

Section VIII: Community Strategies

Local Involvement

The intent of this plan is for the Affton Community Betterment Association, St. Louis County Government, and other organizations involved in the Affton community to build upon community assets to improve the community. The Community Strategies are meant to assist the on-going efforts in the community as they relate to housing and commercial revitalization. Many of the strategies outlined are enormous initiatives that will take many years from start to finish requiring a long-term commitment from the community. The following is a summary of the organizations and agencies involved in implementation of the key community strategies outlined in the Affton Community Plan:

St. Louis County Government

St. Louis County Government will continue to play a vital role in the revitalization of Affton. Because the area is unincorporated, St. Louis County Government is the primary local service provider and will continue to have a presence in the community. Since 1996, St. Louis County has brought nearly \$1 million dollars of new investment to the community through grants from local, state, and federal sources. St. Louis County Government will maintain its function by providing technical assistance, acquiring and administering funding, and providing economic development assistance.

Affton Community Betterment Association

One of the key implementation strategies of the Affton-Gravois Business Corridor plan was the creation of the Affton Community Betterment Association (ACBA) in 1998. The ACBA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit group comprised of residents, business owners, members of the faith community, and school district representatives dedicated to the revitalization of Affton. The mission of the ACBA is:

- ~~•~~ To promote the community of Affton as a great place to live and work

- ✍ To upgrade and stabilize the neighborhoods
- ✍ To promote the physical revitalization of the Affton–Gravois Business Corridor in cooperation with the Affton Chamber of Commerce.

This citizen-based organization is charged with overseeing the ongoing implementation of the Affton–Gravois Business Corridor Plan and addressing the community’s broader needs. While the ACBA is still in its infancy, participation in the organization is growing and gaining recognition throughout the community.

Since the incorporation of the Affton Community Betterment Association in 1998, the organization has been successful in acquiring funding and increasing community involvement in the organization. The ACBA will carry the largest responsibility for implementation of the Affton Community Plan. Community leaders will have to be responsible for making key decisions about future reinvestment and revitalization strategies, undertaking initiatives to improve neighborhoods, and marketing the community to attract new investment. The ACBA has made substantial progress achieving these objectives through the establishment of four key community task forces: beautification, youth and family, housing and community development.

Affton School District

The primary purpose of the Affton School District is to educate students. The inter-relatedness of a healthy community and successful students, however, cannot be ignored. Recognizing the importance of creating partnerships among the Affton School District, the Affton Community Betterment Association, and St. Louis County Government, these entities should continue working together. Exploring opportunities for joint initiatives and collaborative projects should continue. The ability of the organizations to share resources, community assets, and other information is a key element of successful community building.

Housing Strategies

Issue #1: Affton has a lack of new construction and “move up” housing that meets today’s consumer preferences.

Strategies:

- ~~✍~~ Encourage in-fill new construction by identifying vacant lots throughout the Gardenville and Lakewood neighborhoods.
- ~~✍~~ Build a relationship with local housing developers that are presently building new homes in the area so that new housing construction can continue.
- ~~✍~~ Research the feasibility of packaging architectural assistance with low interest home improvement loans to update and create a more marketable housing supply using existing stock.

Involvement:

- ~~✍~~ Affton Community Betterment Association
- ~~✍~~ Local banks
- ~~✍~~ Housing developers

Issue #2: Ongoing, pro-active home maintenance and code enforcement is critical to the viability and health of Affton's neighborhoods.

Strategies:

- ~~✍~~ Continue to assign a "focus" code enforcement inspector to the area to enforce property maintenance violations.
- ~~✍~~ Market and solicit participation in the various state and county housing assistance programs.
- ~~✍~~ Develop partnerships with local associations/groups to assist in homeowner maintenance violations. These could include Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Rebuilding Together with Christmas in April.
- ~~✍~~ Establishing a Property Conservation District in selected Affton neighborhoods should be studied to prevent the decline of housing quality.

Involvement:

- ~~✍~~ Affton Community Betterment Association
- ~~✍~~ St. Louis County Department of Health Neighborhood Preservation
- ~~✍~~ St. Louis County Department of Planning
- ~~✍~~ Local residents

Issue #4: Alleyways in the Gardenville neighborhood are unusable due to overgrowth and lack of maintenance.

Strategies:

- ~~///~~ Develop a funding solution that will restore the alleyways in the Gardenville neighborhood to help alleviate on-street parking and traffic circulation problems on the narrow, often one-way streets of the neighborhood. Long-term maintenance solution should be in place to assure upkeep of neighborhood alleyways.
- ~~///~~ Vacate alleyways and revert the land back to adjoining property owners.

Involvement:

- ~~///~~ Interested residents should seek assistance from the St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic

Issue #5: The condition of sidewalks and driveways are poor in the area.

Strategies:

- ~~///~~ Sidewalk construction should be encouraged throughout the Affton community, especially along busy streets, near churches, and school facilities.
- ~~///~~ Linkages should be made among the areas walking and biking trails such as Grants Trail and the River Des Peres Trail.
- ~~///~~ Many driveways in the Lakewood area are constructed of crushed rock. This construction method is inadequate for today's standards. A program to replace these types of driveways, including a funding mechanism should be examined.

Involvement:

- ~~///~~ Interested residents
- ~~///~~ St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic

Economic Development Strategies

Issue #1: The Affton community is being overlooked for new commercial and retail development.

Strategies:

- ~~✍~~ Take advantage of incentives available such as tax increment financing
- ~~✍~~ Create partnerships to market available sites
- ~~✍~~ Market the proximity of Affton to St. Louis City
- ~~✍~~ Identify sites for redevelopment to include neighborhood-type commercial services.
- ~~✍~~ Encourage mixed-use (housing, retail, office) developments as an alternative to “big box” development where possible.
- ~~✍~~ Explore unique development opportunities associated with the anticipation of MetroLink expansion into the Affton area.

Involvement:

- ~~✍~~ Affton Community Betterment Association
- ~~✍~~ Affton Chamber of Commerce
- ~~✍~~ St. Louis County Economic Council
- ~~✍~~ St. Louis County Department of Planning
- ~~✍~~ St. Louis County Council
- ~~✍~~ Commercial property owners
- ~~✍~~ State of Missouri Department of Economic Development

Issue#2: The appearance of commercial and retail businesses is not competitive with the newer surrounding commercial centers.

Strategies:

- ~~✍~~ Continue to fund facade improvement program
- ~~✍~~ Focus on business retention and expansion in the Affton community

Involvement:

- ~~✍~~ St. Louis County Economic Council
- ~~✍~~ Affton Chamber of Commerce

General Community Strategies

Issue #1: There is a community perception that Affton is not attracting and retaining young, professional families.

Strategies:

- ~~Promote Affton as a desirable place for families by developing an image campaign and creating a local sense of identity.~~
- ~~Consider initiating an asset-based community program that identifies community assets and links resources to build upon community strengths.~~
- ~~Market Affton as a desirable place for young professional families with affordable housing choices, quality school districts, and close access to many destinations in the metro area.~~
- ~~Meet with real estate groups to promote the benefits of living in Affton.~~

Involvement:

- ~~Affton Community Betterment Association~~
- ~~Affton Chamber of Commerce~~
- ~~Local real estate community~~
- ~~The Affton School District~~

Issue #2: The growing senior citizen population will place special needs and opportunities on the community.

Strategies:

- ~~Use the growing senior citizen population as an opportunity to target commercial development that caters to senior citizen lifestyles.~~
- ~~Work with the Affton-White Rodgers Community Center to offer and promote senior activities during the day.~~
- ~~Create partnerships with local agencies and organizations that provide services to senior citizens.~~
- ~~Recruit senior citizens to become more active in the ACBA.~~

Involvement:

- ~~☞~~ Affton Community Betterment Association
- ~~☞~~ St. Louis County Department of Human Services– County Older Resident Program
- ~~☞~~ St. Louis County Department of Parks
- ~~☞~~ St. Louis County Economic Council
- ~~☞~~ St. Louis County Council