



Raytown

Central Business District Plan

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***Raytown Central Business District Plan
Raytown, Missouri***

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Introduction

The Central Business District (CBD) is a key community building block for the City of Raytown. It is one of two primary commercial areas in the city and traces its origin to the beginning of Raytown itself. As with many central business districts the area has seen businesses come and go. It once was the center for commerce and government but now is an area that can best be described as being in transition.

It is the intent of this study to identify a future development vision and plan for the CBD based upon community input and action. Therefore, the plan is developed around three primary components – public involvement (described in this section of the plan), market / economic conditions and anticipated influences, and implementation tools.

Planning Area

The planning area for this study includes much of the central portion of Raytown. The northern boundary is 55th Street, the eastern boundary is Hedges Street, the southern boundary is 66th Street and the western boundary is Blue Ridge Cutoff. Within this large area the greatest amount of attention is focused on the area located between 61st Street, Blue Ridge Boulevard, 63rd Street and the railroad tracks. This is seen as the most critical planning area for successful implementation of the plan and the area that will need the greatest amount of public / private cooperation in order to be successful. As will be seen in later sections of this plan success in much of the planning area will be dependent on the momentum built in this core area and the market dynamics created through implementation.

Existing Comprehensive Plan

As part of the comprehensive plan, adopted in 1996, an analysis of the CBD was conducted. This analysis and the resulting recommendations are recorded as an Appendix to the plan – *Special Area Analysis – Historic Downtown Raytown*. Since its adoption not much has changed within the planning area. Many of the conditions relating to orientation and view, traffic and parking, and land use and building form remain unchanged. The CBD must still:

- Develop an identity.
- Utilize its strengths.
- Define itself as a unique destination.

Given the existing state of the CBD three key questions are essential to defining the plan:

1. What is the appropriate role and function of the CBD in Raytown?

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2. What is the image of the Raytown CBD in the future?
3. What tools can we use to reinforce the role, function and image of the CBD?

Planning Process

The first step in answering the questions above involved the citizens of Raytown in assessing the current situation in the CBD by identifying issues, recognizing assets or strengths and outlining a vision. During a three-day workshop 12 interviews, two public meetings, and two Steering Committee meetings were conducted. Over 100 people were involved in these activities providing ideas and direction for the future development of the CBD.

Key Person Interviews

During the three days 15 individuals identified by City Staff and Steering Committee Members were interviewed. These individuals represented business owners, property owners, employers, and organizations with an interest in the Raytown CBD. The participants in these discussions provided much insight regarding the CBD and their role in the CBD.

While there were numerous items discussed by each of these people as issues and concerns, many of the specific items brought up during the interviews were also mentioned in the public meetings and are represented by the list of issues provided later in this plan. It is important though to note several themes that came up during the interviews. These themes are common threads that many of the interviewees pointed out:

- **Something must be done.** Almost everyone indicated that it seems to be the right time to do something to improve the CBD.
- **Image is a concern that can not be ignored.** Both the City as a whole and the CBD has an image issue to overcome as part of any improvement effort.
- **Cooperation has never been better.** There is a shared objective in government and the private sector toward working together to make the CBD a better place. Several individuals indicated that while there is still some work a noticeable difference exists in how people are working together and attitudes are improving. In fact several people indicated that if they had to move they would do so to meet a community objective for improving the CBD.
- **A comprehensive solution that is incrementally implemented is important.** The CBD will change incrementally just as it has in the past. Positive change in the future will depend on having a comprehensive vision but being strategic in implementation. People do not want to be left out of the vision or the implementation efforts. Implementation needs to be smart and build off of success.

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- **The CBD must become a more diverse destination.** There were many different ideas regarding what may work in the CBD but there was a common recognition that a diverse set of activities will be necessary to make the CBD more vibrant. Several business and institutions have become destinations in and of themselves but the CBD must connect these places and bring in more successful destinations.

Public Meetings

In addition to the individual interviews two public meetings were held during the workshop. The general public was invited to these meetings and to visit the workshop storefront office at 63rd and Blue Ridge Blvd. Twenty-five to thirty people showed up for the first meeting and approximately 50 people were at the second meeting.

During the first meeting participants were asked to identify issues, assets and visions related to the Raytown CBD. The items identified by the public are listed below.

Issues

- NO PEDESTRIAN BUSINESS TRAFFIC – CUSTOMERS
- NO SYNERGY BETWEEN BUSINESSES – NO OVERLAP
- BUSINESS ISOLATED
- NO SIDEWALKS IN FRONT OF SOME BUSINESSES
- SENIORS – HOW TO MAKE DT “USER FRIENDLY”
- NOTHING TO DRAW CHILDREN/FAMILIES
- UNIFORM SIGNAGE
 - VISUAL CLUTTER
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
 - SIGNAGE, SIGNALS
- NO REASON (EXCEPT LIBRARY) TO COME DT
- NO COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE – FESTIVALS, EVENTS
- NOT MUCH TRAFFIC
- NO THEME – CENTRAL SOURCE OF PRIDE
- LITTERING – NO CLEANUP
- ADA COMPLIANCE
- NO IDENTITY / THEME
- PARKING (IN GENERAL)
- ANGLED PARKING AT ONE TIME
- THROUGH TRAFFIC
- DECAY (IN GENERAL) – BUILDINGS, SIGNAGE, SIDEWALKS
- BRIDGE – LACK OF
- SOME SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES
- SUPPORT FOR SOME BUSINESSES
- PEOPLE DON’T REALIZED IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING DT BUSINESSES
 - EDUCATION OF RESIDENTS
- LACK OF:
 - RESTAURANTS
 - ENTERTAINMENT
 - EVENING ACTIVITIES

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- CLOTHING / ACCESSORIES
- SHOPPING AREAS:
 - LEE'S SUMMIT
 - BLUE RIDGE MALL
 - INDEPENDENCE CENTER
 - PLAZA
- CONNECTIONS TO LARGER COMMUNITY
- STOREFRONT VACANCIES
- ABSENTEE LAND LORDS
- LIGHTING (LACK OF)
COSMETIC ISSUE
- NO THEME
- OVERHEAD LINES (UNDERGROUND PREFERRED)
-WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?
- THE WOODEN BRIDGE (NEEDS TO BE SAFER)
- UNCERTAINTY OF THE RAIL SERVICE
- DEPENDS ON BUSINESS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE

Assets / Strengths

- BUSINESS OWNERS
- CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- LOW TAX RATE
- STABLE, LONG TERM BUSINESSES CAN MENTOR NEW BUSINESSES
- 3 BANKS
- BUSINESS OWNERS ALSO OWN PROPERTY
- CITY OFFICIALS / STAFF
- LOCATION WITHIN METRO AREA
- BAPTIST CHURCH
- RAYTOWN PLAZA – PARKING OPPORTUNITY
- SCHOOL DISTRICT
- “THROUGH TOWN” – CAPTURE
- PEOPLE USE DT TO BYPASS HIGHWAYS, INTERSTATES
- BYPASS DT – DESTINATION NEEDED
- PARK SYSTEM
- PUBLIC SERVANTS – ELECTED STAFF
- LIBRARY
- LOCATION / REGIONAL HIGHWAY
- HISTORY / SANTA FE, RICE TPEMONTI
- STADIUMS / TRAFFIC
- 350 CORRIDOR / TRAFFIC
- DESTINATION INSTEAD OF PASS-THROUGH
- SAFETY
- LONG TERM BUSINESSES

Vision

As part of the vision process participants were asked to prioritize the items identified as desirable in the future. The votes of the participants are reflected by the numbers next to

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each item in the list below. The items with the most votes were considered the highest priorities for the plan vision.

- MORE PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC (6)
- ARCHITECTURAL COMPATIBILITY (STANDARDS – SIGNS, FACADES, ETC.) (4)
- NICE TO LOOK AT – CLEAN IT UP (7)
- PUBLIC ART (1)
- STREETScape THEME (0)
- VISUAL APPEAL (8)
 - BEAUTIFICATION
 - GREENERY / TREES / SHRUBS / GRASSES
- TRANSIT CONNECTION TO KC (4)
- HEALTH FACILITIES (2)
- SPORTING GOODS STORE (0)
- STADIUM – “OFFICIAL DOWNTOWN” (7)
- TRANSIT (0)
- ANTIQUE CARS – NICHE EVENTS (2)
- REDEVELOPED BAPTIST CHURCH; PLACE TO PARK “RUT NUT” RVs; GOOD PLACE TO EAT AND SPECIALTY SHOPS; PUBLIC ART (10)
- EVERYONE IS WELCOME (2)
- “OLD TOWN” APPEARANCE
 - THEME (1)
- SMALL TOWN - “MAYBERRY” (6)
- ‘OFFICIAL DOWNTOWN’ OF STADIUMS (0)
- PLACE TO STAY DOWNTOWN (0)
- BICYCLE TRAIL (3)
- LOFT APARTMENTS IN NEW BUILDINGS (9)
- EMPLOYMENT GENERATORS (5)
- ROYAL ST. IN NEW ORLEANS: ANTIQUES, SHOPS, RESTAURANTS (0)
- NORTH K.C. (0)
- EUREKA SPRINGS, ARK.
 - (ARTS, ETC.) (0)
- MUSIC, STREET PERFORMERS (0)
- BREWPUBS / MUSIC / LIVE ACTIVITIES (5)
- PUBLIC SPACE TO ENJOY (AMPHITHEATER) IN WHICH YOU DON’T HAVE TO CLOSE STREETS (3)
- CLINTON, MO
 - TOWN SQUARE / PUBLIC SPACE (2)
- ENTERTAINMENT. DESTINATION, SEMI PUBLIC (SIDEWALK CAFES, ETC.) (12)

It is interesting to note the list and the priorities can easily be grouped into three categories of importance:

1. Diversity of use and activity.
2. Visual quality.
3. Multiple modes for moving in and around the CBD.

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In light of the priorities provided and other information several alternative development frameworks based on public input and sound planning principles were explored. Between public meetings three planning frameworks were explored and discussed with the project steering committee. One framework built upon the strengths of the Blue Ridge / 63rd Street corridor and visualized a strong linear development pattern along the corridor. The second concept framework focused on a single project approach utilizing the Raytown Baptist Church site as the core of a single project that would define the CBD. The final concept framework was the town square concept in which many improvements were envisioned around a common form – the town square. This third concept was further developed and presented to the public in its second meeting for evaluation during the workshop.

Based upon the response of those present at the second meeting the preliminary town square concept plan became a starting point for the creation of the plan presented in this document. From the direction provided by public comment and a subsequent steering committee meeting and City Council workshop the concept plan was refined and prepared for evaluation based on anticipated economic / market conditions and trends.