



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

Redevelopment of Ballwin City Hall

BALLWIN, MISSOURI

SPONSORED BY:
THE CITY OF BALLWIN, MISSOURI

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Urban Land **St. Louis**
Institute

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Table of Contents

ULI ST. LOUIS PANEL	2
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	7
REDEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS	11
CIVIC SPACE ACTIVATION	16
CIVIC SPACE DESIGN	18
CONCLUSION	22
PANELISTS' BIOGRAPHIES	24

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The TAP Panel
touring the study site
with City leadership.
Source ULI St. Louis.

Executive Summary

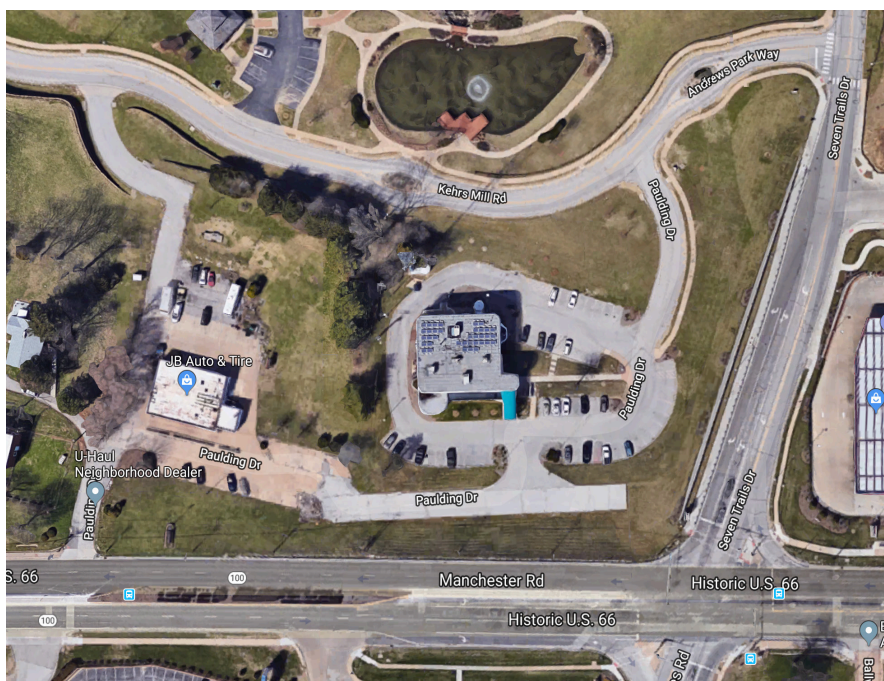
The City of Ballwin, Missouri, established in 1950 in western St. Louis County, is home to over 32,000 residents, a strong retail corridor, and a host of recreational activities for residents and visitors alike. The City of Ballwin (the City) is in good financial health and is in the process of completing a city-wide comprehensive plan. It also recently completed construction of a new City Hall building in Vlassis Park, less than one-quarter mile north of the former City Hall, and near the northwest corner of the intersection of Manchester Road and Seven Trails Drive.

Knowing that the former City Hall location (the study site or the site) sits on a highly-trafficked corridor and features a significant grade change from Manchester Road down to the study site, the City turned to the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Program (TAP) for guidance in the development or redevelopment of the site.

The City asked the real estate professionals comprising the TAP Panel to address the following three questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of marketing the isolated property (14811 Manchester) versus marketing it in conjunction with the adjacent property (14819 Manchester)?
2. If the property (or properties) is placed on the market for commercial use, is the property better used/marketed if the building(s) is retained or if it is a vacant piece of land?
3. What is the highest and best use if the property is retained for public use, again either singularly or in conjunction with the adjacent property?

Through the TAP process, the Panel reviewed briefing materials provided by the City, toured the site, interviewed City leadership and stakeholders from in and around the community, and ultimately delivered a set of recommendations to the City for use in addressing potential redevelopment of the study site. The Panel's recommendations, explained in detail in the following pages, set forth the following key points for the City's consideration.



Aerial photo of the former site of Ballwin City Hall at the intersection of Manchester Road and Seven Trails Drive. Source Google Maps.

If there is a strong desire to monetize the site, the City is encouraged to conduct a retail valuation and a multi-family valuation of the site to determine the potential viability of either market use.

If there is not a strong desire or pressing need to monetize the site, the City is encouraged to align the future use of the site with the City's goals, the community's vision, and the goals set forth in the recent comprehensive plan. These alignments take the following forms:

- Complement the beauty of, potential connection to, and engagement with Vlasik Park by turning the study site into additional green space and space for community gatherings.
- Strongly consider expanding the site via an acquisition of the adjacent property to the west.
- Use the topography of the site to the advantage of its future use. An amphitheater or dual amphitheater and pavilion use could take advantage of the natural slope of the site and the protection from traffic noise afforded by the drop in grade. An amphitheater could be built at the northwest corner of the study site, at the foot of the hill and close to Kehrs Mill Road. If the adjacent parcel is acquired, a separate pavilion could be placed on that site, expanding the opportunities for additional large indoor/outdoor gatherings at Vlasik Park.

While not part of the Panel's direct charge from the City, Old Towne Plaza, the shopping plaza directly south of the site, across Manchester Road, was of interest to the Panel in the context of development of the study site. In

considering the study site, and potential future uses, the Panel contemplated how the shopping center might pose an opportunity to create an even more significant civic center in Ballwin. The Panel encourages the City to work with the current or future owner of Old Towne Plaza to encourage redevelopment of that area in a manner that aligns with the City's vision, creating a city center setting featuring mixed-use, walkable developments that could connect north to Vlasik Park, the study site, and the new City Hall.

Aerial photo of the former City Hall in relation to Old Towne Plaza and adjacent recreational areas and park. Source Google Maps and TAP Panel.



Environmental Scan

The City of Ballwin enjoys a reputation in the St. Louis region as a successful and stable municipality providing quality municipal services to its residents, business owners, and visitors. The City is fiscally sound and has a history of good municipal leadership. The City is bisected north and south by Manchester Road, a heavily-trafficked retail corridor that also divides the various residential developments to the north and south of Manchester. Businesses in the area tend to be service or retail oriented, with few multi-story office buildings lining the Manchester Road corridor. The City does not have a defined downtown core, yet Vlasik Park and its immediate surrounds has become the unofficial city center.

To more deeply understand the characteristics of the City and the study site in particular, the Panel reviewed the City's draft comprehensive plan and conducted a series of stakeholder interviews with municipal leadership, business owners, residents, and engaged citizens. The key findings from that investigation are discussed on the following pages.

The City of Ballwin, Missouri

Ballwin is a family-friendly city. Residents appreciate the City's family-oriented nature and enjoy ready access to quality public education through the Rockwood School District, recreational opportunities at City parks and swimming facilities, and family-friendly entertainment opportunities via community festivals, like the annual Ballwin Days event. There is a strong desire to preserve the City's family-friendly environment.

Traffic is key to healthy businesses. While traffic may often be cited as a concern in other areas of the region, for Ballwin, the traffic found along Manchester Road drives commercial activity, specifically retail activity, which results in direct tax revenue for the City.

Green spaces and parks are nice but remain rather unconnected from space to space. The recreational facilities found throughout the City, whether that be playground equipment and ball fields or swimming facilities and splash



New Ballwin City Hall
in Vlasis Park. Source
TAP Panel.



Former Ballwin City Hall.
Source TAP Panel.



Open space at the study
side, looking east along
Manchester Road. Source
TAP Panel.

pads, are well-maintained and easily accessed. Each park/facility remains on an island, however, unconnected to the broader network of recreational spaces. More intentional connections to the parks for pedestrians or bicyclists would be an added benefit to City residents and visitors.

Housing variety and affordable housing is limited in the City. New development in Ballwin tends to involve tearing down small, older homes to make way for more luxurious single-family homes. This type of infill development is driving up property values and further limiting the supply of workforce or affordable housing. The City also has a limited number of senior housing options. As the City's population ages and Baby Boomers look toward more senior-friendly housing options, residents who have been proud to call Ballwin home for years may be hard-pressed to find many senior housing options within City limits. Across the spectrum of housing discussed, there was a strong desire among stakeholders to promote owner-occupied housing over rental options.

Commuting patterns have more residents leaving for work than non-residents commuting in. With a number of higher-density employment centers east of the City, it's worth noting that roughly twice as many Ballwin residents (12,971) leave the City for their jobs as commute to Ballwin (5,194) for employment.

Ballwin does not have a clear, central downtown or identifiable city center. A city center that is easily identified as such could provide residents with a central gathering space, a place to point to as the heart of the City, and a focal point for those visiting Ballwin for the first time.

City Hall Study Site

With regard to the former City Hall site specifically, stakeholders had the following thoughts to share with the Panel.

Business owners do not wish to see competing uses at the site. During meetings with area business owners and operators, it was clear that the future use at the site would, in an ideal scenario, complement and not compete with existing businesses along Manchester Road. In a region where retailers move easily between and withing municipalities, seeking newer facilities and/or more aggressive incentives, business owners and especially retail operators are attuned to the shifting retail landscape and are eager to retain today's market share.

Retain or increase green space in the City. A number of stakeholders emphasized the proximity of the study site to Vlasis Park and noted a desire to protect the park from encroaching and uncertain development. Turning the study site over to private development would mean a loss in control over the

use at the site and may result in a use that is generally viewed as undesirable by City residents and park patrons.

Senior living opportunities could be built into the site. Stakeholders also discussed the possibility of including housing options at the study site and gave voice to the idea of adding a senior living facility to the site, which could feature views of Vlasis Park to the north.

Options for reuse of the building are limited. The Panel heard from one stakeholder who had a specific idea for utilizing the former City Hall building as is for video production and as an educational facility. Following the Panel's tour of the building, however, it became clear that the outdated nature of the building layout and aging systems make efficient and effective reuse of the building a difficult and likely short-term proposition.

The City's contemplated value of the site, as an entry to Vlasis Park and municipal buildings, may not align with market value. Several stakeholders noted the value of the study site given its location on Manchester Road and its proximity to Vlasis Park. These same stakeholders were also concerned over the City's loss of control over the site when/if a sale occurs. These characteristics and the corresponding perceived value to the community led more than one stakeholder to note that the City could or should place a premium on the property over and above its market rate. This stance also indicates that stakeholders did not see the potential reuse of the site as something that should be driven by financial concerns.

The site could be the 'front door' to Ballwin. Given its location in the geographic heart of the City and between Manchester Road, Vlasis Park, and the new City Hall, the site could become the new 'front door' to Ballwin.

Study Area Design Drivers

When looking at the study site in the context of the broader community and the City's stated goals, the Panel evaluated the site through a variety of lenses and design drivers.

Highest and Best Use. How can the site be used either commercially, privately, or publicly to insure that it is being put to its best use?

Topography. The location of the study area well over 20 feet below grade from Manchester Road will play a critical role in the future use of the site. The downward slope of the land, away from Manchester Road and down to Vlasis Park, is also a key design driver.

Site Lines. Given the topography of the site, potential future site lines for and visibility of any development at the site will be of critical importance, particularly if/when discussing potential commercial uses.



The building that sits on the study site is aging and outdated. Source TAP Panel.



The site sits at the corner of a key intersection – Manchester Road and Seven Trails Drive – and could serve as the 'front door' or heart of the City. Source TAP Panel.



The topography of the site and the drop in grade from Manchester Road down to the site are key design drivers. Source TAP Panel.

Traffic and Access. Situated at the northwestern section of a signalized intersection on Manchester Road, the site is considered a ‘hard corner’ in commercial real estate circles, which is typically a benefit when considering retail uses. Over 40,000 cars drive past the site daily, but access is concentrated at the rear of the site off Kehrs Mill Road. Access via a ‘right-in, right-out’ option directly on Manchester would be preferred, but would require the acquisition of the neighboring property to the west. Without acquisition of the adjacent parcel, the site is left without direct access to either Manchester Road or Seven Trails Drive. It’s also worth noting the tension that would exist between delivering more direct access to the park via a right-in, right-out option on Manchester and the further interruption of traffic by those using that access point so close to a signalized intersection.

Adjacent Uses. The Panel felt strongly that the eventual use or uses at the site should respect the adjacent businesses and complement rather than compete with existing uses in the immediate area.

Community Input. The Panel also respected the input from the community – both through the stakeholder interviews and information provided via the comprehensive plan – and wished to insure that any recommendations made respected that community input.

City Goals. Similarly, with regard to the City’s goals, the Panel took to heart the information found in the draft comprehensive plan and briefing from the City on the TAP workday and worked to insure that recommendations for the site aligned with the City’s goals.

Viewed from Manchester Road, the study site slopes deeply down to Kehrs Mills Road. Source TAP Panel.



Redevelopment Considerations

In considering redevelopment of the former City Hall site, the City wished to consider the benefits or challenges that might be posed by marketing the site as a single piece of property or marketing it in combination with the site adjacent and to the west on Manchester Road.

Marketing the Site Singularly or as a Combined Site

The benefits of marketing a combined site are numerous and include:

- A combined site provides additional gross square footage, increased visibility from Manchester Road as the adjacent site is at-grade with the street, and increased and improved access directly to the site from Manchester Road, again because the adjacent site is at-grade. Currently, as a single parcel, the study site may only be attractive as a single-tenant site, such as a CVS, Walgreens, or bank branch.
- A developer would prefer the larger, combined parcel in order to gain access to the additional access points (i.e. curb cuts) on Manchester Road, thus providing direct access to a combined site. A combined parcel would also provide a developer with more options to address potential parking needs, either via more surface parking or through structured parking if a more dense development is planned. (It is worth noting here that structured parking, often starting at \$20,000/space, may be difficult to achieve at this site given a typical developer's expectations for a return on investment.)
- As is, the adjacent site detracts from the City's 'front door' vision for the study site, and the City would benefit from gaining control of the site in order to insure that the adjacent parcel supports the 'front door' vision.
- All uses considered throughout the TAP process would benefit from a larger site. The term 'mixed-use' arose several times during stakeholder interviews, yet as it is, alone, the site is too small to support a mixed-use

development. Similarly, a potential multi-family residential development option only works with a combined development site.

- The study site does not need the adjacent property in order to be viable, yet the adjacent site and the City Hall site are more marketable as a part of a larger, combined site.

The potential drawbacks to acquiring the adjacent property and marketing a combined site are as follows:

- The adjacent site has been used for automotive repair for a number of years. Because of this, there will likely be a need to conduct an environmental study to determine if any remediation is needed to make it commercially viable. This process and the associated expense will need to be taken into consideration.
- If the former City Hall site and the adjacent site are not combined into one large parcel, a stronger visual and physical separation between the two properties would benefit the eventual use or user at the study site.

Former City Hall Demolition

The City also asked the Panel to consider the benefits that may be realized by marketing the site in its current state, with the former City Hall building intact, or by first demolishing the building and marketing the site as vacant land. If the City is interested in pursuing private development at the site, it may wish to market the site in its current state and not incur the expense of demolition. There is also the outside chance that a user might find the current building of potential use, and through early demolition, that potential use is eliminated.

At the same time, to insure that the outdated building does not remain in place long-term and serve as a distraction from the appeal of Vlasik Park and the new City Hall building to the north, the City may wish to include a demolition stipulation in its contract with a private developer. This will insure that the building is removed, yet is done so without direct expense to the City.

Highest and Best Use

While each of the Panelists brought a certain market perspective to the task at hand, the Panel as a whole continued to evaluate the highest and best use of the site through the lenses of the goals of City leadership, the needs of the community, fiscally responsible actions, and alignment with the City's recent comprehensive plan.

Thoughtful evaluation of potential uses at the site included office, retail, multi-family, and mixed-use options.

Office Uses. There is limited demand for Class A or Class B office space in this area and current commuting patterns show most residents travel outside of Ballwin for work. CoStar statistics show less than one percent vacancy in the area, yet this relates primarily to Class C buildings and converted houses and does not reflect demand for new office space at today's construction rates. Office users benefit from regional highways and interstates as employers are hoping to draw employees from around the region; the study site does not benefit from this type of transportation access. While traffic on Manchester Road is a benefit to area retailers, the volume of traffic limits the appeal for office workers commuting to the area daily. Office tenants and business owners would prefer high building and signage visibility; the poor visibility at the site, due to the grade change, will be a drawback for many office tenants. Finally, office uses are becoming more dense, and thus higher density parking may be required for an office user; achieving higher density surface parking may be challenging due to the site's topography and structured parking may not be financially viable.

Retail. CoStar notes a ten percent retail vacancy rate in the area, but this figure is out-of-date as it does not include certain notable recent moves by area retailers (*e.g.* the recent move by Hobby Lobby is not included in the CoStar data). The Panel was also cognizant of utilizing the site in a manner that does not cannibalize or compete with nearby uses nor create more retail space when there is existing, vacant space available. The site is not large enough for an anchor retailer, so a potential retail tenant would likely be a smaller user (*e.g.* perhaps a 10,000 square foot footprint or a CVS or bank branch). There is also some doubt as to whether or not a locally-owned retailer would have the financial backing to make a development at this site feasible. Regardless of the size of the tenant, all tenants would much prefer to be at-grade with Manchester Road with site-lines to the front door and easily-accessible parking.

Medical Office Space. The demographics of Ballwin and the aging population led the Panel to consider a possible medical office user for the site, yet it is not likely that a medical office could generate the revenue needed to support the return on investment in the site to bring it to market.

Multi-family Residential. A number of stakeholders indicated that multi-family residential, either rental or owner-occupied, might be a good fit for the site. The density of a potential residential development varied from garden apartments with surface parking (generally 16-40 units/acre) to 3-4 story low-rise buildings, which can feature up to 90 units/acre. Regardless of the density, however, the topography of the site will again pose challenges to a developer, and the site does not lend well to surface parking given grade changes. Residential development would likely require structured parking and, again, financing structured parking will make this type of development at the site a challenge.

Monetizing the Site. The hard corner at the study site would likely generate strong interest among potential developers who might be looking to build a gas station, car wash, or a bank. A CVS or Walgreens may also make sense at this hard corner, yet both are already in the area today close to the site.

Each of these types of developments is not likely to add value to the City, may compete with existing businesses or vacant spaces in the area, and does not align with stakeholder goals nor the City's draft comprehensive plan. If the City has a strong desire to monetize the site, it is encouraged to engage a retail broker and a multi-family broker for further valuation exploration.

As stated earlier, the City is in strong fiscal health and is not in a position where its financial health hinges on the sale of the study site.

Highest & Best Use: Civic Use. If the City is not relying on monetizing the site, the highest and best would be to turn it into a civic space and integrate this parcel into Vlasia Park. The City's draft comprehensive plan notes a need for more green space; at present, the ratio of green space and park acreage to the City's current population is low compared to typical municipal standards. Vlasia Park is 'landlocked' and separated from Manchester Road, thus incorporating the study site into the park provides an easy opportunity to expand the park, secure the site's future use, and create a physical entrance/front door to the Ballwin City Center. This connection to Manchester Road may also assist with future plans to create a larger city center development, utilizing the development potential of Olde Towne Plaza to the south and turning the entire area into a potential city center redevelopment site. Finally, a civic use at the study site aligns with the City's draft comprehensive plan and aligns with benefits articulated by the stakeholders.

Alignment with Ballwin's Comprehensive Plan

Why not a Retail Use?

Business Profile (p. 28)

- Significant fast food presence
- Primarily chain restaurants

Key Issues and Concerns (p. 69)

- Shuffling of major retail tenants between commercial developments
- Decline of retail

Biggest Issues over next 20 years? (p. 82)

- Decline of retail
- Vacant and underutilized properties

Principal #3 – A Resilient Local Economy and City Revenues (p. 112-121)

- Redevelopment has not introduced significant net new retail to the community
- Flat or declining sales tax revenue can negatively impact the City's provision of high quality services

Why not an Office Use?

Employment Density (p. 30)

- Multiple higher density employment centers located east of Ballwin

Work Commute Patterns (p. 31)

- Most Ballwin residents commute outside of Ballwin for their jobs
- Net loss in work commuter patterns

Why not a Residential Use?

Principle #1 – Strong Neighborhoods (p. 90-91)

- Diversify housing choices and universal design
- Good schools and high quality of life in Ballwin putting increased pressures on housing options and affordability

Principle #3 – Resilient Local Economy and City Revenues (p. 112-121)

- Mixed-use developments that combine office, retail, and residential uses supported by public gathering/green spaces in appropriate locations
- Mixed-use development creates built-in customer base for long-term retail viability
- Diversify City revenues



Why a Civic Use?

A Community STRENGTH (p. 40, 58, 81)

- Enhances the quality of a community asset available to residents
- Parks & Recreation system cited by residents as top strength of living in Ballwin

Manchester Road Great Streets Project (p. 54-55)

- Cluster existing and future developments to create Town Centers
- By design, promotes traffic calming and pedestrian-friendly environment

Principle #4 – A Strong Sense of Place (p. 122)

- Gathering spaces that promote a variety of social experiences and accommodate large and small groups

Create welcoming entries to City and Town Center (p. 126)

- Create distinction along Manchester Road
- Streetscape enhancements

Vlasis Park Commons (p. 125)

- Welcoming entry to Vlasis Park
- Enhances a high profile community asset
- Unique programming ideas can create a destination-type civic space

Civic Space Activation

With the intention of returning the study site to a civic use, the Panel began to imagine how that recommendation might best be realized to benefit the citizens, provide a welcoming and functional ‘front door’ to the City, and begin to integrate seamlessly with the functions of Vlasia Park beyond.

The City is missing a central gathering point or place, and an amphitheater at the site may make wonderful sense, particularly as the topography of the site begins to create the natural amphitheater design. If the design of an amphitheater were intentionally flexible, it could also accommodate other uses as one might see in a pavilion. In some instances, an amphitheater structure could be designed in such a way as to convert to a pavilion with indoor and outdoor multipurpose space, which could be leased to the public or to organizations for private events. The area around the amphitheater could also benefit from additional outdoor seating and picnic areas to supplement those already found in Vlasia Park.

The open space around an amphitheater would help maintain the open ‘front door’ to the park and could, at the same time, provide additional event space. Food trucks could be brought in and parked along Kehrs Mill Road. A Ballwin Market could spring up along Kehrs Mill – featuring produce from area farmers, craft vendors, and/or other local entrepreneurial businesses – or an Art Walk featuring local artists could help activate the space. In all of these instances, using Kehrs Mill Road, and closing it to vehicular traffic on event days, would allow the safe, free-flow of pedestrians within the Park. Additional crosswalks, particularly high-visibility crosswalks such as continental crossings, and signage to and throughout the Park would also enhance awareness of pedestrians and make the experience within the Park even more attractive to families.



A fire pit could be a nice outdoor gathering point for the amphitheater or pavilion space. Source <http://www.mccmatricschool.com>.



Another public fire pit gathering spot. Source <https://www.westfield.in.gov>.



Utilizing or mimicking the natural topography of the site, a sliding or small zipline play structure could be installed. Source <https://www.playlsi.com>.



Outdoor movies could also make use of the topography of the site and help activate the space. Source Adobe Images.



Lawn games would be a fun way to activate the space and invite the community to get out and enjoy the area. Source Adobe Images.



Civic Space Design

As stated earlier, the City is encouraged to consider redeveloping the study site into a civic amphitheater. The topography and slope of the site lends itself nicely to an amphitheater and the natural slope eliminates the need for fixed seating, requiring a lower investment in infrastructure by the City and allowing more flexibility in future uses.

The experience of traveling along Manchester Road could also be enhanced by open space at the study site. The configuration of businesses along Manchester Road and the constant presence of building right up to and along the thoroughfare creates 'tension' for drivers passing through. One way to help alleviate this tension is to create or design a point of 'release.' By converting the study site into an open civic space, the City is providing that sense of release for drivers and others traveling along Manchester Road. An amphitheater, set deep into the site and away from the road will provide a nice focal point for those passing by and a destination point for those traveling to the Park.

With these points of reference, the Panel identified two separate tracks the City might pursue: Option A, which addresses redevelopment of the study

This overlay of the amphitheater in Ellisville's Bluebird Park onto the study site demonstrates the scale possible here for an amphitheater. Source Google Maps and TAP Panel.





This overlay of the Chesterfield amphitheater onto the study site provides additional scale and perspective. Source Google Maps and TAP Panel.

site singularly; and Option B, which provides guidance for the study site in combination with the adjacent property to the west.

Option A – Amphitheater Amenity

If the City pursues redevelopment of the study site alone, an amphitheater amenity, designed to serve a dual-purpose as a pavilion, would be a wonderful asset to the park and to the City.

- The design for the site should follow Universal Design principles, insuring equal access to the amenities, regardless of physical ability. This type of design would require a paved ramp on east side of the site, to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, and ADA parking on the far east side of the site close to the corner of Seven Trails Drive and Andrews Park Way. Similarly, ADA parking would be added to the southern edge of Kehrs Mill Road, which could serve a dual-function as food truck parking.
- In this scenario, Paulding Drive is decommissioned and becomes green space.
- Visitors to the amphitheater could drop guests off as needed from Kehrs Mill Road via a small pull-off that could be added along the southern edge of the roadway.
- A new access road could be built from the new drop-off area and wind back to serve the cell tower for maintenance purposes, and a new shed to

Amphitheater Design Ideas



With limited infrastructure improvements, seating becomes plentiful and welcoming. Source Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/136163588719177811/>.



Using the natural slope, seating may be added to create amphitheater-style seating. Source Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/332281278733783570/?lp=true>.



Seating using existing topography and featuring a pavilion and stage for gatherings or performances. Source Travel Iowa <https://www.traveliowa.com.aspx/lifestyles.aspx?id=10&lfid=156>.

Pavilion Design Ideas



A pavilion can add rentable shelter and picnic options to the park. Source City of Wildwood, Missouri.



In addition to providing shelter, pavilion designs can add visual interest to the park. Source Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/108227197275665867/>.



Options to provide enclosed space that appears open to the elements helps blend the structure into its natural surroundings. Source 1x1 architecture.



Amphitheater design Option A. Source Google Maps and TAP Panel.

house the cell tower data center and information technology infrastructure could be placed nearby or incorporated into the lower level of the amphitheater structure.

- The amphitheater space now located at the study site would benefit from the site's 'hard' sides to south, west, and east. The northern view corridor may be partially interrupted by the new service function space, ADA parking, and shed access road.

Option B – Amphitheater & Pavilion Amenities

If the City is able to acquire the adjacent property to the west, it is encouraged to consider installing an amphitheater at the study site and a pavilion amenity on the adjacent parcel.

- With this expanded site, the combined parcel benefits from automobile right-in and right-out access from Manchester Road on Paulding Drive through to Kehrs Mill Road. Additional parking, including ADA parking, could be placed on the newly-acquired adjacent parcel. If needed, the City could partner with the adjacent Salem United Methodist Church in Ballwin (14825 Manchester Road) to provide additional overflow parking, which would necessitate improved pedestrian connections from the church's parking lot to the site.
- The pedestrian ADA ramps could be placed on western portion of the site at the current parcel division between City's property and the adjacent property, and a possible switch-back could be factored in to allow for the necessary low-rate grade change.



Amphitheater design
Option B. Source Google
Maps and TAP Panel.

- As with Option A, a new shed would be built to house the data center and information technology infrastructure for the cell tower, and the requisite service lane to that shed could serve double-duty as food truck parking.

The ultimate goal of either design option is to create a sense of place and provide space for Ballwin's citizens and visitors to enjoy the beautifully open green space and park.

Conclusion

While there are a number of options for potential redevelopment of the former Ballwin City Hall site, the Panel determined that the highest and best use for the site is one that is not commercially-driven but is instead a solution that caters to the community at large.

Commercial uses – office, retail, medical office, and mixed-use – at the study site would be difficult and structured parking, if needed, will make commercial development cost-inefficient for a developer.

Although the community noted several missing pieces in Ballwin that could be realized at the site, including senior or affordable housing, those uses are not well-suited for the size and topography of the site.

The built environment along Manchester Road consists of a variety of buildings, one after another, with little public/open space. By removing the building and turning the site into open space, those passing by on Manchester may benefit from the sense of calm or release that comes from a break in the buildings and a sense of respite from the built environment.

In alignment with the City's draft comprehensive plan, the City would benefit from more green space and park space and the site's location in the geographic center of the City, next to Vlasik Park could create the 'front door' or 'heart' of Ballwin that the City is currently missing.

If there is a strong desire to monetize site, the Panel strongly encourages the City to conduct a retail and multi-family valuation to determine the potential viability of either or both options at the site.

If a financial gain from the sale of the site is not a critical factor, the City is encouraged to align the site's future use with the City's stated goals, the community's input, and the goals set forth in the draft comprehensive plan, all leading to a civic or green space at the site.

Vlasik Park is a beautiful asset for Ballwin, and the City has the opportunity to complement the beauty and engagement of Vlasik Park with more green space and civic gathering opportunities at the study site. Through an

acquisition of the adjacent parcel, the City also has the opportunity to expand the impact of the park and broaden the potential programming at this focal intersection in the community.

By embracing the existing topography of the site, the City could build an amphitheater or dual amphitheater pavilion use. If the adjacent parcel were acquired, a pavilion and additional parking could be placed on the adjacent parcel.

Finally, with a future opportunity to create an even larger or more visible city center, the City is encouraged to work with the current or future owner of Old Towne Plaza to redevelop that site in a manner that aligns with the City's vision, turning it into a downtown – a mixed-use, walkable development that connects to Vlasis Park, the heart of Ballwin, Missouri.

Panelists Biographies

Natasha Das, TAP Chair

Attorney, Stinson

Natasha helps clients navigate transactions related to real estate and tax credit and incentive programs. Her clients include investors, community development entities, nonprofits, developers and public and private companies. Natasha's firm grasp of tax credit transactions has allowed her to assist clients in creating best practices and finding creative legal solutions to achieve their objectives. She has experience drafting and negotiating documents for New Markets Tax Credit transactions, Historic Tax Credit transactions, Renewable Energy Tax Credit transactions and transactions involving Opportunity Zones. Also focused on real estate law, Natasha has successfully represented clients on numerous real estate dispositions, acquisitions and leasing efforts. While in-house at The Koman Group, Natasha gained experience drafting and negotiating sales agreements, construction documents, loan documents and property and leasing management agreements. She assisted in the strategic planning and analysis of potential developments through underwriting and market research on multi-million dollar projects. After law school, Natasha earned her master's degree in urban planning and real estate development. Natasha gives back through professional leadership and firm involvement, serving as chair of Stinson's St. Louis Women's Initiative and participating on the St. Louis Recruiting Committee.

Chris Beard

Director of Traffic Engineering & Planning, Lochmueller Group

Chris Beard is Director of Traffic Engineering and Planning for Lochmueller Group where he is responsible for leading a team of 16 engineers and planners involved with comprehensive planning, site planning, and a wide array of traffic and multimodal studies to support transportation infrastructure investment.

Scott Dunwoody

Director, Cushman & Wakefield

Scott Dunwoody is a Director at Cushman & Wakefield with over nine years of office brokerage experience in commercial real estate. Scott specializes in representing office users and landlords in the St. Louis market, in addition to assisting clients with multi-market office requirements across the US. Scott graduated from the University of Dayton with a BS in Finance and MBA. He has been involved with the United Way Men's Leadership Society and Young Leadership Society since 2014.



The TAP Panel at work. From left: Natasha Das, Cara McEddy, Scott Dunwoody, Cristen Hardin, Sam Koplar, and Chris Beard. Source ULI St. Louis.

Cristen Hardin

Associate Planner, City of Collinsville

Cristen is the Associate Planner in the Community Development and Economic Development Departments of the City of Collinsville. Her primary responsibilities include reviewing Zoning & Land Use applications, including: Rezoning, Site Plans, Sign Packages, and Zoning Text Amendments; managing Planning and Economic Development projects, including: short- and long-range plans, and administering TIF and Business District incentive programs; and serving as Staff Liaison to the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Community Appearance Board.

Sam Koplar

Principal, Koplar Properties

Sam is a principal at Koplar Properties, a family owned real estate firm in St. Louis. Sam led the redevelopment of Maryland Plaza in the Central West End, a project that included obtaining state and federal historic tax credits, TIF, as well as handling all of the leasing of the retail and office space. In 2012, the firm completed the York House, a luxury apartment building adjacent to Forest Park in the Central West End, utilizing state and federal historic tax credits and HUD insured financing.

Cara McKedy

President, eddy Design Group

Cara McKedy is the President of eddy Design Group, a woman-owned architecture and design firm in St. Louis, Missouri. Cara's diverse design body of work spans scales and typologies, having led the planning and design of projects in almost all fifty states and abroad. Her experiences include Corporate, Educational, Hospitality, Retail, Industrial, Civic and Sustainable projects. Cara is known for her ability to cultivate relationships amongst clients, team members and her network and uses a people-centric philosophy in the creation of space. She stays actively involved in the community, serving on the Board of the National MS Society, as a member and former Board Member of CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women), with the University of Missouri's Architectural Studies Advisory Board and the St. Louis Forum.



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