University City Community Vision
Listening Session Summaries
November 8-10, 2021

Listening Session #1
Monday, November 8, 2021
12:00pm – 1:00pm

Key trends and drivers impacting University City:

- The school system is an overarching issue for the city. The school population in the 1960s used to be at 6,000 and now it is at 2,500. A lot of people are no longer moving to the city to send their kids to public school – they send them to private schools. Parents send their children to elementary school in UCity, but then elsewhere for middle and high school.
- Many youth are leaving the St. Louis area after graduation. The reputation of the City is not attracting people and young professionals are leaving for larger more progressive cities like Minneapolis, Detroit, Atlanta, Texas and East Coast.
- There aren't enough high skilled jobs in St. Louis. UCity missed out on the scientific explosion in the West End; there is an opportunity to seek out R & D companies to attract highly skilled people to the city.
- Some younger former residents return to UCity to have families as there is a great smaller home housing market here.
- A lot of people love living here for the diversity and potential for growth.

Economic development: What is the sweet spot for UCity? Consider the redevelopment in the 3rd Ward along Olive Boulevard.

- There are a lot of smaller lots and starter homes for first time buyers – this is a great opportunity for UCity. We need more affordable housing. Gentrification is not occurring in the 3rd Ward because it is not a hot market.
- There is a concern that the COSTCO development could cause values to rise including taxes and this could be harmful to senior citizens. Growth will need to be carefully managed.

Visioning and Redevelopment: This is a historic moment for the City in terms of visioning and redevelopment. What do you want to see for the future of the 3rd Ward? How do we maximize the opportunity to shape the fabric of the community to set up future generations for success?

- UCity needs to consider the types of businesses that will attract people to the City. A vision for the Olive corridor will be important. Mixed-use retail/housing and shops that fit the community would be great. The surrounding infrastructure will need to be built.
- Currently, financing is difficult. The Handcock Amendment in Missouri restricts municipalities from raising property taxes so there is heavy reliance on sales tax.
- Sweet spot is to become a sustainable City; to provide the needed services for its residents. The goal is to enhance the 3rd Ward and to build from the visioning process.

Future aspirations for University City: **Thinking of the future, what would be a delightful, aspirational shift for University City?**

- That UCity will be known for 2 things: Family living, and college town. Where students and professors will stay to live.
- Currently the City operates in racial siloes with the North/South Delmar divide. We need to foster more interaction.
- Where there are greater connections among people and there is no Delmar divide.
- A City that is safe with family-friendly neighborhoods and a vibrant Olive Street Corridor from 170 to Skankor (includes the East End).
- UCity needs to become a City that fosters community interaction.
- Let's create a HUB for the City that links all communities in the City – a transportation hub.