

MacARTHUR BOULEVARD

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

PLANNING MISSION

In 2010, the **Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC)** engaged **The Lakota Group** (Planners and Designers), **Gewalt Hamilton Associates** (Traffic and Civil Engineers) and **Community Land Use and Economics Group** (Real Estate Analysts) to prepare a Master Plan for MacArthur Boulevard from South Grand Avenue on the north to its new interchange at Interstate 72 on the south.



MacArthur Boulevard

MacArthur Boulevard is centrally located within the City of Springfield, southwest of its downtown business district, and adjacent to the Village of Jerome, the City of Leland Grove and unincorporated areas of Sangamon County. The corridor is approximately 3.5 miles long and includes the commercial frontage along both sides of MacArthur Boulevard and several blocks of South Grand Avenue to Walnut Street (See **Figure 1.1: Regional Context** and **Figure 1.2: Study Area**).



South Grand Avenue

MacArthur Boulevard is a critical commercial corridor within the Springfield region and community stakeholders recognize its importance and potential for serving the needs of local residents and citizens. It is also a key gateway into Springfield's central and southern neighborhoods. The Boulevard Master Plan will provide a compelling vision for the roadway's future regarding land use mix, development potential and physical environment.

MacArthur Boulevard has two distinct physical environments in which the plan will focus its redevelopment strategies and recommendations. The first running from South Grand Avenue to Wabash Avenues is its mature northern end located adjacent to established residential neighborhoods. This segment includes a variety of land uses, although it is dominated by auto-oriented commercial development. Most of this segment has already been developed, but significant opportunities exist for redevelopment and for changing its physical form.



MacArthur Boulevard businesses

The southern end of the Boulevard, from Wabash and Stanford Avenues to the recently opened Interstate 72 interchange, will be experiencing major change as a large shopping center - Legacy Pointe - is under construction there. Opportunities exist for new land uses and development that would support the viability of existing businesses along the Boulevard.



MacArthur Boulevard near Stanford Drive

The objectives of the MacArthur Boulevard Master Plan process include the following:

- Create a clear, documented and shared vision of the future that “sets the stage” for funding strategies, capital improvement programming, new development and retention/attraction of area businesses.
- Develop an optimal short and long-range land use strategy and development framework.
- Create a range of alternative land use and development concepts that enhance and revitalize the Boulevard.
- Attract land uses and development that are more compatible with the goals, needs, infrastructure and character of the surrounding community.
- Assess transportation issues affecting the Boulevard today and in the future with the ultimate goal of balancing pedestrian and vehicular access.
- Analyze market trends so that redevelopment scenarios can be grounded and tested, especially for short-term action strategies.
- Establish a framework for future changes to development regulations that emphasize high quality, sustainable site and building design.
- Create a unified design theme that significantly changes the physical character of MacArthur Boulevard.

PLANNING PROCESS

PHASE 1: CORRIDOR ANALYSIS

The first phase of the Corridor planning process was initiated in March 2010. It involved the assessment of existing land use, physical conditions, transportation system, parking and real estate market. A steering committee composed of 30 stakeholders was formed by the SSCRPC to help guide the preparation of the plan. Members of the committee include elected officials and staff from Springfield, Leland Grove, Jerome and Sangamon County, local property owners, business owners and residents as well as SSCRPC staff and representation from the MacArthur Boulevard Business Association (MBBA).

The first-phase analysis also included a comprehensive review of:

- Previous plans/studies
- Recent/pending private developments and public projects
- Existing land use mix and zoning code.
- Transportation conditions/plans/studies

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- Market and development trends

This first phase included SSCRPC and City staff reviews, a Steering Committee focus group session, key stakeholder interviews, a community workshop, which focused on existing conditions and a State of the Corridor report. The workshop focused on existing conditions, initial findings and a visual preference survey.

PHASE 2: COMMUNITY VISIONING

The second phase involved generating ideas and concepts that addressed potential development and redevelopment opportunities. Alternative development scenarios and concepts were then presented at a second community workshop to gain public feedback, refine the concepts, generate additional planning/design ideas and prioritize an overall land use and development direction for the Boulevard.

PHASE 3: BOULEVARD MASTER PLAN

Based on the analysis and input from the first two phases, Phase 3 generated a more specific development framework as well as revitalization strategies for MacArthur Boulevard. Specific recommendations were made for development opportunity sites and a design approach was crafted for enhancing the overall Boulevard. A third community workshop was held to review and refine the Master Plan.

PLAN PURPOSE

The City of Springfield, Sangamon County, the Village of Jerome and City of Leland Grove, and the MBBA, as well as community leaders, property owners and developers will use the MacArthur Boulevard Master Plan as a guide for planning and development decisions over the next 5 to 10 years. It will serve several purposes depending on the needs of the user, such as:

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Master Plan will provide a framework for potential development and revitalization activities along the Boulevard. The City of Springfield, Sangamon County, SSCRPC and Jerome municipal staff will review development projects for conformance with the objectives, guidelines and recommendations set forth by the Plan.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT GUIDE

The Springfield City Council, Sangamon County Board and the Jerome Village Board will use the Plan to prioritize public investment initiatives and improvement projects. Information on existing conditions and future land use and transportation needs will also be used to seek grants at the regional, state and federal levels.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT GUIDE

This Master Plan report will provide a base of information about the area's constraints and development potential for people interested in investing and developing along MacArthur Boulevard.

MARKETING TOOL

The Plan will be used by the City of Springfield, Sangamon County, the Village of Jerome and MBBA to promote the Boulevard's existing businesses as well as its significant development opportunities.

FUTURE VISION

The Plan will act as a tool to inform current and future residents and business owners about the SSCRPC's, City's, Village's and MBBA's collective vision for this key commercial corridor.

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