

# College Street Corridor Plan

## Public Engagement Plan

### Introduction

Planning for the future of the College Street Corridor will rely heavily on public engagement. The process will encourage planning area residents, property owners, business owners, and community members to interact with each other and city representatives to partner in solving problems and creating a desired future. The public engagement process is outlined on the attached figure. In addition to documents, a web site, public signage, and several public meetings, people may engage in the planning process through an on-line forum to be created. One-on-one meetings will also be utilized as appropriate. This document details how the public engagement process will work with the community to create a desired future for the College Street Corridor.

For the purposes of this planning process, public engagement is defined as “*a highly inclusive problem-solving approach through which regular citizens deliberate and collaborate on complex public problems.*” (*Public Engagement: A Primer from Public Agenda*) The primer goes on to state: *In short, authentic and skillful engagement with a broad cross section of stakeholders improves results by:*

- *Bringing together multiple points of view in order to inform decisions.*
- *Creating legitimacy and a sense of shared responsibility by involving the public and diverse stakeholders early and often in a change process, rather than after decisions have been made.*
- *Fostering new allies and collaborations.*
- *Stimulating broad awareness and momentum for change.*

Ultimately, results of this community conversation will be digested by staff and conveyed to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council through a report and presentations. Even though the plan will be created through the public engagement process, ultimate finalization and approval rests with City Council who is responsible for making decisions and allocating resources to implement the plan. So, while the public will have a great amount of influence in creating the plan, they must realize that it must be realistic, attainable, and approvable by City Council.

The attached flow chart entitled *College Street Corridor Plan-Public Engagement Process* summarizes the process for public engagement. There will be multiple components for engaging people in the process as discussed below:

## **Public Engagement Components**

### **Press Releases**

Prior to the beginning of the process, a press release will be sent outlining the planning process and public engagement. Press releases will also be sent out prior to each meeting and describe other opportunities for participation.

### **Stakeholder Mailings & Personal Contact**

Mailings will be made to property owners and identified stakeholders in the planning area. The mailings will describe the plan, the process, and announce public meetings. They will also provide instructions for those people wanting to gain information from the web site or participate in the on-line discussion forum.

To the extent possible, staff will make personal contact with planning area stakeholders, informing them of the planning process and providing an opportunity to discuss the plan.

### **Meeting Advertisement Signs**

Signs will be prepared and posted in the right-of-way, advertising the public meetings and providing contact information for anyone wanting additional information. The signs will also contain the web site address and how to access the on-line forum.

### **Public Meetings**

An estimated seven (7) public meetings will be held to engage stakeholders and members of the community. The meetings will be structured with topics for discussion and an agenda outlining desired outcomes for each meeting. They will be held at Butler Rosenbury and Partners' community room located at 319 N. Main Avenue. This location is on the eastern edge of the West Meadows. The final meeting will be an open house describing the outcome of the plan. Meeting notes will be prepared and posted following each meeting.

Meetings will be governed by the 10 Tenets of Civility established by the City of Springfield:

#### **Be Attentive**

*Live with awareness toward others and your surroundings.*

#### **Acknowledge Others**

*Greet people, ideas and values with respect.*

**Be Inclusive**

*Recognize and welcome all people every day.*

**Listen**

*Seek to understand by concentrating on what people say.*

**Respect Other Views**

*Respond to different opinions with a fair and open mind.*

**Speak Out With Courage**

*Express yourself with honor and conviction.*

**Act with Compassion**

*Treat others with kindness and honesty.*

**Give and Accept Constructive Feedback**

*Consider criticism thoughtfully and factually.*

**Treat Your Environment with Respect**

*Show regard for nature, resources and shared spaces.*

**Be Accountable**

*Acknowledge mistakes and take responsibility for your actions.*

**Web Site**

A section of the City's web site will be devoted to the plan. It will contain a description of the planning process, reports, public meeting announcements, agendas, meeting notes, staff contact information, etc.

**On-Line Discussion Forum**

An on-line forum will provide an opportunity for people to discuss the plan with each other and the City. Civility and constructive discussion will be ensured through established rules and management of the site by City staff.

**Process Discussion**

The following discussion provides step-by-step details of the public engagement process by following the attached flow chart. The numbers on the chart correspond to the numbers below.

**1. Background Report Summary**

A Background and Analysis Report, and an Executive Summary will be available on the web site. This report describes the existing conditions of the planning area as well as any issues identified. The report is the foundation for moving forward.

**2. Staff Discusses Background and Analysis Report with Public**

The *report*, primarily the Executive Summary, will be presented and reviewed by staff at a *community meeting*. The report and presentation will also be available on the *web site*. The discussion will center on issues that must be addressed in order to move forward and people will be afforded the opportunity to express their views on the existing conditions of the planning area.

Initial discussion with the community included booths at the *Route 66 Festival* and the *Neighborhood Night Out* in the West Central Neighborhood. Planning staff has also participated in *Neighborhood Teams Meetings*, bringing issues identified during the background information gathering process to the group. Some of the issues are being addressed including a dangerous building, health violations, and illegal burning.

### **3. Frame Issues & Opportunities for Discussion**

Once people have expressed their opinions and identified issues and opportunities, staff will organize the discussion and provide a framework for continued discussion.

Discussions may reveal competing interests requiring resolution. For instance, some people may feel that the area is blighted because of the businesses intruding in the housing district, but others may feel that the opposite is true. Vetting this issue may facilitate envisioning a future College Street Corridor. It will be important to manage differing values, opinions, motives, and desires in search for trade-offs and common ground.

### **4. Visioning Deliberation**

Initially, visioning deliberation will consist of working through number 3 above with community members. Ultimately, the desire is to deliberate a vision of the future corridor by facilitating discussion through meetings, conversations, the on-line forum, the web site about the issues, opportunities and desires based on the established common ground.

### **5. Create Vision**

From the visioning deliberation, articulate a vision of the future for the College Street Corridor. This can be stated as if one is walking down the street in 20 years describing what is seen. It should be based on the existing situation as described in the background report and discussed in meetings. It should envision the issues as resolved and a desired future in place. This step will require imagination as well as grounding in the reality of possibilities. People should express a desired outcome, while recognizing overall economic conditions and general conventions in Springfield.

## **6. Prepare Vision Statement**

Staff will use the discussion in number 5 above and craft a vision statement for community review.

## **7. Vision Statement**

Express a vision statement for the future, along with goals and objectives necessary to achieve the vision.

## **8. Discuss Action Alternatives**

Utilizing the background report, previous discussions, and the vision statement, identify gaps between the existing conditions and the vision.

## **9. Frame Action Alternatives**

Articulate necessary steps to fill the gaps and implement the vision identified in number 8 above. In cases where multiple options are possible, list as alternatives.

## **10. Prioritize Action Alternatives**

Create a logical sequence of action steps.

## **11. Discuss Implementation Actions**

Following prioritization, list action steps and devise in implementation plan.

## **12. Revise and Finalize Actions**

Utilizing a final meeting (Open House) and the electronic mediums, determine the final plan and action steps.

## **13. Prepare Draft Plan for Commission & Council Review**

Staff compiles the information gained through the process and prepares a plan document for review.

## **14. Draft Plan**

The draft plan document will be reviewed and revised for finalization by Commission and Council.