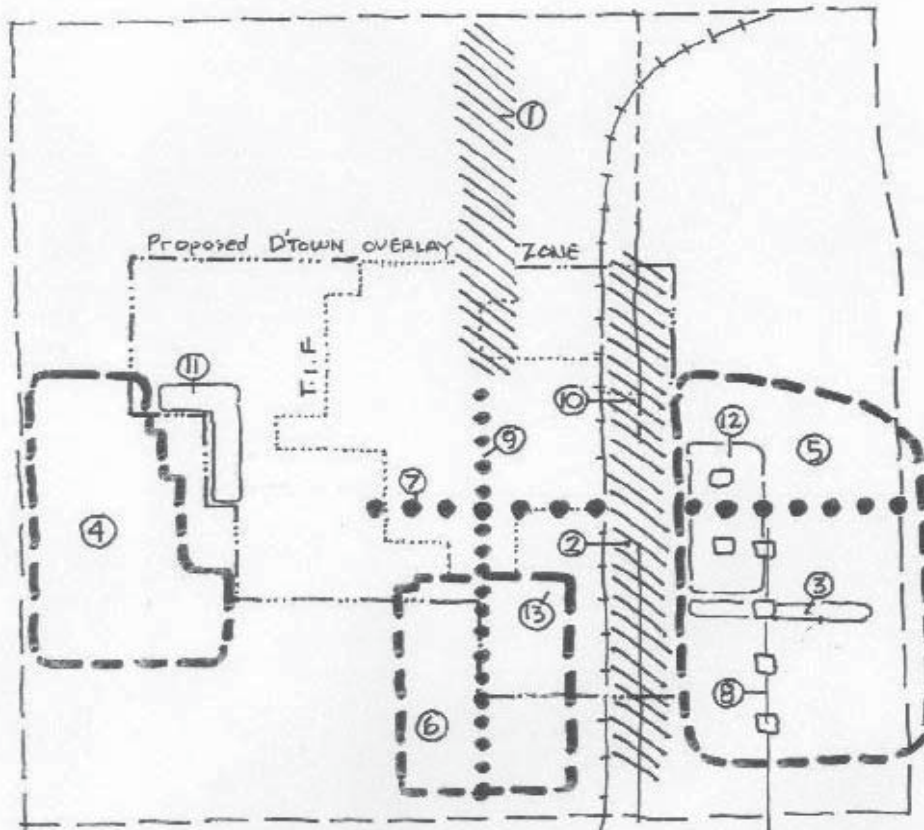


N e i g h b o r h o o d F r a m e w o r k P l a n



Neighborhood Framework Plan



Neighborhood Framework Plan

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In-town Neighborhoods

Thriving neighborhoods are the backbone of a successful community. This includes a successful downtown. For downtown Springfield, a positive relationship between the mixed-use center and the adjacent residential community will greatly increase the quality of life in these in-town neighborhoods.

There is great variety and opportunity in Springfield's in-town neighborhoods. But unfortunately, what they share along with their proximity to downtown is a common sense of threat from downtown. The west side, especially the Central City neighborhood, appears under siege from an expanding Capitol district. To the south, expanding office use in the Aristocracy Hill neighborhood threatens the residential balance of the south side. In contrast, the Enos Park neighborhood on the north feels threatened by the potential for increased tourists and traffic making their way to the Lincoln Tomb. Neighborhoods east of 11th Street are within a few blocks of downtown, but feel a sense of abandonment as goods and services are not extended in their direction to meet the community's needs. The 10th street tracks and 11th Street are operating as a great divide cutting them off from downtown.

R/UDAT Neighborhood Framework Plan

The R/UDAT framework plan contains recommendations intended to shore up community boundaries by stabilizing residential use and at the same time, improving connections from neighborhoods to the downtown area. The plan is a suggestion of activities and zoning that will become tools for the community leadership. Successful implementation of plans stems from community acceptance and promotion and protection of the plan. Springfield has enthusiastic community leadership that is looking for implementation tools.

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Neighborhood vulnerability is often evidenced by low rates of owner occupied housing. Enos Park for example has a rental rate of 78%. When high rates of rental housing occur in predominately single-family structure neighborhoods, the responsibility for maintenance gets blurred between the owner and renters. This leads to neglected properties and houses in disrepair. Run down properties are open to speculation for alternative uses which are often not compatible with residential uses. Worse, if the structure is torn down, as has occurred in the eastern section of the west side neighborhoods to build small parking lots, it can lead to the permanent removal of the single family residential fabric, further destabilizing the community.

The R/UDAT framework plan promotes healthy communities and an improved quality of life downtown. The plan focuses on coordinating programs that rationalize land use through a series of corridor studies; promotion programs aimed at increasing home ownership and funding for the renovation of residential units; promote new infill residential development and improved streetscapes both in and between neighborhoods to take advantage of the walk-ability of the downtown area.

FRAMEWORK PLAN ELEMENTS

North 6th Street Corridor Improvements

A study of the land uses on 6th Street, north of Madison is intended to analyze the options for the reuse of existing buildings and, where there are gaps, development of infill projects, especially mixed use. At the same time, plans for streetscape improvements should continue up to Carpenter. North of Carpenter, the streetscape development should reflect the residential character of the Enos Park neighborhood and connect to Lincoln's Tomb.

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11th Street Corridor Redevelopment Area

The redevelopment of 11th Street is crucial to the revitalization of the neighborhoods to the east. A corridor analysis will review land uses from the east side of the 10th Street rail line to the west side of 12th Street from Carpenter Street to south of Cook Street. The focus should be on creating a strategy for development of the corridor that will fill in the gaps; the objective being to provide community level goods and services, including a grocery store, to serve east side residents as well as the emerging downtown population; add multifamily residential uses to further support commercial uses and provide alternative housing opportunities; provide a gateway feature at Capitol Avenue on both sides of 11th street. Introducing community level goods and services to the 11th Street Corridor will not compete with downtown commercial. Proposed commercial development blocks will be marketed to stores with formats which are not compatible with downtown typology, and generally require a lot of parking, such as grocery stores, warehouse stores, family restaurants, for example. These complementary commercial uses will add variety to the array of goods and services available to in-town residents. Increased services and design guidelines requiring buildings to frame the street will also set the stage for an improved amenity and sidewalk/ streetscape development that will create a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.

Cook Street Neighborhood Revitalization

The revitalization of the Cook Street commercial area will focus on reclaiming a deteriorated neighborhood node. The revitalization program should provide opportunities for locally operated neighborhood business in a traditional neighborhood layout. Emphasis will be on vibrant storefronts with limited parking. The R/UDAT team feels that both the 11th Street corridor and Cook Street retail revitaliza-

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tion study will enhance the existing work City staff has started on the South Grand corridor and the east side of the neighborhood, east of 15th Street.

Home Ownership Zones

Home Ownership Zones are intended to provide a variety of funding mechanisms for facilitating home ownership of residential units. The plan proposes two such areas, one on each side of downtown: West Side and East Side Home Ownership Zones. The boundaries are general in nature and primarily indicate an area of focus. Programs similar to the Enos Park TIF district should be applied to these two new zones to assist in renovation costs. Funding programs should be administered and organized to provide opportunities to combine and overlap programs to provide the maximum benefit to prospective and existing homeowners. Assistance should consider low interest loans for renovations, and where eligible, provide downpayment assistance through new programs.

There are existing Community Housing Development Organization groups on the east side administering a variety of home ownership tools. Their efforts, as well as the efforts of west side communities should also be supported by the City with targeted code enforcement for the properties of absent landlords that have fallen into disrepair. Citizens can also assist city staff with starting neighborhood deputy programs to train citizens to report on code violations.

HUD has several funding sources to assist in home ownership, including low interest loans for renovations in priority areas. In addition, the newly created American Dream Downpayment Fund has been established to provide downpayment capital for first time home buyers meeting eligibility requirements. These funding mechanisms are addressed in the implementation section of this report.

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Aristocracy Hill Conservation District

Conservation districts are emerging as increasingly important preservation tools for neighborhoods. They are usually utilized when enough of the original fabric and building stock of the neighborhood has been lost to make national or local historic designation unlikely. Conservation districts usually address land use issues such as height, setback, mass, and rhythm to ensure compatible infill construction, and usually address the cultural importance of the neighborhood to the larger community. The team recommends an inventory of historic resources in the Aristocracy Hill neighborhood and a survey of the design and land use elements that are character-defining elements of the district. These elements should be incorporated into the design guidelines as part of the designation of the neighborhood as a conservation district. These guidelines should also be incorporated as a subarea of the downtown overlay district.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Capitol Commons Infill

This demonstration project attempts to show how the residential urban fabric can be reclaimed. The proposed town houses fit into the existing block pattern, and are designed to be sympathetic to the community and the massive Capitol complex. In addition, the new town homes will provide an innovative and clear community boundary.

Capitol Green Residential Community

This demonstration project proposes a traditional urban community at the Capitol

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gateway on the east side, east of 11th Street. The plan is to develop a single-family community with garages in the rear, accessed off laneways, streetscape enhancements, and a series of pocket parks. The purpose of the plan will be to provide a development of significant impact and quality to complement the ongoing scattered site infill housing in the area.

Aristocracy Hill Residential Infill

This infill area is located in the northeast corner of the neighborhood south of the Lincoln Home Historic District. While the zoning in the district will continue to allow a mix of office, institutional and residential uses. The overlay zoning should limit the allowable square footage of office use to ensure residential use remains the predominant use. Alternatively, the area could be changed to residential use only to help bring back the original neighborhood character.

Capitol Downtown Overlay Zoning District

One significant tool in the framework plan is the proposed Capitol Downtown Overlay District. The purpose of the overlay district is to incorporate special performance requirements including, but not limited to parking, downtown landscaping, signage, lighting and set back lines into the Springfield Zoning Ordinance to ensure quality development occurs within the district.

Implementation of the above programs and plan elements is an important part of achieving positive results in these neighborhoods. The existing TIF district and CDBG funding sources should support the streetscape economic development components of the studies.



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