

# PLAN CONCEPT

Following the Background and Analysis Report and three public meetings, a concept for the plan is beginning to emerge for public consideration. The concept addresses issues identified in the Background and Analysis Report and the first public meeting. It also considers opportunities and express the ideas for a preferred future voiced in the second public meeting, as well as subsequent conversations and comments. The plan concept is generally as follows:

The **issues** are detailed in the Background and Analysis Report and meeting notes but may be summarized as:

- The area is generally neglected and blighted.
- Some public facilities are lacking.
- There is poor access for fire protection in some of the corridor.
- Flooding in part of the corridor.
- The eventual completion of West Meadows, including implementation of the Rail Reconfiguration Plan, is very important to the redevelopment of College Street.
- The streetscape environment and pedestrian facilities are poor, including the retaining “Art Wall.”
- Conflicting land uses have evolved.
- Some businesses became obsolete, leaving vacant buildings.
- The corridor lacks an ‘identity.’

The **opportunities** include:

- The location of the corridor in relation to downtown, future West Meadows, the West Central Neighborhood, and the high traffic volume of Kansas Expressway.
- The topography creating a potential viewshed of the West Meadows.
- The history of the area, including College Street’s role as Route 66 and some remaining older buildings.
- Existing established business activities (especially at the Grant intersection).
- Ongoing plans to relocate railroad tracks and reduce flooding.
- Vacant land, and land that may become vacant, offer opportunities for new construction.

## Land Use Discussion

The following land use discussion provides a backdrop for both the short and long range proposals for the College Street Corridor Planning Area. The corridor is a very diverse mix of land uses, some of them in conflict. This variety of land uses generally works well, with some exceptions. Part of the reason the mixed uses are able to co-exist is that the corridor, or planning area, can be divided into four (4) distinct sub-districts. (1) College Street, between Grant and Broadway Avenues, (2) Olive Street, (3) College Street between Broadway and Fort Avenues, and (4) College Street between Fort Avenue and Kansas Expressway.

Sub-district 1. This sub-district is anchored at Grant Avenue by two business establishments, Bud's Tire and Wheel (since 1958)(formerly a Route 66 era filling station) and Mother's Brewery, a relatively new business retrofitting a long time bakery facility. At Broadway are a beauty shop and an abandoned filling station, dating back to Route 66 times. In between are a mix on small businesses and housing, apparently existing in relative harmony. However, some of the older housing is in poor condition.

Sub-district 2. Olive Street was a housing district in Route 66 times and before, but since it was zoned industrial, it was converted into a commercial, warehousing and office district, with only two older houses remaining.

Sub-district 3. College Street between Broadway and Fort consists of a wide variety of land uses including single family housing, multiple family housing, a salvage yard, an auto repair business, and a former commercial node. Included are buildings in very good condition and those that are probably beyond economic feasibility for rehabilitation. There are definitely issues with the land use mix in this sub-district.

Sub-district 4. College between Fort and Kansas Expressway generally consists of industrial and commercial uses. North of the corridor, the dominate land use is salvage yards and commercial uses. Jordan Creek also traverses the sub-district through here, creating a large flood plain. Fort Street and the topography form a barrier, between sub-districts 3 and 4, allowing for relatively harmony between the sub-districts. The former Hawkins Mill is located on the southeast corner of College and Kansas Expressway, creating a future opportunity for an iconic gateway to the corridor.

## **Plan Concepts**

The **future** should be created in phases. **Phasing** is desirable for several reasons:

A long range vision is emerging that is closely aligned with the fulfillment of the vision for the West Meadows. In time, it is anticipated to be fully realized, but the complete vision requires the reconfiguration of the railroad tracks. Once this is accomplished, College and Olive Streets will be seamlessly connected with the West Meadows, without the barrier and safety hazard of railroad tracks.

At that time, it is anticipated that demand for commercial activities will be more defined and it may be possible to develop new, multi-use buildings or a center to support, and be on the edge of West Meadows. It is also anticipated there will be increased demand for residential as the West Meadows plans are complete.

So, we need to continue creating a long range desired future for the corridor so it is evident what we are reaching for in the future. However, for now, we should develop a short-range plan that will begin the redevelopment process with current levels of economic demand and considering the current national and local economic realities.

### **Short Range Plan (1–10 Years)**

While there may not be an identified economic demand for clearance of blighted properties and the provision of new development centers at this time, there are many steps that can be taken to improve the livability and economic vitality of the corridor in the short term. These, in turn, will improve the image and identity of the College Street Corridor and set the stage for reaching the ultimate, long range vision.

The steps are summarized as follows:

- Eliminate the blighting conditions and make use of resources in place.
  - Enforce health and safety ordinances.
  - Rehab if feasible.
  - Demolish if necessary.
- Encourage infill development.
- Create a customized, flexible, mixed-use zoning ordinance.
- Encourage land assemblage along south side of College between Fort and New Avenues to construct a multi-story, multi-family development, overlooking the future West Meadows.

- Upgrade public facilities by incorporating into Capital Improvements Program.
  - Provide sewer main service to all properties, particularly those on the north side of College, west of Broadway at the proposed commercial node.
  - Replace all 6 inch water lines with 8 inch lines.
  - Provide attractive streetscape including lighting, wider sidewalk, parking, and landscaping.
  - Upgrade Fort Avenue, including new street surface and attractive streetscape with pedestrian access into West Meadows. Include screening from the salvage/recycling business
  - Acquire property on Broadway to extend alleyway between New and Broadway, and College and Walnut.
  - Improve the appearance of electric lines along College Street by burying or other means (such as Robberson Alley downtown); particularly between Fort and Broadway Avenues.
  - Continue implementation of Corps of Engineers project to manage stormwater in order to reduce flooding in the western section of the corridor.
  
- Utilize proposals in the Route 66 Corridor Management Plan to announce this area as a section of Route 66.
  
- Construct Route 66 themed roadside park on city-owned land on the north side of College Street, east of Fort Avenue. Install Route 66 signage and graphics celebrating the former status of College Street as part of the Mother Road; **OR** offer the property for residential redevelopment to private developers.
  
- Provide gateways at Grant and Broadway Avenues and Kansas Expressway announcing this as the West Central Neighborhood portion of Route 66.
  
- Encourage retail establishment reliant on large traffic volumes at northeast corner of Kansas Expressway and College Street that will also serve the neighborhood with basics.
  
- Use Brownfields assessment program to address environmental questions, including former filling stations, and “diesel spring.” Continue cleanup programs as needed.

- Clean up Jordan Creek, including unnecessary brush, weeds, trash, and homeless camps. Form stream team to maintain the creek following initial cleanup and improvement.
- Refurbish the retaining “Art Wall” along the south side of College Street.

### **Long Range Vision**

Once the rail reconfiguration is complete, there may be greater market demand and opportunity for clearance and redevelopment with new mixed use structures, especially in Sub-district 2 (Olive Street) and at the commercial node at Broadway and College. A seamless connection can then be established between the College Street Corridor and the West Meadows of Jordan Valley with a mixture of residential and commercial uses.

This concept will be discussed and further developed over the next several weeks.