



CITY OF
ST. CHARLES
ILLINOIS • 1834

AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agenda Item Number: IA

Title:

Public Hearing for Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Downtown, North of Main Street

Presenter:

Russell Colby

Meeting: City Council- Public Hearing

Date: August 3, 2020

Proposed Cost: N/A

Budgeted Amount: N/A

Not Budgeted:

Executive Summary (if not budgeted please explain):

Background

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range policy guide and is advisory/non-binding. The document is intended to establish a road map and vision for the future so that when development opportunities arise for private or public properties, the City has a wider vision as a point of reference. The document is most frequently referenced when the City reviews zoning changes or development projects.

The City adopted the current Comprehensive Plan in 2013. In 2019, City staff initiated a process to update the Comprehensive Plan for Downtown, specifically the portion located north of Main Street.

The primary objectives of this current Comprehensive Plan amendment:

- Land use and visioning for the former Police Station site, recognizing that the current plan does not identify any future reuse of the site.
- Consideration of potential impacts of the “Active Riverpark” concept on the Fox River frontage, and related future opportunities resulting from reduction/modification of the river floodplain.

A public hearing is required before the City adopts any amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Review and Recommendations

Recommendations were developed by the Plan Commission. Draft plan pages were presented to the Planning & Development Committee in February. (The Committee subsequently discussed and reviewed a draft Request for Proposals for the former Police Station site which incorporated the East Side plan pages as an Exhibit.)

The draft plan amendments are substantially similar to what was presented in February. For the West Side, in response to a property owner inquiry, the “Open Space” land use area shown along the State Street Creek floodplain has been adjusted to follow the boundaries of the commercial properties along Route 31 and exclude the residential properties to the west along State Street.

The attached final draft plan pages would be added to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 8, “Downtown Subarea Plan” as an addendum to the “Catalyst Sites” section. The existing chapter can be viewed here:

<https://www.stcharlesil.gov/sites/default/files/planning/comprehensive/ch8downtownsubareaplan.pdf>

Additional information and documents regarding the Comprehensive Plan amendment can be found on the project website: <https://www.stcharlesil.gov/projects/downtown-comprehensive-plan-update>

Attachments (please list):

Comprehensive Plan Amendment- “Downtown Catalyst Sites Addendum”

Recommendation/Suggested Action (briefly explain):

Conduct the hearing and take public testimony. The hearing may be continued, if necessary, or closed. An ordinance amending the Comprehensive Plan is listed on the City Council agenda.



Comprehensive Plan Update

Downtown - North of Main St.

City Council Public Hearing
August 3, 2020



Background

- **Comprehensive Plan**

- Long-range policy guide- advisory/non-binding
- Vision and road map for the future
- Current Plan- Adopted in 2013

- **Purpose of the Amendment**

- Land use and visioning for the Police Station site
 - No future use identified in 2013 plan
 - City Council interest to solicit developer interest
- Consideration of the Active River “Riverpark” concept
 - Economic impact- Land use potential
 - Physical impact- Shoreline and floodplain changes

Project Timeline

- Jan. 2019 – Plan Commission review of existing conditions and background documents
- March 2019 – Presentation of Economic Impact Analysis of Active Riverpark concept
- April 2019 – Community Open House
- July 2019 – Open House report presented
- Sept. 2019 – Plan Commission East Side recommendations presented to P&D Cmte.
- Feb. 2020 – Plan Commission West Side recommendations presented to P&D Cmte.
- June 2020 – Draft East Side plans incorporated into Police Station RFP draft
- August 2020 – Public Hearing for final draft prior to adoption

Overall Themes

- Transition from downtown core to park/recreational areas to the north
- Riverfront: open, green, accessible
- Mixed use/commercial fronting on active streets, riverfront open space
- Connections to recreation uses, trails
- Residential to add foot traffic
- Building height in the 3-4 story range most preferred
- Buildings set back from riverfront
- Residential transition to neighborhoods
- Parking/parking decks on interior blocks





Plan Documents

- Downtown Catalyst Sites Addendum
- Add Site “R” (east side) & Site “S” (west side)
- Land Use Recommendations page
- Site Improvements page

Downtown Catalyst Sites Addendum

SITE R

Land Use

Any proposed development should contain the following characteristics :

- Maintain 60 feet of open space along the river.
- Maintain Riverside Ave. to provide access for existing utility infrastructure.
- Conceal parking within the development.
- Building heights should be in line with current zoning and should step down towards the river; taller buildings can be considered through a PUD review process.
- Building setbacks will be determined based on riverfront/ shoreline improvements, which may include enhancements identified in the 2015 River Corridor Master Plan Update ("Riverpark Concept").

 Mixed Use

The old police station and surrounding parking lots are some of the best opportunities for redevelopment along the river within downtown. The preferred land use of these sites is Mixed Use, such as ground floor commercial and upper floor hotel or residential uses. New uses proposed for the old police station site will need to maintain access to the City Well site. Any new development that would remove the public parking behind City Hall would need to accommodate the removed public parking within the proposed plan.

 Residential or Parking

This area is suitable for residential or parking uses. Residential uses would transition from the neighborhood to the east and take advantage of views of the river. Alternately, a parking garage in this location could be used to support City parking needs, if the current municipal parking lot(s) are redeveloped for mixed use.

 Open Space

Maintain public open space along the river. The location and size of the open space may vary depending on riverfront/ shoreline improvements. However, the public open space should not be reduced to less than 60 feet, which is the approximate width of the current 100 year floodplain along the riverfront.



Site Improvements

■ ■ ■ Riverfront:

- Enhanced river trail/ promenade, 20 feet minimum width pathway.
- Maintain public space near the bike bridge for a viewpoint.
- Either retain or relocate the Veterans Memorial near the old police station.

▨ Utility:

- Better screening of utility uses to enhance the appearance of the area.

▭ Structure Parking:

- Structured parking should be concealed by buildings where possible.
- Structured parking could be established east of Riverside Ave., with an upper level access from N. 2nd Ave. A traffic study and analysis is needed to determine the impact on the existing street network and traffic controls.

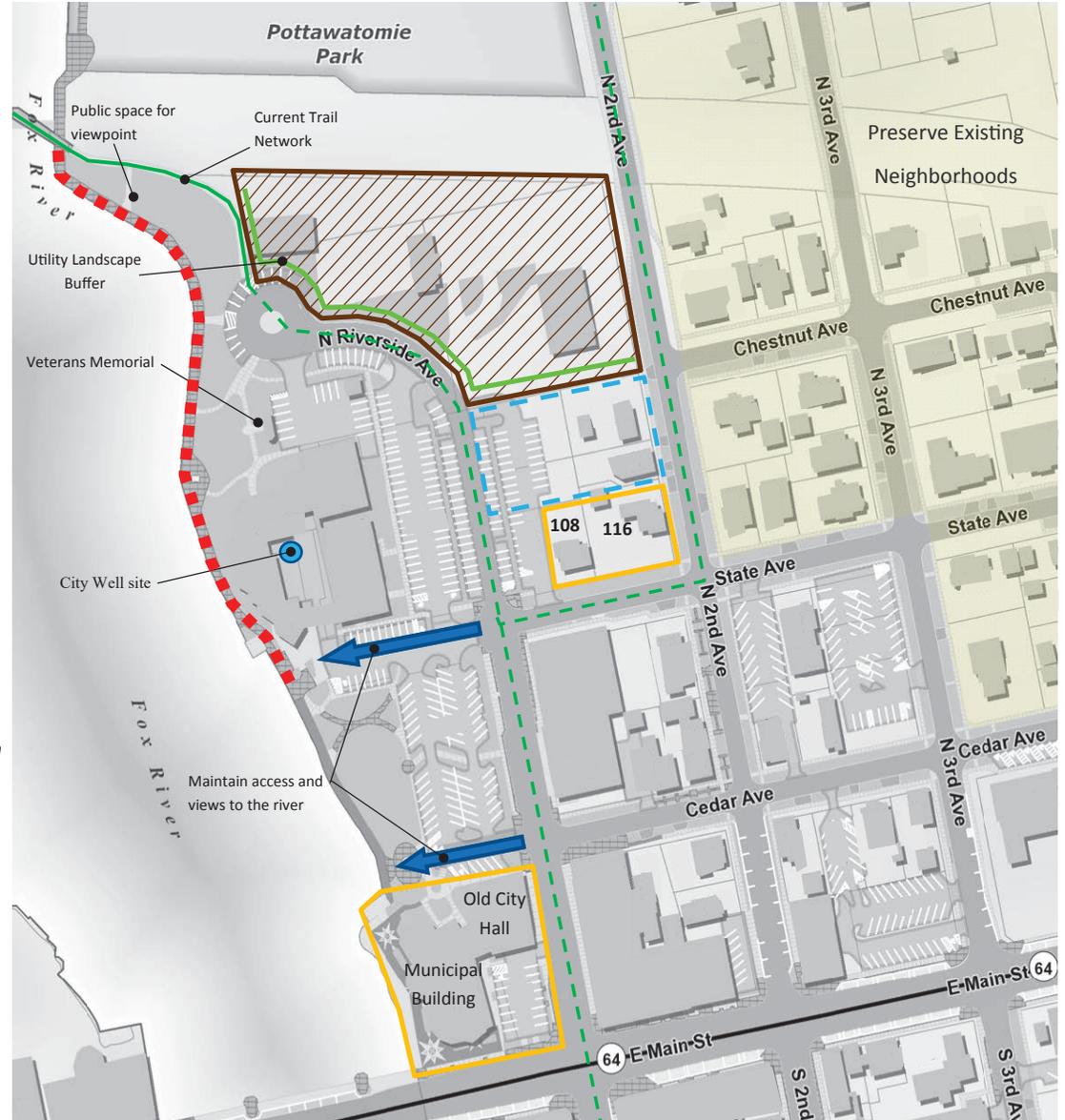
▭ Landmarks:

- 108 and 116 State Ave. are locally landmarked structures. Any work that would significantly alter the structures will need to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Preserve Old City Hall building and the Municipal building. Both structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

← Access/ Connectivity:

← Maintain public access and visual connection to the river at State Ave. and Cedar Ave.

--- Interconnection of Fox River Trail, Great Western Trail and Pottawatomie Park should be improved and enhanced to promote bike/pedestrian access and recreational activity.



SITE S

Land Use



Mixed Use

- Primarily first floor commercial uses and upper floor office or residential uses.
- Ground floor residential use along the Neighborhood Transition block frontages.



Open Space

- Open space can be designed with floodplain options in discussed in the Site Improvement Plan.
- Open space should be maintained along the State Street Creek floodplain per the Land Use plan.
- Open Space along the River:
 - If the shoreline remains in current location, consider open space improvements.
 - If the shoreline is extended out as part of the “Riverpark Concept” identified in the 2015 River Corridor Master Plan Update, retain parking as an access to the park .

Block Frontages

As areas are proposed for redevelopment, each street should be designed based on the following block frontage categories.



Active Commercial

- Buildings set back from right-of-way line.
- Wide sidewalks or promenades.
- Space available for active use by businesses.
- Strategically placed planters that do not obstruct walkways or usable areas.



Commercial

- Wide walkways.
- Primarily hardscape.
- Strategically placed planters that do not obstruct walkways or usable areas.



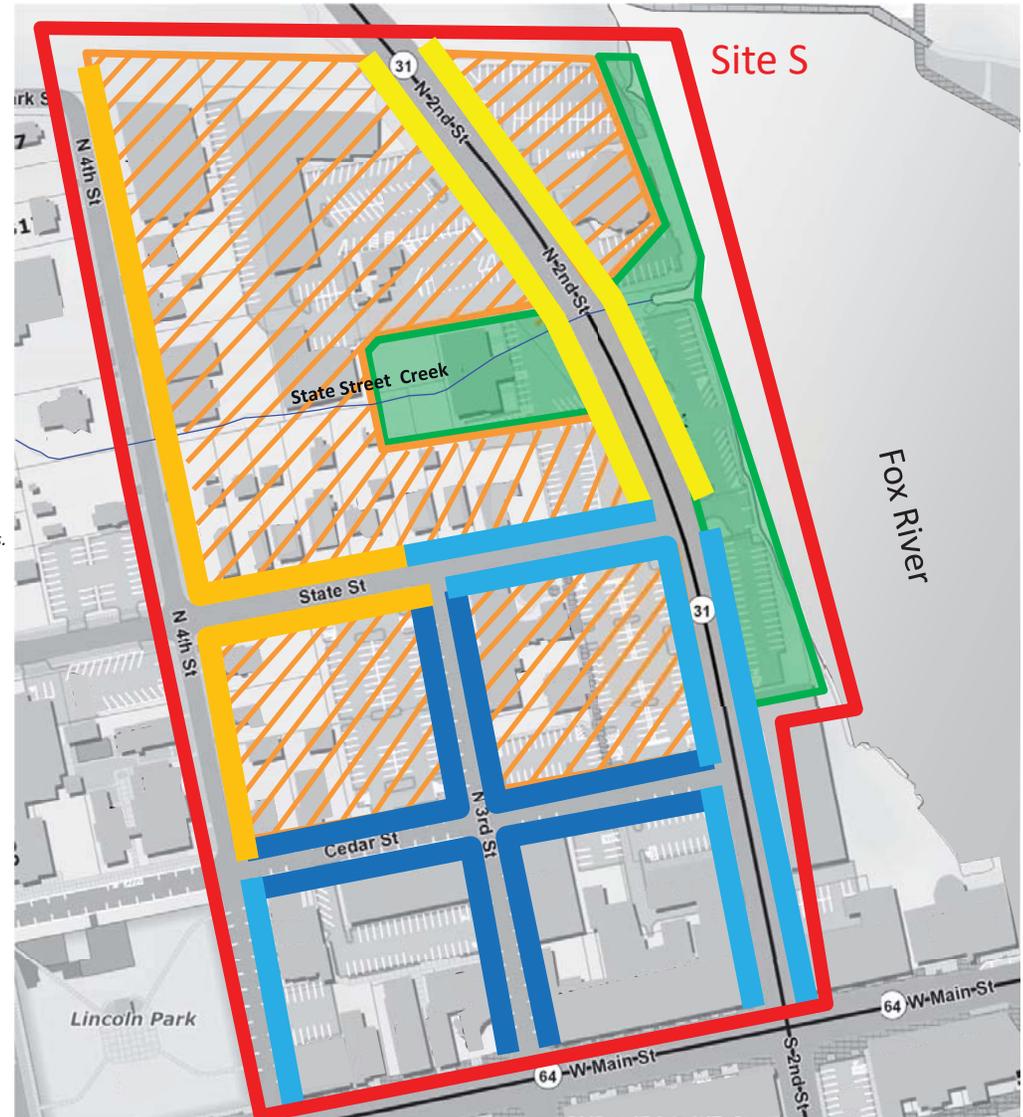
Neighborhood Transition

- Sidewalks with open green parkway.
- Parkway trees.



Street Buffer

- Sidewalk or combined sidewalk/bike path.
- Separation from street.
- Heavier plantings or barriers to protect pedestrians.



Site Improvements

Transportation Network Improvements

- Traffic Signal at State St./Rt. 31 would improve walkability and access.
- ↔ Improve cross access between 4th St. and Rt. 31, north of State St.
 - Consider narrowing Rt. 31 to improve/ widen the parkway and sidewalks along the street.
- ↔ Complete Connections between Bike bridge and State St./ Rt. 31 area.
 - Path along river would require stairs to access the bridge.
 - Path along Rt. 31 would connect existing trail and ramp from the bridge.

Parking:

- Public parking structure(s) are needed to serve northwest quadrant of downtown (including Main St. businesses).
- Importance of architectural treatment of parking decks— design parking decks as internal to a block or building in order to keep the street front active.

Buildings:

- Height within current zoning; taller structures require review of architecture and massing as part of a PUD re-view process.
- Consider potential for adaptive reuse of existing buildings vs. wholesale demolition.
- Importance of relationship of buildings and the street— Design buildings for active pedestrian activity along the street frontage.

Streetscape:

- Develop streetscape plan and/or design standards for the area; integrate with the rest of downtown
- Provide space for functional sidewalk and parkway areas designed to accommodate street-level activity and use by businesses, as seen in the “Block Frontages” section on previous page.

Floodplain-Potential Options :

1. Continue to utilize existing parking lots for parking at street level, or alternately as open space.
2. Relocate/ consolidate floodplain storage. The “Lower/Raise” areas on the map show conceptually how this could occur.
 - Design floodplain storage as Open Space along the State Street creek near Rt. 31 and along the riverfront (shown in yellow).
 - Remove property located west of Rt. 31 and south of the State Street creek from the floodplain to make those properties more readily developable (shown in red).
3. Provide floodplain storage elsewhere to maximize the potential development footprint within the northwest quadrant of downtown.

