A New Vision for Old North: Small Scale Strategies for Revitalizing Communities

Sean Thomas, Former Executive Director, Old North St. Louis Restoration Group

Bonnie Roy, Partner
History: 1880 - 1940
History: 1940 - 1970

Redlining & the 75+ year legacy of limited access to financing for mortgages, etc.

All of Old North was in the “red” zone (classified as an area not recommended for loans or investments)
History: 1940 - 1970
History: 1970-1980
History: 1980

Formed in 1981

Mission: To revitalize the physical & social dimensions of the Old North neighborhood in a manner that respects the community’s historic, cultural, and urban character.
Community development sometimes feels like this…
8 + 10 Strategy

8 Essential Ingredients for Effective Community Development

+ 10 Smart Growth Principles

= Sustainable Revitalization
Essential Ingredients for Effective Community Development (SHEPPIC)

1. Social Capital
2. Housing Options for diverse population
3. Economic Goods, Services, & Opportunities
4. Physical Space that is Attractive
5. Political Support
6. Partners with Resources & Respect for the Community’s Vision
7. Institutional Anchors
8. Coordinating Entity
8 Essential Ingredients for Effective Community Development (SHEPPIC)
10 Smart Growth Principles

1. Mix land uses.
2. Take advantage of compact building design.
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods.
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
7. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.
10 Smart Growth Principles
Smart Growth Principles
Results

+28%
Population Growth (2000-2010)

↓ 42%
Crime Reduction (2010-2015)

Each star represents a property that had been vacant 10 years ago but is now redeveloped.
EPA Grant Project
Smart Growth
Fall 2015

Old North St. Louis
Sustainably Developing a Historic District
CONSULTANT TEAM

Landscape Architects | Planners | Urban Designers

Environmental Engineers | Civil Engineers | Planners

Architects | Historic Preservationists

STEERING COMMITTEE

City of St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency
Old North St. Louis Restoration Group
EPA Office of Sustainable Communities
White House Strong Cities, Strong Communities
REGIONAL CONTEXT

• Proximity to Downtown

• Adjacency to Current Planning Projects
  • North Riverfront
  • Preservation Square
  • Choice Neighborhoods
  • NGA Headquarters
  • GRG Trestle
  • Potential North/South MetroLink Expansion
  • Gateway Arch Renovation
PROJECT SCOPE

- Develop a vision
  - Guide new growth and development
  - Protect, preserve, and rehabilitate historic character
  - Incorporate sustainable features
  - Enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors

PROJECT TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Initiation</th>
<th>Data Collection &amp; Existing Conditions Analysis</th>
<th>Charrette / Public Engagement</th>
<th>Report Development</th>
<th>Final Report</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2015</td>
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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP

- 3-Day Workshop
  - Stakeholder Interviews
  - Five Focus Group Sessions
    - Housing & Historic Preservation
    - Environment & Energy
    - Growth
    - Transportation
    - Implementation
  - Public Open House Events

- Participants Included:
  - Neighborhood Residents
  - Four Federal Agencies
    (EPA, White House Strong Cities Strong Communities, National Parks Service, USDA)
  - Three State Agencies
  - Regional Planning Agencies
  - City Government Officials
  - Local Not-For-Profits
  - University Faculty
  - Community Business Owners
  - Project Stakeholders
PROJECT GOALS

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY
Put public investment to its best and highest use

PRODUCTIVE LAND USE
Help revitalize the neighborhood

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE
Improve the community’s environmental conditions

LEVERAGE NEIGHBORHOOD
Historical resources

ECOLOGICAL & SOCIAL BENEFITS
OVERALL PROJECT GOALS
• Use green infrastructure to address stormwater pollution
• Improve energy efficiency of buildings in the neighborhood and incorporate alternative energy production
• Improve air quality
STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY

• Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to and within the neighborhood
• Incorporate opportunities for public art, wayfinding, and interpretive signage
• Coordinate effort with ongoing projects in the area and neighboring redevelopment initiatives
PRODUCTIVE LAND USE

- Encourage investment in the vacant and underutilized parcels in the neighborhood
- Determine compatible land uses and building forms
- Consider shared resources such as district composting, waste reduction programs, urban agriculture
Overall Neighborhood Strategies
FOCUS AREAS AND KEY OPPORTUNITIES

STRENGTHENED RESIDENTIAL
- Blair Avenue & Sullivan Avenue
- Strengthen Established Residential Areas

CONNECTOR
- St. Louis Avenue
- Extend and Connect Commercial / Mixed Use

GREEN BLOCKS
- Hadley Street & Monroe Street
- Promote Alley Development
- Encourage Neighborhood-Based Infrastructure

CORRIDOR
- N. Florissant Avenue & N. Market Street
- Establish Commercial / Mixed Use
- Improve Transit / Connectivity

GATEWAY
- N. Florissant & 14th
- Enhance Brand / Identity
- Utilize Alternative Energy Sources
- Develop a Multi-Modal Station
GATEWAY
CORRIDOR
GREEN BLOCKS
STRENGTHENED RESIDENTIAL
STRENGTHENED RESIDENTIAL
What’s happening now?

• Plan was adopted by the Old North St. Louis Restoration Group Board

Plan as a Guiding Tool

• East-West Gateway partnered with the City to study N. 14th Street as a Great Streets Project.
• Community Center Conceptual Development
• New single-family housing construction
For Full Report:
www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/old-north-st-louis-sustainably-developing-historic-district

Google Search: “EPA Old North St. Louis”

Sean Thomas,
Former Executive Director,
Old North St. Louis Restoration Group

Bonnie Roy,
Partner

Vibrant Communities Consulting

SWT DESIGN