

# JAMESTOWN MALL AREA PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SAINT LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI

## BACKGROUND

Jamestown Mall opened in 1973 offering regional commercial merchandise on the suburban fringe of St. Louis, in anticipation of residential development moving into the area. The anticipated residential units never materialized and unfortunately, in recent years, new regional shopping destinations that are located closer to larger populations of shoppers have degraded the effective trade area of Jamestown Mall, causing a decline in sales and foot traffic. Over time, the quality of merchandise offered has declined and is now misaligned with the needs of the North County community. Today, although two of the mall's anchor buildings are occupied, its other two anchor buildings are vacant and portions of the mall have been walled off to reduce the appearance of vacant space.

North County residents remember Jamestown Mall's days as a shopping destination and want something more positive for their community in this location. In response to the community, St. Louis County investigated what could be done to improve the site's performance.



A village center with neighborhood serving retail could create a new identity for North County.

## PROCESS

As a first step, in the fall of 2009 the Urban Land Institute (ULI) conducted a panel study of the North County area to identify the issues contributing to the decline of retail and to provide realistic recommendations for the best use of commercially zoned lands, particularly at the Jamestown Mall location. As a result of the study, ULI suggested a two-part solution that included the creation of a coordinated vision and public participation from the community. ULI determined that the best use for the land given the constraints on the property was to demolish the existing mall and replace it with a smaller scaled, neighborhood oriented mixed-use development.

Taking the next step recommended by the ULI study, St. Louis County commissioned Dover, Kohl & Partners, a nationally-recognized town-planning firm to create an Area Plan for the Jamestown Mall site. Beginning with a kick-off presentation in July 2010 and a six-day design charrette in September of 2010 the County brought together community members, community leaders, elected officials and the design team to work together toward a common solution.

The County's initiative came at a time when the Mall's owners were burdened with a worsening national recession. Reimagining the future of Jamestown Mall requires a long-range perspective and broad consideration of possibilities. Dover-Kohl's multi-disciplinary design team of national and local experts provided necessary outside perspective for the future of the site.

As an important first step, the design team helped to establish community consensus and reset the community's expectations through hands-on design exercises with the general public and meetings with neighbors. The building of this general consensus was used to create a shared vision and lay the groundwork for future public support necessary to obtain approvals required for the redevelopment of the site.

## FIRST PRINCIPLES

Through the public design process, community members and the design team worked together to develop a series of economic and placemaking principles to guide the appropriate redevelopment of Jamestown Mall. Shaped from public input during the charrette, the “First Principles” embody the public’s vision for the future of this important property.

Due to many variables and unknown factors, the plan must remain flexible to accommodate changing economic forces, developers’ pro-forma, existing anchor tenants and unforeseen needs or uses. While the built-in flexibility leaves some uncertainty about the exact form, layout, and use of the property, the First Principles help to create stability and certainty about future development.

FIRST PRINCIPLES	
<u>ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES</u>	<u>PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES</u>
"Reset" the Property in Everyone's Mind	Seek to Establish a New "Heart of the Community"
Balance Private & Public Interests	Design Mixed-Use, Walkable, Smart Growth
Keep it Phase-able to Keep it Feasible	Emphasize the Strengths of the Site
Balance Neighborhood Desires & Developer Priorities	Build for the Coming Era, Not the Last One
	Build Well, or Do Not Build



The vacant Sears as it exists today.

## PLAN STRATEGIES

In order to compete with the newer retail formats emerging closer to large concentrations of consumers, the Jamestown Mall site needs to become a walkable environment, with shared parking, housing, and workplaces in a mixed environment that provides on-site support for retail activities. Creating this environment with its diverse housing opportunities could encourage the location of new employment at the site.

In order to make the site a viable place, the current large expanses of surface parking should transition over time into an interconnected network of streets forming coherent blocks. Parking should be located in mid-block locations behind buildings in order to create a pedestrian-friendly village center streetscape. These streets should be equipped with the components necessary to make pedestrians comfortable, such as street trees, benches, narrow traffic-calmed travel lanes, and on-street parking.

Diversification of uses will also make the site more resilient to the ups and downs of economic markets. Imagine if it were possible to live in a townhouse only blocks away from shopping and from one’s office; if restaurants, a grocery store, dry cleaners, and daycare were also located nearby. If the development plan provided opportunities for families to live in a walkable village, close to shops and employment, and insured a high quality of design and construction, this location could provide a competitive alternative to New Town St. Charles.



The northwest (Sears) site is transformed over time from a single-use mall to a village center.

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The large open parking lots and vacant outparcels comprising Jamestown Mall represent a tremendous opportunity for future diversification of the site's uses.

As evident by the closing of national retailers at the Jamestown Mall site, this location is not well suited for a regional retail center. However, as demonstrated by analysis in the Jamestown Mall Area Plan report, in the format of a village center there is a potential current market for 76,000 to 200,000 square feet of new retail on the site serving the local economy.

Based on the economic findings of the trade area for this location, the Jamestown Mall Area Plan is centered on one main idea – transforming the single-use, large footprint buildings of Jamestown Mall into a mixed-use village center that can easily adapt to changing economic needs and pressures.

In reconfiguring the Jamestown Mall site for uses that better serve the adjacent neighborhoods, there is an opportunity to provide the community with a village center. The size of the site, approximately 142 acres, could allow up to 1,400 new single-family attached and detached dwellings and apartments units in addition to the 200,000 square feet of retail, and 80,000 square feet of offices or varying combination of the above.

The analysis also identifies a potential market for senior living in small lot houses and townhomes which could account for 600 of the new households. The importance of this residential and employment base is essential to make the retail component more attractive to retail developers, investors and successful as a business location.

At the lower range, the site could support 700 new units which would significantly contribute to the viability of local-serving retail by providing customers with this as their most convenient shopping location. Providing a concentration of middle-income households is attractive to retailers and is the best chance the site has at insuring the success of services like a grocery store and restaurants.

## CONCEPTUAL PLAN SCENARIOS & ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives for the best use and form of development for each parcel, based on its location on the site and its proximity to surrounding uses and roadways are illustrated in this plan. The plan areas also illustrate four main plan scenarios, shown on the following page, that represent varying development strategies for the entire site. Different aspects of each of the plan strategies can be mixed leaving maximum flexibility while maintaining a cohesive plan for the site. All plans adhere to the First Principles and create a village center for the surrounding community.

The proposed development scenarios allow for phasing that permits the Jamestown Mall site to develop incrementally. Single or multiple parcels may be redeveloped while others may remain in operation. The end result of incremental development is that each new construction project helps to add to a cohesive, complete village. The plan works equally well should the property come under single ownership and be redeveloped all at once.



Senior housing, shown above, is an integral part of the proposed new walkable village.

## CONCEPTUAL PLAN SCENARIOS & ALTERNATIVES

### TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN



The Traditional Neighborhood Development Plan features a block and street network creating a complete village. A diverse village center is focused on the northwest parcel and could extend to the plaza at the center of the neighborhood. This scenario develops the site fully including the southern parcel by Coldwater Creek. The operating anchor stores remain as the village center and neighborhoods develop around them. If the existing anchor stores close, the parcels can be redeveloped to create a more complete neighborhood. As with the other scenarios, a diversity of housing is offered including townhomes, live/work units, duplexes, multi-family buildings and small homes on private lots.

### GARDEN SUBURB PLAN



The Garden Suburb Plan features curvilinear streets, center median boulevards, and larger parks and retention areas throughout the village. Neighborhoods are planned around a network of enhanced natural systems that connect throughout the site and to the natural flowways of Coldwater Creek through the open space systems of neighboring subdivisions. Retail is contained within the northwest parcel, resulting in a focused amount of neighborhood retail. The plan identifies a potential location for a sports complex prominently on Lindbergh Boulevard. The southern portion of the site is illustrated with an amphitheater and a large park that would connect to the Great Rivers Greenway trail system.

## CENTRAL COMMON PLAN



The Central Common Plan starts with the premise that all of the mall property comes under single ownership of a master developer. This scenario allows the property to be developed in a manner irrespective of the existing property lines, roadways, underlying infrastructure, and buildings. With more freedom to form plan geometries, a larger central gathering space surrounded by shops and townhomes, similar to Lafayette Square in St. Louis, could be possible. It should be stated that any of the four scenarios would benefit from and could be implemented under single ownership and a master developer.

## PARK & VILLAGE PLAN



The Park & Village Plan is one in which portions of the site are transformed into a regional park while others are cleared of their existing conditions to reduce blight, but are held until economic conditions are more favorable to development. The northwest parcel could develop with a small village center with a neighborhood serving retail and expand in the future. Farming may continue on the eastern outparcels. This scenario could be considered an interim stage to the other development scenarios.

**NEXT STEPS**

Due to the current economic downturn, development at the Jamestown Mall site faces many challenges in the near term and it will take time before the private sector has an appetite for new development. The public sector may need to take a leadership role to set the stage to attract private investment.

Ultimately, it will take a coordinated effort between the public and private sectors in order to achieve the desired community results. St. Louis County should take an active role in continuing the efforts to redevelop Jamestown Mall into an economically sustainable development by clearing obstacles and setting the stage for future development effort. But the County cannot do this on its own. Knowing that the public sector is committed to the plan, the private sector should also take an active role in the redevelopment of this site.

Expectations for this project need to be placed in a realistic context. Depending on market and credit conditions it could take time to produce substantive change on this site. Redevelopment of the property will not happen overnight but there are steps that can be taken now to set the stage for development. As the economy recovers it will become more economically viable for development to occur in this location. Some steps toward implementation will set the stage for development of the site while also enhancing the retail and community environment throughout North County.

For example, because most of North County has developed along conventional suburban road networks and formulas, there is now an excess of regional commercial space available, causing lowered performance from all locations. Removing excess commercial space on the Jamestown Mall site from the regional surplus would help make other commercial locations in North County more viable.

In the table that follows, steps that address marketing, policy and regulatory changes, and economic strategies are presented along with an estimated timeline for implementation. They have been broken into short term (1-5 year range) mid term (6-15 year range), and long term (15 years and beyond) goals.

Following this long-range, phased plan for redevelopment, the Jamestown Mall site promises to become a memorable part of the North County community once again.

*Additional information on the Background, Process, First Principles, Details of the Plan, Economics, and Next Steps can be found in the Jamestown Mall Area Plan Report.*

**STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

	short term 1-5 years	mid term 6-15 years	long term 15+ years
<u>MARKETING</u>			
1. Promote North St. Louis County	[Timeline bar spanning all three terms]		
2. Promote the Jamestown Mall Area Plan	[Timeline bar spanning all three terms]		
<u>POLICY &amp; REGULATORY CHANGES</u>			
3. Adopt the Plan	[Timeline bar in short term]		
4. Develop an Acquisition Strategy	[Timeline bar spanning all three terms]		
4A. Engage the Property Owners	[Timeline bar in short term]		
4B. Acquire the Property	[Timeline bar in short term]		
4C. Clear the Land	[Timeline bar in short term]		
4D. Create a Public-Private Partnership	[Timeline bar in short term]	[Timeline bar in mid term]	
5. Revise the Zoning	[Timeline bar in short term]		
<u>ECONOMIC STRATEGIES</u>			
6. Create a Detailed Strategy for Retail, Office & Residential Uses	[Timeline bar in short term]	[Timeline bar in mid term]	
7. Use Smart Phasing & Incremental Steps to Implement Detailed Plan	[Timeline bar in short term]	[Timeline bar in mid term]	



A variety of residential building types would be located within walking distance to shops.