

Existing Conditions Summary

This section is a summary of the full existing conditions report, *'350 Highway / Blue Parkway - Existing Conditions Report'*, dated October 4, 2004.

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

The existing conditions report was the initial report in the overall 350 Highway / Blue Parkway Corridor Study. The report includes a summary of the study process, a summary of the public participation and visioning process, and the market analysis and market positioning strategy for the corridor area. It also describes the existing land use, transportation and infrastructure conditions along the 350 Highway / Blue Parkway Corridor. It illustrates the physical opportunities and constraints within the study area. It was used as the guide for the direction of the alternative concept and final designs for redevelopment of the corridor.

The public input, the visioning process, and the market positioning strategies are summarized in the following section beginning on page 16, and will not be included in this section.

For the existing conditions report, the corridor was divided into four distinct territories: The Northwestern KCMO Territory, The City of Raytown Territory, The Southeastern KCMO Territory, and The City of Lee's Summit Territory.

The report studied the Urban Design, Aesthetics, Zoning, Land Use, Topography, Public Facilities, and Parks and Open Space, as well as infrastructure and transportation. Four key elements were identified as determining factors in the existing character, condition, and resultant issues of the corridor:

1. The Route – The roadway itself is the major contributing factor for the existing character and nature of the corridor. The initial design complied with accepted standards of the times. The routes expansion to a 4 lane divided highway, put into place more modern standards, new lanes were separated from the original lanes creating developed land in the median, and numerous intersections.



Development Within Corridor Median

Additionally, when the route was designed it cut diagonally through the urban grid, divorcing the grid on the north side from the south side, creating skewed intersections, and odd shaped lots adjacent to the roadway.

The route also carries a high volume of traffic. In 2002, the Average Daily Traffic ranged between 10,000 to 22,000 vehicles per day. The heavier volumes were found at the western end of the corridor, near I-435, and the lightest traffic volumes were found at the eastern end of the corridor near I-470.

The route is a state highway and not a local street, so the expectation for a large portion of drivers is one of convenient, fast, access to Downtown Kansas City or back home to the suburbs. This causes numerous conflicts in balancing the efficiency of the commuter traffic, with the viability, ease of access, and safety of the surrounding commercial and local traffic.

The changing nature and function of the roadway also contributes to character of the corridor. On the west, the corridor is a standard controlled access urban expressway. In Raytown, the road functions as an accessible commercial corridor. To the east, in the Little Blue River Valley, the road functions as a rural expressway, and further east to Lee's Summit, functions as an urban expressway again. This is significant change of use, of function, of character in only 8 miles of corridor.

2. Age – The age of the roadway itself, the age of the municipalities and their location in the development of Greater Kansas City (Raytown is a first ring suburb with all the assets and challenges that come with it), contribute to an aged corridor in need of revitalization and redevelopment. Few undeveloped areas exist in the corridor. Those that do are undeveloped because of lack of infrastructure.

Age is contributing to the overall aesthetic character and quality of the corridor as well. Older buildings in need of rehabilitation are abundant, as are signs, each competing in size and color to be recognized by the tremendous amount of traffic that travels the corridor each day. Overhead lines are abundant. Additionally, numerous outdated and



Expressway Adjacent to Unity Village



Commercial Nature of Corridor Within Raytown



Competing Signage

outmoded parcels do not have modern site layouts, lot sizes, storm drainage systems, landscape, or facades. This contributes to an overall feeling of the corridor being dated and not modern.

3. Boundaries – The corridor itself has along its length, 5 separate jurisdictions, KCMO, Raytown, Lee’s Summit, Unity Village, and MoDOT, the owner of the road way. Each of these has its own set of regulations, codes, guidelines, and agenda for the corridor. These boundaries manifest themselves in the corridor in the form of land use and development decisions that are made along the corridor. Each is governed by its own guidelines. This contributes to an uncoordinated and wildly divergent view of the nature and function of the corridor.

Additionally, as described above, the function and character of the road changes along its length. Generally those changes occur at the municipal and jurisdictional boundaries.

4. Infrastructure – A significant factor contributing to the existing character of the corridor is the existing infrastructure. Significant portions of the Little Blue Valley area have not developed because of lack of sanitary sewer. Other parcels closer to the eastern boundary of Raytown have not developed because of this as well. Additionally, lack of storm sewer and storm water detention are significant issues in the Raytown and the Knobtown areas.



Lack of Stormwater Detention

The corridor also lacks significant non-vehicular walk/trail/connection infrastructure.

These key factors contribute greatly to the existing nature and character of the corridor. They represent challenges, but also opportunities for the development and redevelopment of the corridor. A full discussion of the existing conditions may be found in the Existing Conditions Report.