

**Creve Coeur Economic Development Strategy
Public Forum
April 16, 2004
Meeting Summary**

City Representatives

Marc Braun, Economic Development Commission
Don Kalicak, Economic Development Commission
Joe Ambrose, Economic Development Commission
Theresa Lynch, Council Member Ward II
Mark Perkins, City Administrator
Dan Smith, Finance Director
Ellen Dailey, Planner

Public Participants

Ned Maniscalco
Shiela Weaver
Marvin Gelber
Judy Meador
Bill Koman

Marc Braun welcomed participants then gave a power point presentation outlining:

- Overview of the Economic Development Commission's purpose and efforts since established
- Overview of the city's existing economic development efforts
- Overview of the Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis prepared by UMSL
- Draft mission statement and goals for the economic development strategy

The draft mission statement and draft goals and objectives were distributed to participants.

Discussion followed the presentation:

Mr. Braun pointed out that employees of Nidus, Danforth, Monsanto and other businesses tend not to access services west on Olive and asked participants for their thoughts on why this is the case, with the following responses:

- Traffic is a major problem, and many fear it is going to get worse.
- Older population will have more and more difficulty getting around in future years.

Mr. Perkins commented that the city's comprehensive plan envisions the creation of a live/work community in Creve Coeur, and cited MLP's King Landing development as an example.

There was discussion about the difficulty in creating a live/work community with little vacant land available, as well as what the city's role should be regarding use of 353.

Additional comments followed:

- Conducting exit interviews if possible was suggested to learn why businesses leave the city.
- Education is the key; other communities have worse traffic problems and issues that Creve Coeur.
- Developments like King's Landing (MLP) will help to attract a younger age profile.
- Traffic volume is not going to change (currently 50,000 cars/day on Olive). City needs to stop studying things and start implementing.
- City Council needs to be more efficient in making decisions. City is more responsive than before, but still takes too much time getting the same input over and over instead of moving forward.
- Other communities are actively pursuing new businesses and retail. City needs to be more proactive. Protecting existing businesses is worthwhile, but existing businesses need to continue to invest here too.
- The city should not be interested only in keeping existing businesses. Competition is good too.

Mr. Braun explained that the purpose of an economic development strategy is to both focus on new development and support existing viable businesses.

Additional comments followed:

- City is missing entertainment, good retail, and a recreation center. City needs to have a checklist of what we have and what we need.
- If city wants quality retail and a full service hotel, it needs to be prepared to use incentives like TIF or 353.

- Developers are NOT knocking on Creve Coeur's door.
- Even though there's a lot of traffic, much of it goes to the hospitals or through Creve Coeur on the way to somewhere else – they need to have more reasons to stay here and more pedestrian amenities.
- Change is needed; Creve Coeur can't stay the way it is.
- "Painful" steps such as use of 353 will be needed to bring hotels or other desired businesses here.
- EDC and City Council are more effective and more responsive than they used to be.
- Creve Coeur's reputation as being difficult to work with (for developers) is "legendary"
- Creve Coeur's residential neighborhoods and schools are big positives.
- Alternative housing choices can help the traffic situation but they need to include nearby services and amenities.
- Creve Coeur's policies for home based businesses are too restrictive and outdated. Since there is a large number of home based businesses, city needs to look into revising its home occupation ordinances and application. City could also provide low cost office space as "incubator" for home based businesses.
- Need to publicize city's successes more.
- Council understands that the city needs businesses and industries.

Ms. Lynch asked participants what they think needs to be changed within city codes and processes with the following responses:

- Comprehensive plan needs to be thrown out and reworked.
- Inspections department can improve – there are unreasonable timeframes for conducting business in the city.
- Creve Coeur Pavilion parking is a disaster – too many restaurants in the center create the traffic problems.
- City Council stagnation is a huge deterrent – negativism seems to carry more weight with council/city than positive comments.

Mr. Kalicak asked what specifically is problematic in the comprehensive plan with the following responses:

- Plan is unrealistic.
- Plan it applied unevenly.
- Comp plan is an attempt to reconcile issues between east and west portions of the city.

Additional comments followed:

- Businesses pay more in taxes than they receive in services.
- There is tension between developers and residents, but not sure how to resolve this issue. This situation often puts the city in the middle.

Ms. Lynch asked what participants think the city needs that it doesn't currently have, with the following responses:

- Unique shops and walkable, pedestrian-friendly areas
- City needs to know what it wants and doesn't want, then work to get it
- A full service hotel but will probably have to subsidize the garage meeting space
- More small, unique shops
- 15' setback on Olive is a concern, but makes sense off of Olive
- Pioneer Bank is too close to Lindbergh

The second public forum will be held Thursday, April 29, 5:30-7:00 p.m. in the city council chambers at the Government Center.

Prepared by Ellen Dailey, Planner
April 21, 2004