

## Planning for Sustainable Brownfield Redevelopment

### HELPING A COMMUNITY REVITALIZE AN AGING CORRIDOR DAMAGED BY CIVIL UNREST

#### DELLWOOD, MISSOURI, EPA REGION 7

In 2014, Dellwood, MO, sustained substantial property damage during the civil unrest that originated in the adjacent community of Ferguson, MO. Dellwood lost 13 commercial properties to fires, which severely impacted the community's economy and sense of security. Along West Florissant Avenue, four properties were burned. On three of these four properties, the building and associated debris was removed and the lots are now vacant. A building remains on the fourth property, the former Discount Tire store at 9801 West Florissant. However, the building remains in disrepair, despite having sustained less damage than the buildings on the other nearby properties.

The city is leading the area's recovery by developing a community-based vision for the people who live, work and play in the area. The city's goal for the planning process is to determine the most beneficial redevelopment opportunities for the neighborhood that will reduce the social and economic barriers associated with the current aging and limited commercial uses represented in in the corridor. City leaders also want to attract private investment to Dellwood to further restore and revitalize the neighborhood.

In November 2016, the city requested technical assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Land Revitalization Team to create conceptual redevelopment plans for four sites along the West Florissant Avenue corridor. The goal of the planning process is to help the city jump start its public engagement process by providing visual images of potential types of redevelopment that could occur along the corridor. The conceptual planning process will be reinforced by the city's targeted investment in the corridor, Promise Zone activities, and policies such as the city's [Great Streets Initiative](#) (2014).

In May 2017, the Land Revitalization Team conducted a site visit and workshop with local stakeholders in Dellwood to engage with the community and explore reuse options for each site. During the workshop, attendees identified and considered short- and long-term visions for each of the four properties, as well as the corridor overall. Stakeholders supported use and aesthetic changes along West Florissant Avenue and were interested in increasing the community's use of, and ties to, the future business and recreational activities along the corridor. In particular, community members voiced a desire to make the corridor more accessible for pedestrians and non-motorized transportation. Stakeholders also wanted to create a unique community identity to this section of the corridor, and supported identifying amenities such as retail establishments and venues for public gatherings and entertainment.

Based on the workshop and a preliminary market analysis, the Land Revitalization Team suggested phased redevelopment approaches and designs for three projects along the corridor. Highlights of the plans include:

- *9801 West Florissant (former Discount Tire)*: Renovate the building for a destination specialty food/beverage service use (such as an ice cream parlor or a coffee shop). Reusing the existing garage doors could provide seasonal flexibility for indoor/outdoor seating.
- *9947 West Florissant (former AutoZone)*: Short-term: Clean up the site to add community garden plots and parking. Intermediate: Construct a three-bay "Maker Space", including incubator-oriented office or retail space, a meeting room, or a community conflict resolution center. Long-term: Add parking and housing, targeted for middle class families or seniors.
- *9844 West Florissant (former Juanita's Fashions R Boutique) and 9846 West Florissant (former Advanced Auto Parts)*: Short-term: Grade the Boutique site and add a small playground, parking area and space for food trucks. Intermediate: Expand infrastructure and services onto the Advanced Auto Parts site and add kiosk/micro retail facilities for small business investment. Long-term: Add permanent structures to support "move-up" retail uses that need additional space beyond that provided by the Maker Space.

For more information, please contact David Doyle, EPA Region 7, [doyle.david@epa.gov](mailto:doyle.david@epa.gov).



Figure 1. Full build-out redevelopment concept for the Former Advanced Auto Parts and Juanita's property.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

- City-led redevelopment planning on private property requires the owner's cooperation and participation to be successful.
- Business and civic leadership is essential to engaging the community and building stakeholder enthusiasm for revitalization.
- Redevelopment concepts must be based on market conditions to create realistic expectations.
- Phased development (e.g., "lean urbanism" and "incremental sprawl repair") is appropriate when market conditions cannot support dense development.

#### PLANNED POST-TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

- The Missouri Department of Natural Resources will support Phase I Assessments on two properties.
- EPA's Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) program will support development of an implementation strategy.
- The Council of Development Financing Agencies (CDFA), using EPA grant funds, will assist the city with identifying financing alternatives to implement the plan.