REBUILDING INDUSTRY - COMMERCE IN SAINT LOUIS

ST. LOUIS CITY PLAN COMMISSION
Industrial-Commercial Rebuilding

CITY PLAN COMMISSION - 1953

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Report Coordinator
MIRIAM W. SCHMITT

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Your City Plan Commission is pleased to transmit herewith a report outlining the opportunities now available for industry and commerce on undeveloped Federal, private and municipally-owned properties in the city of St. Louis. The report has been prepared by the City Plan Commission, and is based on the idea that the development of these areas will not only facilitate the reutilization of abandoned properties, but also provide new employment opportunities and stimulate the growth of the city.

We therefore respectfully request your favorable consideration of the proposals contained in this report, and stand ready to assist you in the attainment of the program.

Yours very truly,

SAUL A. DUBINSKY, Chairman.
Industry and commerce were the foundation for the steady growth and maturity of St. Louis. They were responsible for its development from a fur trading outpost near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers to one of the world's great metropolitan centers. The City's unusually wide diversity of industry assured stability of income for the community, and progressive commercial establishments brought an attractive standard of living to its people.

Although the City's industry and commerce have prospered for nearly two centuries, recent years have seen considerable movement to suburban parts of the Metropolitan Area. Because this trend now threatens the economic stability of St. Louis, certain questions require immediate consideration:

1. WHAT DOES THE CITY OFFER?
2. WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES TO REDEVELOPMENT?
3. WHAT CAN BE DONE?
What does the City offer?

1. AVAILABLE LABOR MARKET
Two-thirds of the manufacturing workers in the St. Louis urbanized area live in the City.

2. PUBLIC TRANSIT
90% of the City population live within one-quarter mile of direct downtown service.
97% of the City population live within one-quarter mile of transit service.

5. PARKS, CULTURAL

6. MEDICAL CENTER

7. FINANCIAL CENTER
3. RIVER, RAIL & TRUCKING

St. Louis is still the
"Gateway to the West."

4. UTILITIES IN PLACE

NATURAL GAS... ELECTRICITY...
WATER... SEWERS.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

8. FIRE PROTECTION
9. POLICE PROTECTION
10. ENFORCED SMOKE CONTROL
What are the obstacles to redevelop?

1. HIGH PRICE OF LAND
With more than 90% of St. Louis already developed, real estate prices are high.

2. LACK OF ON-TRACK INDUSTRIAL SITES
Although vacant land is limited, many good sites exist. Obsolete buildings and blighted neighborhoods obstruct their development.

3. TRAFFIC CONGESTION
Inadequacy of streets slows circulation of people and goods. Delays are irritating and costly.
4. DIFFICULTY OF ASSEMBLING LARGE TRACTS OF LAND

Vacant lots are small and scattered. Piecemeal ownership of real estate makes site assembly too slow and costly.

5. LACK OF OFF-STREET PARKING & LOADING AREAS

Adequate, convenient space is not obtainable at a reasonable cost.

6. BLIGHTED OR SUBSTANDARD SURROUNDINGS

Unsafe, unsanitary, and unattractive surroundings repel customers and good employees. Modern industry and commerce demand desirable environment.
What can be done?

... at the local level:

Private interests and the City of St. Louis can work together with tools presently available to clear slum areas and make room for industrial and commercial expansion. Authorization for large cities to exercise the right of eminent domain in slum clearance and redevelop-ment work was granted by the "Urban Redevelopment Corporation Act" of the Missouri Legislature in 1946. The City can, therefore, assist in the assembly of tracts large enough to accommodate new, modern industrial and commercial establishments, and can help firms now located in St. Louis to expand their sites. For a tract of 15 or more acres, the Community Unit Plan of the City's zoning ordinance can be used to secure permission for industrial or commercial construc-tion by application to the Board of Public Service, regardless of the zoning district in which the tract is located. The City can also help industry and commerce by carrying out present plans for an express highway system and generally improving its traffic, transit and parking situations. Private concerns can reciprocate by providing adequate off-street parking facilities for their employees and cus-tomers, and possibly by staggering employees' working hours to minimize the peak loads on streets and mass transit facilities.
... with the aid of the State:

Besides providing the right of eminent domain, the State "Urban Redevelopment Corporation Act" of 1946 provides for significant tax concessions to corporations organized under the law. Any interested group of businesses or individuals could organize such a corporation. With taxes presently representing a major burden to industry and commerce, this tax relief provision should prove very attractive to firms which are considering expansion or relocation of their plants.

... with Federal aid:

Title I of the Federal "Housing Act" of 1949 provides for slum clearance and redevelopment with subsidation by the Federal government of the cost of removal of obsolete structures and preparation of the land. This law provides for acquisition of land by private interests at a price which is "reasonable" in view of its proposed future use. A "Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority" was established by the City of St. Louis in February, 1952, to handle the acquisition, preparation and resale of property under Title I. The excess of the cost of purchasing the property and preparing it for use over the "reasonable" resale price is absorbed by the Federal government and the City. In order for an industrial or commercial project to qualify for this Federal aid, it must be designed to redevelop a "predominantly residential" slum area. The problem of permanently relocating residents in another neighborhood will not be too serious, as a large number of new low-rent Public Housing units will soon be made available for low-income families in St. Louis.
A group of interested persons or firms forms an "Urban Redevelopment Corporation" and consults with the City Plan Commission in determining the proposed new use of their selected area as related to the Comprehensive City Plan.

The Corporation files an application with the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority of St. Louis expressing interest and intent to perform redevelopment.

The Land Clearance Authority asks the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency for a preliminary advance to finance factual studies.

The Land Clearance Authority prepares a redevelopment plan under a final advance by the Federal Agency.

The redevelopment plan is reviewed and approved by the City Plan Commission, and approved by the Board of Aldermen after a public hearing.

The Federal Agency gives final approval to the redevelopment plan and grants a temporary loan.

The Land Clearance Authority acquires the property, relocates all families, clears the land and prepares the site for redevelopment.

Title to the land is transferred to the Urban Redevelopment Corporation at a "reasonable price" considering its proposed new use.

The Project is constructed by the Urban Redevelopment Corporation.

Outline of procedure
under "Title 1"
Plans for selected redevelopment areas

Three examples of redevelopment area planning are shown on the facing page, and the indicated "Survey Areas" are elaborated upon in the following pages. These plans are presented as samples of what might be done throughout St. Louis' slum area. Each "Survey Area" could be developed either in total or by parts.

DeSoto-Carr Area

This area includes the existing Carr Square Village, the Pruitt Homes now under construction, two other planned Public Housing projects, and an Urban Redevelopment project. It will be bordered on the south by the Daniel Boone Express Highway (Cole Street Branch) and bisected by a north-south distributor expressway. An industrial-commercial redevelopment project for the O'Fallon Street Survey Area would complete the rebuilding of the DeSoto and Carr neighborhoods. An important by-product of the project would be the provision of additional school, park and shopping facilities badly needed by the inhabitants of the existing and proposed housing projects.

South Broadway Area

This is a very large section of the area in need of redevelopment. In it are located some of St. Louis' largest industrial plants such as the Anheuser-Busch Brewery and several large Monsanto Chemical Company installations. The general plan provides room for expansion of these giant industries and of several medium-sized heavy industrial plants in the area. A modern shopping center on Broadway would be provided with adequate off-street parking space and would, therefore, be able to serve a large area to the south and west as well as the adjoining residential district. Additional land is reserved for the right-of-way of the Ozark Express Highway which is now under construction.

Market Street Area

Located in the heart of the City, this section contains some of its worst slums. Commercial and light industrial firms planning to move their plants should find such a central location very attractive. Nearly all of the area south of Market Street would be razed and made available for industry, excluding that part reserved for express highway right-of-way. North of Market, from east to west, would be light industry, commerce, housing and a site for expansion of the St. Louis University campus. The Vashon School and Community Center would be preserved to serve the people in the residential area.
This plan preserves an existing land use pattern of relatively small industrial firms while cleaning out the decadent housing in between. It calls for correction of the cumbersome gridiron arrangement of streets. Many sites for expansion of firms now present and others to accommodate new concerns can thereby be made available. Provision is made for the widening and straightening of Fourteenth Street. This should provide easy access for trucking and other industrial firms in the area. Movement would also be speeded by the proposed Daniel Boone and North-South Distributor express highways. Location of additional trucking firms in this area would be a logical extension of the predominantly trucking section to the east across Twelfth Street.

The O'Fallon Area can provide 30 acres for new development, and the plan proposes that this be used about 65% for industry, 15% for commerce and 20% for needed public improvements.
LEGEND

RESIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL
INDUSTRIAL
PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS
OFF-STREET PARKING
& LOADING

EXISTING BUILDINGS

1 ORSCHEN TRUCK TERMINAL
2 P.E. TRUCK TERMINAL
3 MO. DIECASTING CO.
4 CONTINENTAL BAKING CO.
5 HEALZER CARTAGE CO.
6 LASER GLASS CO.
7 PEORIA CARTAGE CO, INC.
8 MILNER CO. ELEVATORS
9 ELY-WALKER DRY GOODS CO.
10 FOSTER TR. TERMINAL
11 STOCKER HAUSMAN CO.
12 H. PAUK MFG.
13 COMMERCIAL WASTE CO.
14 WILSON TRUCK CO.
15 STAR PUMP & COOLER CORP.
16 YUR FAVORITE CAKE CO.
17 STATION KKX
18 BE MAC TRUCK CO.
19 INTERSTATE TRUCK TERMINAL
20 WHITE MOTOR CO.
21 SHELL SERVICE STATION

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
A primary consideration in redevelopment of the Kosciusko Area should be to provide room for expansion of the important heavy industries already located there, with particular emphasis on provision of additional off-street parking facilities. Elimination of many useless streets and widening and improvement of others such as Broadway and Third Street are contemplated. The plan includes a modern retail shopping center on Broadway. Any remaining space could be made available to new heavy industries which would undoubtedly find the area attractive because of its proximity to the river and riverfront railroad yards. The nearness of the Ozark Express Highway to the west should facilitate trucking in this vicinity. The 86 acres for redevelopment in the plan include 24 acres for commerce and 62 for industry.
Housing Characteristics

Legend
- Residential
- Residential & Commercial
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public & Semi-Public
- Parks & Playgrounds

Existing Land Use
2. Welsh Co.
3. Benjamin Air Rifle Co.
4. Manufacturers Bank & Trust Co.
5. Schleicher Box Co.
6. Fire Station.
7. Warehouse.
8. Ben Gutman Handling Co.
10. Western Litho Plate Co.
11. Union Electric Co.
12. St. Louis Paint Co.
14. Loy-Lange Box Co.
15. Chas. E. Schweizer Co.
16. Controlled Castings Co.
17. Visnet Mill.
20. Pauly Jail Co.
22. American Car & Foundry Co.
23. Benjamin Moore Co.
24. Duncan Packing Co.
25. Fry-Fulton Lumber Co.

Legend:
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public & Semi-Public
- Parks & Playgrounds
- Off-Street Parking & Loading
- Existing Buildings

Proposed Redevelopment Plan
The portion of this area that lies south of Market Street can be excellently served by the railroads, as the area is bounded on the south by the Mill Creek Valley railroad yards. The Clark Avenue branch of the Daniel Boone Express Highway will cut through this section, as will a crosstown distributor expressway. These highways, plus several widened surface streets, should allow easy truck access. These indigenous transportation advantages suggested the reservation of this area south of Market Street for industry. North of Market would be a large commercial district. It is believed that many commercial establishments, professional offices and institutional organizations would be interested in moving into such a centrally located area. These types of development located here should serve to reinforce and stabilize the Central Business District. Approximately 145 acres can be provided for redevelopment, one-third for commerce and two-thirds for industry.
LEGEND

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public & Semi-Public
- Off-Street Parking & Loading
- Existing Buildings

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Church
2. Amer. Thermometer Co.
3. N'Western Products Co.
4. Independent Fish Co.
5. Hubbell Metals Inc.
6. Y.M.C.A.
7. T.M.S. Walsh Co.
10. Hotel
11. St. L. Argus Newspaper
12. Lincoln School Bldg.
15. Mo. Pipe Fittings Co.
16. Alton R.R. Shop
17. Pedestrian Ramp
Contracts for financial aid shall require that there are or are being provided, in the project area or in other areas not generally less desirable in regard to public utilities and public and commercial facilities and at rents or prices within the financial means of the families displaced from the project area, decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings equal in number to the number of and available to such displaced families and reasonably accessible to their places of employment.

— From Section 105 of Title I of the Federal Housing Act of 1949.

PRIVATE HOUSING

PLAZA DEVELOPMENT - 1350 UNITS
Looking ahead...

The City Plan Commission has presented, herein, specific suggestions as to what can be done to turn a large portion of St. Louis' costly slums into economically valuable industrial and commercial sections. Existing legislation to aid redevelopment, and in some cases to help defray reconstruction costs, has been noted.

Two major problems which are confronting St. Louis appear to have a common solution in an Industrial and Commercial Redevelopment Program. Clearance of slums and provision of attractive, adequate industrial and commercial sites at a reasonable price could both be desirable results of such a program. The cost to the taxpayer of this type of reconstruction would be small considering the social benefits of slum clearance, and in the long run, taxes collected on the new plants might exceed by a wide margin the original contribution by the government.

The need for rebuilding of the central St. Louis is critical. The necessary tools are at hand and the public is anxious to see some immediate action made. It remains for the industrial and business leaders of the community to join with their city government and set this program in motion.