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We would love to hear from you. If you do not have access to the internet, please call us and we will mail you a survey (314) 266-8620.

#### **GET INVOLVED WITH** THE SLUP UPDATE!

Throughout this engagement process we would love to hear from you and receive your feedback. You can be a big part of this project by participating in public meetings, workshops, pop-ups throughout the city, and walking tours in various neighborhoods. Please check our website for the most recent updates.

#### Follow Us!



Stay Updated!

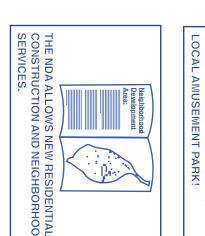
Website: www.slup-stl.com

Email: info@slup-stl.com



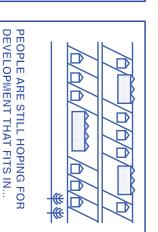
The SLUP Scoop Newsprint Team Publisher: Interboro Partners

> Matching Game Answers 1F, 2D, 3G, 4B, 5C, 6A, 7E











# **Word Search!**

Find the list of words below



Planning & Urban Design Agency of St. Louis

#### 3. MIXEDUSE 4. SLUP 5. **NEIGHBORHOOD** 6. BUSINESS

7. DEVELOPMENT 8. STLOUIS

# within the St. Louis map

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# E E The SLUP Scoop!

Issue 01

January 2024

Issue 01: Let's Get Going!

A newsletter covering updates on the St. Louis

Strategic Land Use Plan for the City of St. Louis

**City of** 

Plan

St. Louis

Strategic

Land Use

of the Comprehensive Plan

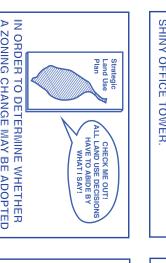
# 9. COMMERCIA 10. INDUSTRIAL 11. OPPORTUNITY 12. ZONING

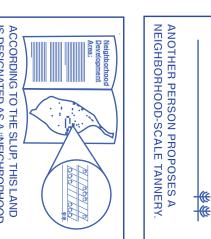




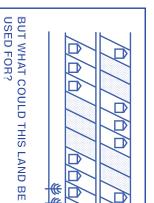


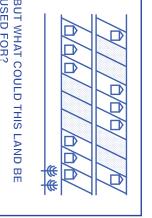


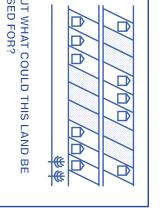


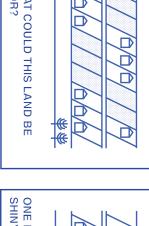






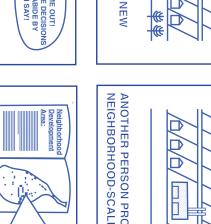


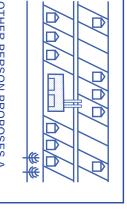












# guide

Plan is we can

The accompanying cartoon offers an imaginary scenario that underscores the importance of the SLUP in

# **Topic Spotlight: Vacancy**

In each newsletter we profile a specific issue relating to the SLUP in order to understand the existing conditions that impact Land Use Planning in St. Louis In this edition, we take a look at one of St. Louis's greatest current challenges: vacancy. How we should plan for vacant land is a major question we will have to consider.

St. Louis has one of the highest vacancy rates in the country, with nearly 20% of all properties unoccupied. Out of all the properties in the city, up to 25,000 of them are designated as vacant. 65% being vacant lots and 35% being vacant buildings. The City defines a vacant building as any building with consistent signs of abandonment, including structural condemnation, window/door board-up services, tax delinquency, and lack of general maintenance. Vacant lots are any parcel that does not contain a building, that is not used for an explicit purpose (e.g., parking lot, park), and where there is evidence to suggest the property is not being provided with regular property maintenance.

St. Louis, Missouri



Vacant Building

Source: Vacant Property Explorer, St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative, 2023

In three years, the City has accumulated over \$20 million worth of costs due to vacancy, including unpaid property taxes, forestry maintenance fees, and unpaid vacant building fees. However, the consequences of vacancy aren't just economic. Abandoned or poorly maintained properties attract crime and illegal dumping, diminish community pride, and add burdens to City departments and residents.

The factors that have contributed include population loss, weak real estate markets and aging housing stock, suburban sprawl, detrimental public policies such as redlining, predatory or negligent investors, the foreclosure crisis, and other forms of disinvestment. In order to understand the historical context of today's vacancy rate it is especially important to look at the factors that contributed to a 63% decline in St. Louis's population from its peak of

Starting in the 1940s, housing

regulations, mortgage policies, urban renewal, and zoning laws all contributed to a pattern of segregation and 'white flight' in which the White population moved outside of the city limits to the surrounding suburbs while the Black population was mostly confined to certain northern tracts in the inner city. Between 1950 and 1970, 60% of the White population in St. Louis left the city, leaving large amounts of vacant properties<sup>1</sup>. Black residents were also forced out of the city by discriminatory loan practices and other harmful policies, and many people left voluntarily to escape a city burdened by urban decline. St. Louis stands as an example of the urban crisis that affected many cities in the

In 1971, the City attempted to address the rising vacancy rate by creating the Land Reutilization Authority (LRA) which was the first landbank in the United States. The job of the LRA is to manage vacant and abandoned properties until new private owners can purchase them and return them to productive use. Today, the LRA owns approximately 10,000 properties out of the 25,000 that are considered vacant. Most of the properties owned by the LRA are vacant lots.

Some of the St. Louis neighborhoods with the highest vacancy rates are Vanderlou with 58.7% vacancy, and Fairground with 57.6% vacancy.

The largest private owner of vacant properties in St. Louis is Northside Regeneration LLC with 1,601

The City's 2018 Equity Indicators Baseline Report used vacancy as one indicator of equity in St. Louis. In terms of vacancy rates, St. Louis has an equity score of 3 out of 100, with 100 being the most equitable distribution of vacancy between majority-White and majority-Black census tracts. There are more than nine times as many acres of vacant land and buildings in majority-Black census tracts as in majority-White census tracts, showing that vacancy remains an issue tied to the racial

In August of 2023 the City of St. Louis announced the launch of the Vacancy Strategy Initiative, a partnership with the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative to address the rate of vacancy and turn vacant properties into opportunities for revitalization. Two resources that the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative offers to the community include: the Vacant Property Explorer, an interactive map for viewing and exploring potentially vacant properties in the City of St. Louis; and the Vacant Lot Toolkit, a guide to acquiring and revitalizing vacant lots.

The Strategic Land Use Plan update will consider vacancy and how to address it: what is the right future land use for vacant lots and for neighborhoods with very high vacancy rates?

Gordon, Colin. Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City. University

# Out & About: Highlights from our Community Engagement

11/13: Public Workshops





Earlier this month our team met with Aaron Williams from 4theVille-an organization that develops programs and encourages preservation of The Ville. Aaron took our team, city staff, and members of the steering committee on a walking tour of The Ville neighborhood and shared with us some of the area's history, and showed us what areas are working well currently, and what areas have a lot of potential.

12/02: Pop-Ups



"We need to be one cohesive city for future success while celebrating the individuality or identities of unique St. Louis Resident

[We] should further numanize the spaces, make them spaces everyone feels St. Louis Resident

This city has so much potential!" St. Louis Resident

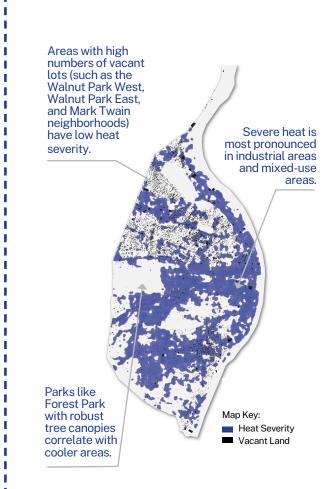
"I want Saint Louis as a whole to thrive and provide residents with opportunity. - St. Louis Resident

[The] future of land use needs to prioritize making schools, green spaces for flood water retention and recreation, and usable public transit. We have enough entertainment districts." St. Louis Resident

# Map Spotlight

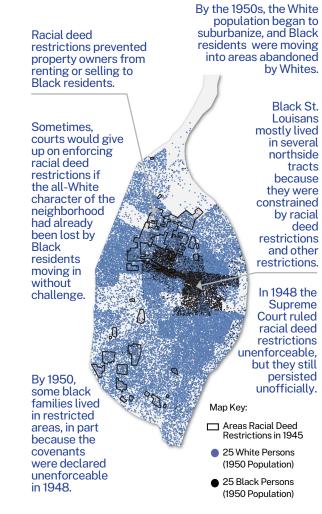
In each issue we reproduce some maps from our analysis that highlight important themes. In this issue, we present six random takeaways from our ongoing analysis of existing conditions.

There is less heat severity where green space is.



"STL Vacancy Explorer." STL Vacancy Tools. Accessed October, 2023. "Heat Severity-USA 2021." Heat.gov. Accessed September, 2023.

Racial deed restrictions were once among a range of strategies used to enforce racial segregation.



"General Information | 1950 Census." National Archives and Records Administration, Accessed November, 2023

Gordon, Colin. "Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City." Mapping Decline | Colin Gordon | The University of lowa. Accessed December 22, 2023.

#### Past redlining is tied to current vacancy in St. Louis.

one of the few Walnut Park East was unrestricted a predominantly White zones in St. Louis in the the mid 1960s when 1940s and it became a majority did not have Black neighborhood, Construction of Interstate 70 rent or buy through the property there. In the 1950s The early 60s Ville was 95% was partially African responsible American. for this shift. HOLC Class D Ranking HOLC Class C Ranking

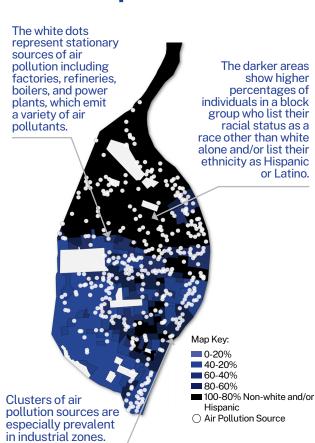
Loan Corporation rated the neighborhood of Gravois Park D (hazardous) in 1937 and C (definitely declining) in 1940. The redlining of this area prevented many residents from attaining loans or other services and contributed to disinvestment in the neighborhood

The Home Owners

Vacancy of Land

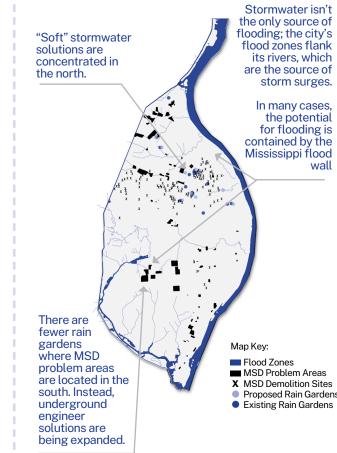
"STL Vacancy Explorer." STL Vacancy Tools. Accessed October, 2023. oration (HOLC) Designations ca. 1930. Accessed November, 2023.

Many air pollution sources in St. Louis are located in neighborhoods with high concentrations of non-white and/or Hispanic residents.



Prepared by the Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic. Data Sources: EPA 2018 EJ Screen Public Geodatabase; EPA, FRS Facilities Geodatabase

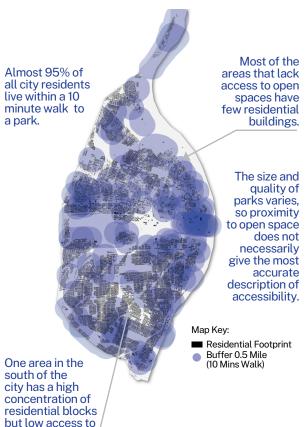
Stormwater flooding happens throughout St. Louis, but raingardens, detention ponds, and other "soft" solutions are concentrated in north St. Louis. where land is more abundant.



National Flood Hazard Layer. Federal Emergency Management

Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District. St. Louis, MO.

#### Most people in St. Louis have good access to parks.



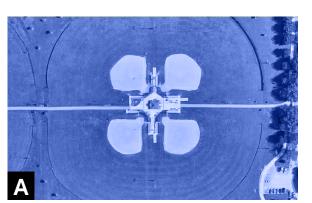
"City Parks: Parks Shapefile." City of St. Louis. Last modified May 30, 2013.

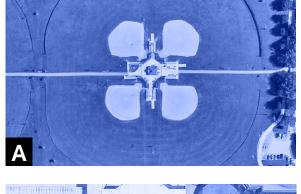
"Building Footprints Shapefile Dataset - Building Footprints." St. Louis

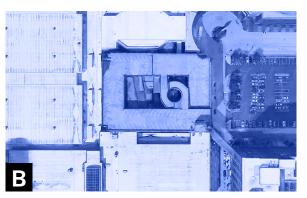
open spaces.

#### **Matching Game!**

Match the image to the land use designation in the current SLUP. Answers are located on the back page of the newsletter













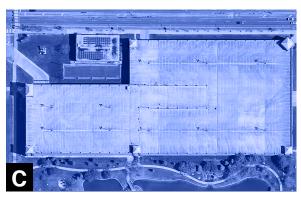
2. NPA | Neighborhood **Preservation Area** 

Commercial Area

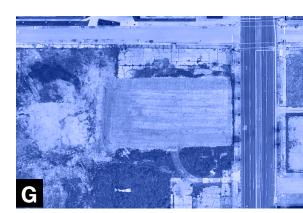
3. OA | Opportunity Area

**Development Area** 

- 4. SMUA | Specialty Mixed Use Area
- IPDA | Institutional Preservation &
- ROSPDA | Recreational / Open **Space Preservation & Development Area**
- **BIPA** | Business / Industrial Preservation Area







is that a phenomenon which is happening

evenly across the city or in certain areas or

NS: It's not even. So it happened the largest number

of people who've left are in North St. Louis, but

they're starting to lose families in other parts of the

city, not nearly at the rate that you see in North St.

Louis. If you understand North St. Louis you realize

that for many decades there was a lack of public

investment. Since I've lived here since 2008 many

of these neighborhoods have been in decline. I

could take you down the street today and show you

a photo I took in 2010. And not enough has been

done about the crumbling infrastructure in these

neighborhoods. In fact, it's worse in many places

In the neighborhoods in the north, which have

been depopulating for decades, do you expect

NS: I'm a demographer so I am trained to not think

with my feelings. I'm not thinking about politics, but

looking at markets. For instance we look at what the

private market is doing and we have the projects

around the NGA site. Who's buying homes and who's

buying lots? I think it's fair to say that a lot of people

are disappointed that there hasn't yet active private

market for the development of homes leveraging

the economic investment from the NGA site that

was promised. If you were to go walk around the

eighborhood surrounding the site today I think

you would be disappointed by how little economic

activity there is. I pulled up a Zillow map just a

couple weeks ago and I think there's only five or six

properties that were sold over the past year.

than it was when I took the photos.

that trend to continue?

neighborhoods?

# WHY DOES THE **SLUP NEED AN UPDATE?**

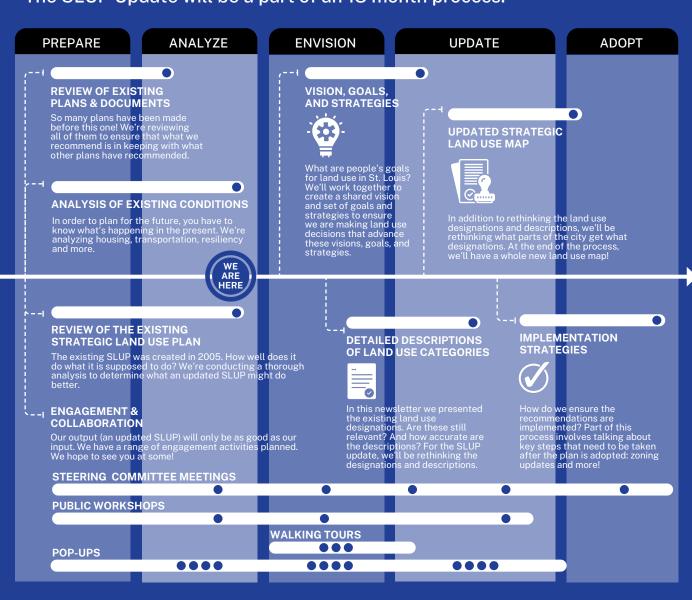
A lot has changed in St. Louis since the Strategic Land Use

comprehensively consider how our land use can best reflect St. Louis's current

Land Use designations (profiled in this newsletter) are somewhat vague, and don't give policymakers enough information to make informed decisions about

# **How Are We Updating The SLUP?**

The SLUP Update will be a part of an 18 month process:



### **An Interview With Ness Sandoval**

Ness Sandoval, Ph.D, Professor of Sociology at Saint Louis University

We spoke with Ness Sandoval, Professor of Sociology at Saint Louis University, about his research on the demographic trends in St. Louis, and the relevance of his findings to land use planning. Ness's research focuses on the spatial hierarchy of inequality in American cities. As a demographer, Ness provides a valuable outline of the key obstacles facing the city and offers a call to action for imagining what a forward looking vision of St. Louis might look like!



The land use plan is an aspirational document, a blueprint for the people in St. Louis to aspire to. What are the primary demographic hurdles facing the city that might temper expectations?

NS: I would probably list a few. I think the first hurdle is the out migration of its residents, specifically its families. Every year we see that there's a net loss of residents, but when you start to look at who these people are that are leaving: it is families with

children. And so thinking about land use, there are a lot of institutions built around children: parks, soccer fields, basketball courts. We need to ensure these spaces, and the land uses around them, intentionally support kids' wellbeing.

Another is affordable housing. The city is building lots of housing, there's a lot of apartments going up, lots of condos going up: people are moving into the city. There are good opportunities for them. But the question I always ask is: where's the housing for the mom and her kids that's affordable? Where is the affordable single family home? And I've seen some lueprints for the scale of the number of homes that are coming online and in terms of affordability it's nowhere near the number that's needed.

For the hurdle of the out migration of families,

Given your background in studying demography, what do you think the outlook of neighborhoods in decline in St. Louis will be in the next decade or

> I admire St. Louis. I believe in St. Louis, in its potential, and the strength of its people. Given that there once was close to 900.000 people and now it's 280,000 the city has really been through a lot. People have stood with the city. There's a very strong spirit in the city. People love the city. They want to see the city succeed.

And so for me the question is: given that many single and retired people are not leaving the city, the people who are leaving the city are families with children. And so we look at the two factors of why they are: schools and crime.

And so when you ask me, can I project this forward and what will happen? I think any person who would tell somebody, "Stay in the city. The schools are getting better," but that is not everyone's experience. I've seen it in my own personal network, of people who were once committed to the city, at least two families have left since January.

#### The SLUP is an opportunity to make a radical new vision for the city.

NS: As a demographer, I always tell people I want to be wrong. Please let me be wrong because if I'm wrong, that means that something special is happening that is not predicted.. But I don't see any evidence that I'm wrong. The market has not proven me to be wrong yet. Now what the City's doing is great, but the city can only do so much. It can only produce so much housing it doesn't have.

It doesn't have a lot of money at scale to fix these problems, and so the private market says we're only going to build in the central West End or The Grove. That should be a signal that those are your thriving neighborhoods. This is where people want to live. We

need to make it easier for families with children to stay in the city. We need to create safe neighborhood with great access to schools, opportunities, etc.

How can the city use population assumptions to guide its planning approach in the SLUP process?

NS: We just talked about some challenges facing the city, some big ones, but significantly there are infrastructure challenges. It's got a water problem, it's got street problems. It's a city that was designed to hold 900,000. It had 300,000 people, now 286,000. And so how do you fix this? How do you fix a city that doesn't need all this infrastructure? It's got blocks that ve two houses; it's got neighborhoods that are not safe. I don't have the solution, I'm just providing data and saying let's talk. There are groups of residents that want to fight for the city; they believe in the city. I don't want to leave this interview saying there's nothing hopeful. There are lots of people that have an image for the future of the city that they want. The city has everything to be successful. It is succeedi f you look at the central corridor, or Forest Park, or owntown. Those parts of the city are comparabl to any city in the country, Houston, Dallas, San Francisco. The greenways are very successful; they

However, how much does it cost to maintain some parts of the city with so few people? I think that troit's got some good examples to look at where entire neighborhoods are gone, but there are some very nice urban farms. The land becomes something that's an advantage to the city by providing access to organic food. But what does this mean for the future of the city? If you don't talk, if you don't have these radical changes, I believe that if you interview me in five years from now the streets still will not be fixed, we will still have random crime around the neighborhood and families with children will still continue to leave.

I'm a hopeful person, but you know, some of the data points are brutal. One community member told me that every time I present, it's brutal. But one thing I've heard is that they appreciate my transparency and that I'm not hiding the facts from the public. And they keep telling me, "I don't like what you're telling us, but keep telling us!" And I think the city would be well poised to hear that message: don't hide data, give it to the people, be honest, and create a shared vision of the future with transparency for the

### **Meet The Steering Committee**

The steering committee, composed of twelve St. Louisans selected by lottery, will help guide the direction of the new SLUP. We asked each member the following question: Why do you want to be part of the steering committee? Here's what they said!

**Bernard Powderly** 

Kasimu Taylor

**Denean Vaughn** 



I have lots of ideas for unused plots of land in and all throughout the St. Louis area. For example: 3rd spaces, playscapes, and agricultural/self

**Ntosake Ambonisye** 



"As a health equity advocate, I'm nterested in efforts to dismantle the racist policies and practices that have resulted in the segregation and intentional disinvestment in communities of color. I am interested in contributing to efforts that can truly transform our city and ensure ALL residents live in thriving built



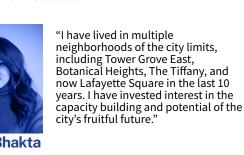
I grew up in the city of St. Louis. However, I have spent most of my adult life living in other parts of the Midwest. Now that I have settled in St. Louis, I would love to get involved in my neighborhood as well as the city at large."



Stephanie McCloud

"As a lifelong St. Louisan, I feel a sense of civic duty to give back to the City which I call home. I feel my background and interests in urban planning and transportation enable me to have thoughtful conversations about the future of our region and the possibilities of building a better tomorrow for St. Louis residents and







**Twanya Banks** 

"I love giving back to the community and am fully invested in making the City of St. Louis a better place for all."

"Born and raised in St. Louis I have seen

the neighborhoods that I've grown up

community have no voice in what their

in become spaces where those in the

community will look like in the future.

I'm an advocate for those people and

this will allow me to be their voice in

omeowner, block captain, member of

the Hyde Park neighborhood planning

committee, and I've recently started a

community led non-profit to serve the

Hyde Park community. I enjoy meeting

with and listening to community

members to make our wonderful

"I'm a MO Realtor and land

redlining) is detrimental to my

"I am both a business owner and

resident of the city of St. Louis, and I

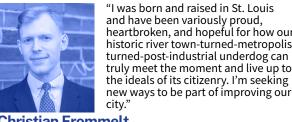
am passionate about its history and its future and I want to ensure that it

structuring (for example

community better."

rooms that they're not able to be in."

I'm a small business owner,



historic river town-turned-metropolis turned-post-industrial underdog can truly meet the moment and live up to the ideals of its citizenry. I'm seeking new ways to be part of improving our

## A Word from the Planning and Urban Design Agency

The SLUP update is being championed by the St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency. We spoke with Executive Director Don Roe, and City Planning Executive Miriam Keller about their thoughts on this most recent update and how they envision the new plan to shape the city's future!

#### How do the Planning and Urban Design Agency and the City use the SLUP?

Don: The SLUP is a core document under state law for how we evaluate items that go to the Planning Commission. We (the Planning & Urban Design Agency) staff all those meetings, and the question is always—does this rezoning (or redevelopment plan or other item) conform to the SLUP? This gives the City a legal grounding for decisions. In other words, we're not making arbitrary decisions, but we're operating with a formal set of goals and principles, with the SLUP in particular as a guide for land use.

Miriam: We use it all the time. Every item the Planning Commission reviews is compared to the SLUP. We also write memos for each and every Board of Adjustment meeting about whether requested variances (i.e., special exceptions to zoning rules) are in keeping with the SLUP. However, I think it's used a little bit as a reactive tool. If we had a more informative, specific, and community-driven land use plan. we could use it to drive some of the work we know our community needs: things like zoning reform, neighborhood reinvestments, and so on. That's exactly what we're trying to do with this SLUP update

#### Why does the City of St. Louis need a new SLUP?

**Don**: When we first created the SLUP in 2005, it was a huge step. Honestly, the City had been operating without a formally binding land use plan for decades. And as you can imagine, there was a lot of problematic stuff older planning documents, like the comprehensive plan adopted in the 1940s. So the SLUP we have now, while general in nature, was a BIG step forward in terms of planning in St. Louis.

But a lot has changed since 2005, and we've learned some ways our current SLUP doesn't serve us in the ways it needs to. For example, what does the current SLUP have to sav about economic justice? About housing affordability? About transit-oriented development? About climate change? The answer is... not much. It's time for a redo that takes that all into account, and set the stage for neighborhood planning.

Miriam: "If we had a land use plan that really centered equity, climate resilience, and the other things we want for our future, it would mean that the day-to-day land use policy decisions we make work in service of those goals. In fact, they would have to!"

Miriam: The current SLUP also doesn't have much community buy-in—I bet a lot of people reading this interview didn't realize St. Louis had a formal citywide land use plan! We need that to change, both so that people have a real voice in shaping the plan, and so that we can all be operating with a shared vision for our city's future.

#### What are your ambitions for the new SLUP?

Don: The new SLUP needs to be user-friendly, clear, and ambitious. St. Louis if full of potential—a unified citywide plan can help us envision that potential, and work together

Miriam: I want the new SLUP to be something that is useful to every entity in City government and in the community that touches land use. That means developers, development agencies, and even some operational departments. This plan should help everybody work together in service of a shared, community-driven vision.

This new land use plan will also set us up to tackle some issues with our zoning code. Once we have a clearer vision for future land use, we'll be able to fix our zoning issues by bringing zoning regulations in line with our goals. In fact, part of this process is a detailed assessment of our current zoning code and recommendations for how to update it. So think of the SLUP / Comprehensive Plan update as a step 1, and a zoning code update as a step 2.

#### Land use can be pretty abstract. Why should people care

**Don**: Well, how we use land touches everything in our lives: housing, jobs, the environment, grocery stores, you name it. It's about having what we need in the right places, and it's about creating places people want to be. The SLUP legally serves as the land use component to the City's comprehensive plan. But this process will set the stage for creating other planning guidance for our city (e.g., transportation and mobility, etc.).

Miriam: We have to think with the future in mind. We have real issues (and opportunities) that deal with land in St. Louis. How do we guide the use of vacant land? How do we use land in a way that protects us from flooding and extreme heat? How do we make sure the land around our kids' schools supports their learning and wellbeing? How do we support diverse housing development to meet our

These aren't things we can change overnight...we need a vision document that bakes that in, and that gives us the legal backing to start tackling those issues through zoning and other implementation tools. So, basically, this is a chance for the community to come together and think about what we value, and what we want our future to look like (until it's the time to update again). The deeper dives we do through neighborhood planning will also build on the SLUP, and provide really important strategic direction.

# History of St. Louis' Land Use Planning

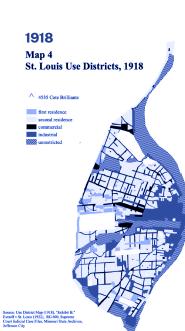
In order to analyze the current SLUP, it is useful to understand the past Land Use Plans that have shaped the City. This timeline outlines some of the key moments in the history of land use planning in St. Louis from the early 20th century to the present.





industrial uses outside

residential areas.







# 1975

1975: Attempt at a new comprehensive plan

An outside firm was hired to create an Interim Comprehensive City Plan to replace the 1947 plan. The 1975 city plan contained policies and recommendations for land use, transportation, public facilities and housing. It also included a strategy to prioritize rehabilitation and funding for certain areas of the city while leaving neighborhoods labeled as "depletion" areas to be virtually ignored. Following similar patterns to the 1947 plan, the areas designated for depletion were mostly in the North of the city and predominantly Black. After public criticism in reaction to the racial implications of the plan. it was ultimately abandoned and the 1947 plan remained the only comprehensive plan for St. Louis.

2005

# 1907

1907: The St. Louis Civic league created "A City Plan for St. Louis:" the first attempt at a comprehensive city plan in the United States.

This was the first time the city was treated as an integrated whole rather than individual pieces to be planned separately. The plan aimed to attract newcomers with both civic and commercial improvements in order to maintain St. Louis's status as a major American city. It focused on the following issues: a group plan for municipal buildings, an inner and outer park system, civic centers, street improvements, a Municipa Art Commission, and legislation necessary to implement the proposed plans.

The 1907 plan was never fully realized, but the ideas it presented shaped the city's development through the 20th century.

# 1923

**1923: Harland Bartholomew makes major** plans for St. Louis

With an \$87 million improvement package, city planner Harland Bartholomew implemented major changes in the city's infrastructure and open spaces, including the park that would eventually become the Gateway Mall. These plans designated funding for: street improvements, construction, river CITY OF ST. LOUIS MAJOR-STREET-PLAN channeling, parks and playgrounds,

public hospitals, firehouses and equipment, rail and auto bridges public markets, waterworks upgrade, powerplant, and the municipal auditorium and downtown plaza and memorial.



#### 1947 1947: The City Plan Commission created a new comprehensive city plan

Under Harland Bartholomew, a new city plan was adopted in an attempt to guide the city's expected growth for the next 50 years.

The plan focused on the following improvements: Creating a stricter single-use zoning code • Designating more land for single-family units to spread out residential density Designating "obsolete" and "blighted" areas for urban renewal Constructing highways through the city to

allow for heavier traffic Creating more parks and open spaces throughout the city

It's important to mention that this plan had

underlying agendas that were harmful to the advancement of equity and social justice. The designation of certain areas as blighted contributed to displacement of economicallydisadvantaged people, many of whom were people of color, and exacerbated segregation within the city. We can still see the lasting, problematic impacts of this plan in the makeup of the city of St. Louis today, and therefore equity and social justice are important drivers of the current SLUP update.

2005: The Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP) was adopted The 2005 Land Use Plan is intended to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in St. Louis by encouraging appropriate types of development and preservation in clearly defined locations. This remains the most recent Land Use Plan for St. Louis.