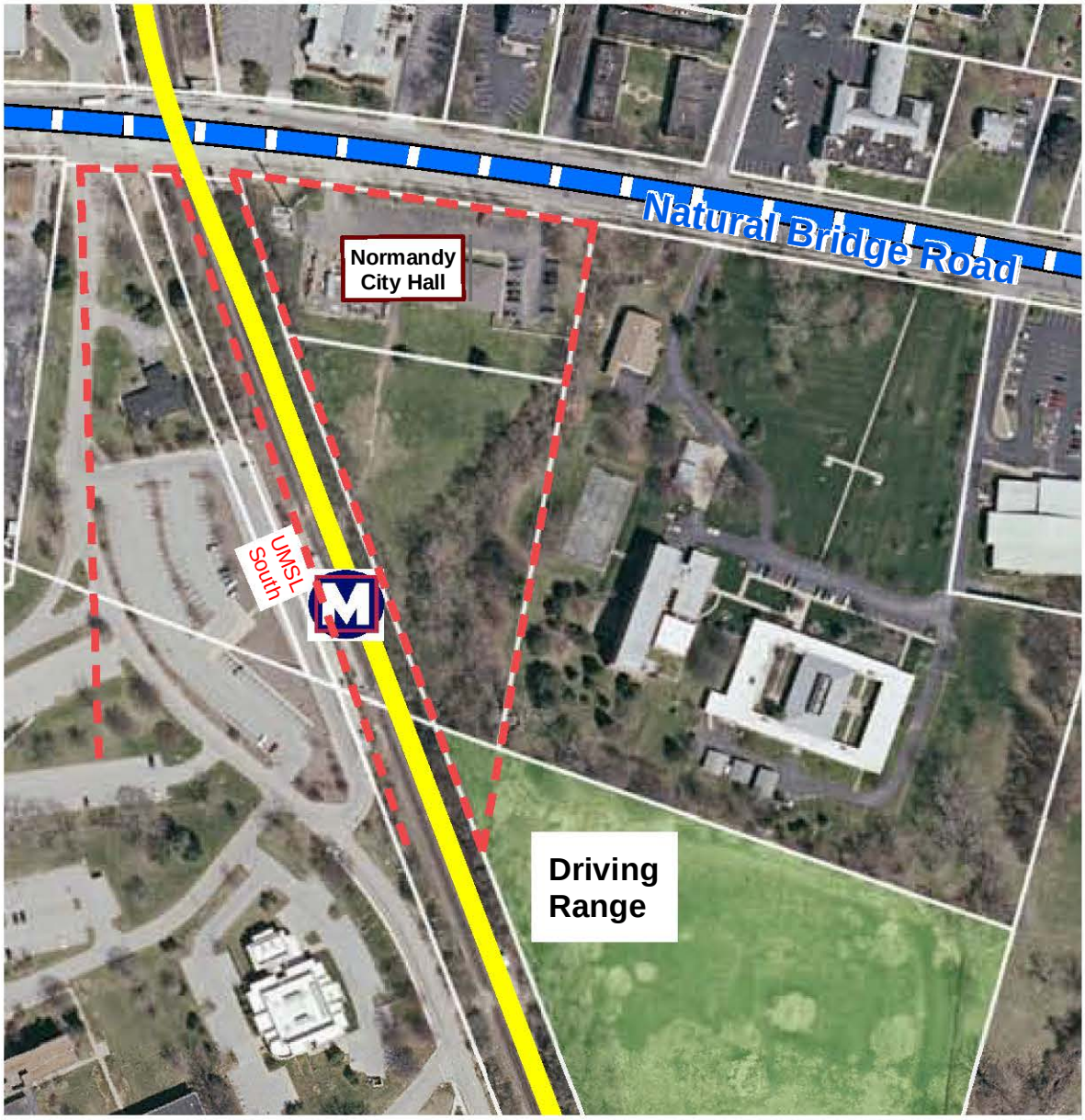
Restaurants & Retail

Many stakeholders mentioned the lack of dining options in the area. Adding restaurants to the development mix would draw people in, give them a reason to linger, and provide a great reason to return. Restaurants would attract students and, with the right mix, residents with families. Outside seating at these restaurants would create activity along the street and add to the feeling of a vibrant community. As another stakeholder noted, "there's no greater amenity for pedestrians than other pedestrians."

In great university cities around the country one often sees a successful retail strip which serves to bring everyone together regardless of age. Retail should play a part in the development mix, but it would not be the biggest piece nor would it involve a "big box" retailer.

Business Incubator

Given the struggle new business owners often experience in the area, a suggestion was made to consider a business incubator in the proposed development. To support the concept, the School of Business at the University could partner with the development in some fashion and provide business mentoring services to new business owners. The University could also use the incubator as a learning lab for students wishing to launch a business idea.



The Development Area

Development Strategy

Following the discussion of land use, the Panel turned to the second question posed to the TAP: with two separate areas for development – the redevelopment property immediately east of the Station, and the Wedge, identified in the Great Streets project for Natural Bridge Road, what is the best strategy for moving development forward – tying the parcels together or looking for two separate development opportunities with separate development profiles?

The Wedge

The Wedge, a historic business district at the eastern end of the Great Streets area, was formed by the intersection of Natural Bridge and Florrissant roads. The Wedge already enjoys a relatively dense business environment and has, more recently, been subject to considerable planning via the Great Streets initiative.

City Hall Site

The area behind City Hall and east of the UMSL South Station is poised for development, particularly Transit Oriented Development. Combined with the property on which City Hall sits, the area behind becomes exponentially more attractive to development and would serve as a much-needed eastern access point to the UMSL South Station.

The Wedge

Normandy City Hall

Developable Land, South of Normandy City Hall

The initial challenge is to create density. The broad area under consideration – the City Hall site, the Wedge, and the Natural Bridge corridor between – spans over a half-mile of land. At the eastern end of the study area, The Wedge will need additional nurturing by stakeholders, but it is already fairly well under way. At the western edge, the larger City Hall site provides greater initial development potential as well as potential for acting as the catalyst development sought by the stakeholders. By initially starting with one area – the City Hall site – and creating a dense development, stakeholders may achieve the catalyst desired and attract additional development to address the vacant buildings and developable land between the site and the Wedge.

To address development in the study area, the Panel recommends creating a Master Developer entity in which the University plays a key role together with the City of Normandy and North County Inc. Similar to the structure of Grand Center Inc., this Master Developer would tie the entire district together and work to find the other developers to address in pieces within the development area.

The Master Developer would control the uses and the design aesthetics for the entire study area, from the City Hall site to the Wedge. Additionally, a local governance structure could be implemented to guide/control the addition and mix of uses. Land use regulations should also be addressed along the length of Natural Bridge Road in the Great Streets area. Each new business owner or developer considering moving into the community should be able to easily discover and understand the 'going-in rules' of the area. Building and lot sizes may need to be reconfigured within the study area to meet the needs of new business owners/developers and yet retain the existing character of the neighborhood. A universal zoning code should be put in place or, if one is already in progress, finalized. By way of example, interested parties could look to development along South Grand in the City of St. Louis and the formation of the managing entity, the South Grand Community Improvement District.

Destination Development

With the variety of land use ideas on the table, the challenge to create a sense of place, and the need for more activity on the street, the Panel began to explore the idea of creating a dense, mixed-use environment in the study area. The area along Natural Bridge Road has potential and, together with the Great Streets initiative, could be developed into something similar to the University City Loop. By targeting a development which leverages the student population, provides services to the larger community, serves as a destination for the area, and maximizes the proximity of transit, nearly all of the needs identified by the stakeholders are met. Adding residential and retail to the area would create an interactive, vibrant, and more full-day environment around campus. Additionally, by adding a programing piece to the development via periodic entertainment and performance, the area would be able to continue to draw visitors and create a sense of place.

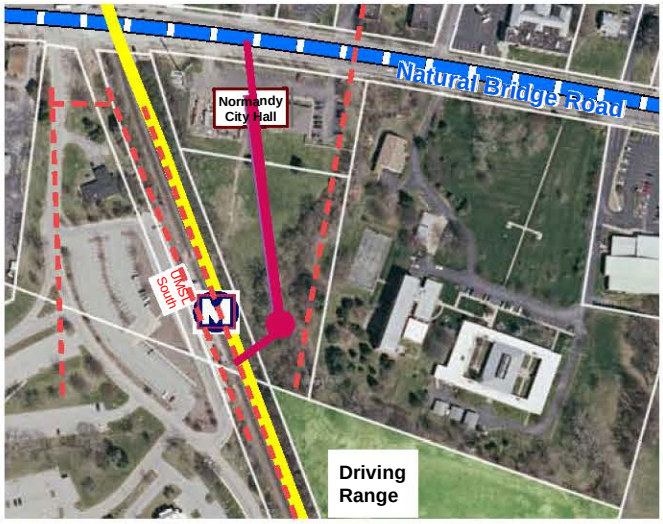
By using a targeted, integrated approach to development, there is potential to create a destination at the Station, including a mix of restaurants, retail, and office uses. A destination development would support Metro's goals of driving ridership and economic development around the stations along its rail lines. The University would enjoy the benefit of a destination amenity in close proximity to its residential population and students. Neighborhood residents, employees of the University and local businesses, and Glen Echo members would have a reason to stay in the area and spend their disposable income.

Plank Street Station

To create the destination development and a corridor of mixed use, the Panel recommends building a new street from Natural Bridge Road south through the City Hall property. The new street would terminate in an event space due east of the UMSL South Station. The Station would connect to the new development via a pedestrian walkway or bridge. To rebrand the area and create the much-desired sense of place, the area would be named Plank Street Station and would encompass the UMSL South Station, rebranded Plank Street Station. "Plank Street" gives a nod to the history of Natural Bridge road, yet should not bring to mind any existing negative references. Through the use of one brand name for the development area, a new name without existing negative connotations, development and investment in the area might be more easily realized.

The University, MetroLink station, and neighborhood surrounding Plank Street Station would benefit from the development's amenities and provide additional support for the development. In addition to on-street parking and parking in the existing MetroLink lot, the land north of the existing Station could be utilized for parking for Plank Street Station via a new parking garage. To the south of the new Plank Street, the driving range could become a mix of residential uses and could provide a direct connection to the Station for members Glen Echo Country Club. Within the neighborhood to the east of Plank Street, access to the Plank Street residential area component and the Country Club could be realized via an improved Oakmont Street.

The Plank Street Station entertainment district becomes a critical amenity for the University, attracting and retaining students and professional staff and sheltering its student housing flank and investment.



Plank Street Station

The Boulevard - St. Louis, Owned and Developed by Pace Properties

Potential Incentives

Considering the Plank Street Station concept, the Panel addressed the third and final question posed to TAP: what potential incentives, i.e., physical infrastructure and financial incentives, could stakeholders, i.e., St. Louis County, City of Normandy, Metro, the University, and MoDOT provide to increase the location's desirability?

The study area needs a "catalyst" development to spur additional investment in and further development along Natural Bridge Road. To move development forward, the Master Developer will need to make use of every available incentive, possibly including TIF, TDD, CID, etc. The Panel strongly recommended a redevelopment plan for the district via the formation of a Chapter 353 Redevelopment Corporation for the entire Great Streets redevelopment area, including the Plank Street Station development.

Chapter 353 of the Missouri Revised Statutes, the "Urban Redevelopment Corporation Law," allows for the formation of a specialized not-for-profit corporation to acquire, construct, maintain, and operate redevelopment projects per the Redevelopment Plan. The 353 designation allows for 25-year real property tax abatement (100% for 10 years, 50% for 15 years), the ability to borrow and mortgage as an entity, and provides long-term funding sources when overlaid with any existing TIF, CID, or TDD districts. Examples of Chapter 353 Redevelopment Districts within the St. Louis region include the Ford plant redevelopment into Aviator Business Park in Hazelwood and the redevelopment of Grand Center in the City of St. Louis.

The 353 Redevelopment Corporation would serve as the Master Developer of the new district (from the Plank Street Station to the Wedge). Leadership and governance of the Corporation would be provided by a board of directors consisting of at least three, but not more than 13, members represented by the major stakeholders including the University, the City of Normandy, North County Inc., and others.

Additional funding opportunities may be available via partnerships with other key stakeholders in the community. The event space and entertainment plaza might provide an interesting opportunity to raise funds via sponsorship or naming rights by a corporate partner, perhaps Express Scripts. The members of Glen Echo Country Club could conduct a private offering and establish a certain percentage of ownership in the district; in return, the Club would receive its desired new entrance. In support of the additional visibility and increased ridership Metro is likely to realize with the development of Plank Street Station, Metro is encouraged to consider developing a pedestrian bridge/connection to Station from the east as well as a new parking garage north and west of the Station. (The Panel estimates that approximately 300 spaces would be needed to serve the Plank Street Station entertainment district.) Any of these options could help fund the development. Used together, however, the development would be best positioned for success.

Summary

The Panel offered the following key points as the stakeholders evaluate potential development strategies and land use potential for the UMSL South Station area.

Master Developer. The stakeholders should consider the formation of a Master Developer partnership to guide investment and uses in the Great Streets area.

Unified Governance & Zoning. Establish a local governance structure and universal zoning code to guide new uses for the Great Streets area.

Utilize Chapter 353*.* Through the establishment of a Chapter 353 Redevelopment Corporation, stakeholders may begin to structure long-term development goals and funding.

Include the City Hall Site*.* Taken alone, the property east of the Station and south of City Hall is not large enough to develop into something that will serve as a catalyst for the area. Stakeholders should consider a joint venture with the City of Normandy to co-develop the City Hall site and either relocate City Hall operations elsewhere or incorporate its operations into new space in the development.

Station Connections*.* Create a much-needed connection to the UMSL South Station/Plank Street Station from the east. All connections to the Station, physical as well as philosophical, should be enhanced and promoted to drive ridership at the Station and bring visitors to Plank Street.

Plank Street Station*.* Build a new mixed-use street and corridor through the larger development parcel. Terminate the street in an event space. Brand the new mixed-use, Transit Oriented Development as "Plank Street Station" and use it as a catalyst site for the 353 area. With the catalyst site in place, then the Master Developer can begin to address infill development between this area and the Wedge.

Oakmount Street*.* Enhance and expand Oakmount Street to provide access to new residential options south of the Plank Street corridor and provide a new entrance to Glen Echo Country Club.

Gateway to Greatness*.* The University should consider using Plank Street Station to demonstrate its vision as a "Gateway to Greatness."

Panel Professional Biographies

Andy Barnes, IMPACT Strategies, TAP Chair. Andy is the Director of Business Development for IMPACT Strategies, Inc. a full service construction management and design/build firm located in Fairview Heights, Illinois, with projects throughout the St. Louis bi-state region. Andy has been involved in over $100 million in construction projects including 500,000 square feet of loft redevelopments on Washington Avenue in downtown St. Louis, hundreds of senior housing units throughout the region, and the St. Charles Convention Center. Andy has also been involved in efforts to revitalize key areas of the City of St. Louis, including the Carondelet neighborhood and the Lemp Brewery Complex in the Benton Park neighborhood. He is a LEED Accredited Professional and a member of the Management Committee for ULI St. Louis. Mr. Barnes has a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from the University of Missouri and a Master in Construction Management from Washington University.

Kent Evans, Vice President, Brokerage, Intelica Commercial Real Estate. Kent began his career with Intelica as Vice President of Property Management and more recently became Vice President of Industrial and Office Brokerage for the commercial real estate firm. Kent has extensive experience in commercial real estate development, redevelopment, management, leasing, acquisitions, financing, and property management. He also has extensive experience utilizing TIF, TDD and CID bonds to enhance the financial structure of real estate projects. Prior to joining Intelica, Kent worked for the Greater Missouri Builders for 15 years first as the Manager of the Commercial Real Estate Division and then as Vice President of the Commercial Real Estate Division. Kent has a degree in Political Science and History from Webster University in St. Louis.

Andrew Gulotta, Attorney, Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C. Andrew is an Associate in the Real Estate Practice Group and represents clients in a variety of real estate matters, including acquisitions and dispositions, foreclosures and workouts, commercial leasing, development, real estate-based lending, and zoning and land use. Prior to joining Greensfelder, Andrew worked in a government planning agency where he gained broad experience in the field of urban planning and land use regulation, including subdivision, zoning, variance and CUP issues as well as community development, comprehensive planning efforts, and the application of geographic information technology in cartographic, demographic, economic, and spatial analysis. In addition, Andrew has served as a commissioner on multiple Tax Increment Financing (TIF) commissions. He has also worked closely with numerous state and local economic development authorities as well as regional planning and inter-governmental agencies on a wide spectrum of development initiatives. Andrew is a graduate of Saint Louis University School of Law.

Amos Harris, Principal, Spinnaker St. Louis, LLC. Amos is a principal of Spinnaker St. Louis and is currently leading the development of the Laurel and Metropolitan Exchange projects in downtown St. Louis. Combined, the two projects make up a $250 million mixed-use Transit Oriented Development surrounding the Convention Center MetroLink Station. Amos has a degree in history from Yale University.

Laura Radcliff, Senior Vice President, Public Finance, Stifel Nicolaus & Company, Inc. During her career, Laura has served as investment banker on more than 300 bond issues with a total par amount in excess of $16 billion. Laura's primary investment banking focus is on revenue bonds of public entities. She has served as investment banker for numerous development financings, including Public Improvement Districts, Tax Increment Finance Districts, Municipal Management Districts and Community Development Districts across the country. Laura has lectured extensively on the topic of financing to a wide range of audiences, including the American Bar Association, the Council of Development Financing Agencies, several individual state agencies and municipal organizations, and numerous real estate and economic development organizations. She currently serves as a member of the board of the Council of Development Financing Agencies and the Illinois Tax Increment Association. Laura holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban Planning from Michigan State University and she earned a Masters of Public Affairs degree from Princeton University.

Rachel Witt, Executive Director, South Grand Community Improvement District. As Executive Director of the South Grand Community Improvement District, Rachel oversees security, maintenance, capital improvements, economic development, and administration for the District. Since her hire six years ago, the District has received over $5 million in grants, assessments, and sales tax revenues and secured funding for a free surface parking lot for the District's retail customers. Recently named a Great Street, the South Grand CID has also received funding for street and sidewalk improvements, with Phase 2 construction anticipated in Summer 2012. Rachel earned her B.S. from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and a Master's degree, with a public administration focus, from Widener University. Rachel is President of the Third District Police Partnership and has served on its board for six years. She served on the Lafayette Square Restoration board as the Vice President of Community Affairs (2007–2008), on the St. Louis Regional Bicycle Federation as Treasurer (2008–2010), and recently became Vice President of DeSales Housing Corporation (2010–Present).

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