

## ***New Ideas/Suggestions - Steering Committee & other Community Stakeholders***

*Tower Grove Heights Neighborhood Association's LONG TERM Solution:*

*To distinguish between the TGENA's consolidated comments and the comments of other individuals, a different bullet is used, they are indented, and there are no spaces between the suggestions.*

- *The Commerce Bank plans indicate that they will not be utilizing all of their current parking. We want to focus on converting the property that remains after the Commerce Bank redevelopment project into a landscaped well light parking lot. The residents with houses surrounding the bank, bought with the existing parking lot. Their home values will increase with the creation of an attractive parking area. With attractive signage, visitors will have ample parking when visiting the north end of the business district.*
- *We want to focus on using the existing areas and having the city buy Commerce's lot seems a wonderful solution to the parking crunch. Keep the character of our neighborhood. A suggestion is to have a public area with street vendors.*
- *The parking lot that is next to Cheap Trix could be improved into an attractive lot. With signage and meters it could be used by visitors. Currently it is an eyesore.*
- *Buy Phillips and again make an attractive surface lot.*
- *The most obvious immediate-term solution for providing significantly more parking spaces is to open up the Commerce Bank lot to the public and put up some better signage. That would take care of the issue for several years. (Steering Committee member comment)*
- *Public hearings for no-parking zones. (TGH resident comment)*
- *Encourage use of off-street parking by area residents. This could be by use of matching grants towards construction or repair of parking pads, garage doors, etc. (TGH resident comment)*
- *Get a developer who is willing to give discounts if we get a certain number of residents who want to build quality garages. Sign up people who are interested. (TGH resident comment)*
- *Strict enforcement of speed limits. (business comment)*
- *Residential one-way streets to reduce through traffic. (business comment)*
- *Cobblestone pedestrian crossings. (business comment)*
- *Incentive for use of existing residential rear parking. (business comment)*
- *Make all traffic lights red are regular but intermittent intervals to improve pedestrian friendliness. (I.E. Every fifteen minutes, all the lights are red. The rest of the time would be "normal.") (business comment)*

- Tim Boyle (or any business) buys 2-family home     \$50,000  
*Purchaser tears down home*     \$10,000  
*Purchaser paves lot and landscapes it*     \$10,000  
*Purchaser ends up spending at least \$70,000 (for a total of maybe 13 parking spots)*  
*Average cost per spot*     \$5,400

*Business should approach every household near their establishment and offer them the \$4,000 to defray the cost of developing off street parking. The catch is that it has to be wide enough for at least two cars and they must park their cars there in the space behind their home. Neighborhood gets to keep buildings. Residents get to improve their own property. Business's get twice the parking for half the cost. (resident comment)*

- *Yes, I was the one who wrote in about the "neighborhood valet", but the parking study summary mentioned it and didn't fully describe it. They have a "neighborhood valet" in a neighborhood in Boston. You take 2-3 spots on each side of Grand, marked by something up high, and have valets (not in front of any particular establishment). You then run adds that say that from Wednesday evening to Sunday evening, between some times like 6-11, just come on down to S. Grand and we will do the rest. Folks who do not know the area will then walk about, not having to worry about their car. (resident comment, gleaned from Tower Grove list serve)*
- *We just got back in from Maine and I saw the first "effective" pedestrian crosswalks that I have ever seen. They paint in the usual striped abbey road crosswalk, like in a couple of spots in the Loop (in the Loop they are in spots where there is NO stoplights). However, you have probably noticed in the Loop, that most drivers don't know that cars are supposed to stop when pedestrians are crossing, even if it is when traffic is at full speed. Most drivers just think that the pedestrians are just being risky to cross, and I thought that too until my wife pointed out the law again, there are no stoplights there, so it appears that you are crossing into full traffic with no right of way). Anyway, drivers do not know that (especially when there are crosses where there are no stoplights). And, drivers can not see the crosswalks, which are painted on the street. So, in Maine in the small towns that have busy roads running through the shopping/walking districts, they have boldly painted walks so that you know that they are different than the usual fair. Then, they have yellow flags in the CENTER of the road, which come up 4-6 feet. The flags mention that it is state law to stop at the crosswalk, etc, and have the district name. You can really read them from the driver's seat, and they are reminders about the law, the district, and that you are in a special area. But they actually look somewhat decorative along the shopping district, and make it look like a special area. They also are a lot cheaper than curb bumpouts and other options. (resident comment, gleaned from Tower Grove listserve)*
- *The Transit Benefit Program is part of TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century). It offers incentives for both employers and employees to encourage the use of public transportation and car or vanpools. The South Grand Business District is conveniently located near several bus lines and just a jaunt away from the MetroLink. It makes sense, where possible, to encourage employees in the Business District to use public transportation or carpool with co-workers or others that work nearby. RideFinders and Citizens for Modern Transit are two organizations that can help employees and employers benefit from TEA-21's Transit Benefit Program. RideFinders actually hooks people up with interested carpoolers who live and work near them. (Steering Committee member comment)*

<http://www.cmt-stl.org/clean/program.html>  
<http://www.ridefinders.org>

- *I know the First Church of Divine Science is mentioned above in a few places. I also know they've been approached at least once about their parking lot, which sits empty **most** of the time. I think the final parking solutions should include a strong suggestion to approach and work closely with the church towards some kind of compromise. Perhaps they could designate 8 or 10 parking spaces in their lot for employees of the District. Then they would still have spaces for daytime meetings. Or the lot could be metered. And part of the money made at meters could go towards maintaining the lot. (Steering Committee member comment)*

### ***General Comments - Steering Committee & other Community Stakeholders***

- *I'm thoroughly delighted with the solutions proposed by Art & Architecture. They're creative and urban. Personally, I would support almost all of them. (Steering Committee member comment)*
- *The long-term future of urban business areas are dependent upon adequate, safe parking nearby, be it surface or multi-level garages. Experience in St. Louis has proven that business districts without access to parking have limited success while those with parking thrive. Residential property values increase as the urban businesses improve, but will not experience that increase without the parking. (business comment)*
- *Surface parking must be appropriately landscaped, fenced or secured as needed, and be sensitive to adjacent residential property. (business comment)*
- *The design of parking structures must fit architecturally in the neighborhood with ingress-egress planned for public safety and maximum traffic flow. (business comment)*
- *Is there a number of existing parking spaces, a number for current need, and a projection for what will be needed in the next five – ten years based on the change in parking needs in the past? These numbers are required to make an accurate and believable case for demolition as suggested in item 30 and in preparing grant applications for funding such projects. (business comment)*
- *Our thoughts on the South Grand Parking issue:*
  - 1) *South Grand could use some more parking but it must be planned very carefully and it should not be any more than necessary.*
  - 2) *Any parking solution must be for ALL the businesses in the district, not for a specific merchant or developer.*
  - 3) *A parking area (garage or landscaped lot) should ideally be located near the center of the district. This would allow for no more than a three-block walk for any visitor. Anyone who will not tolerate this length of walk would not be a frequent visitor to South Grand in the first place.*
  - 4) *The parking solution should increase the accessibility of South Grand as a "destination", but should not disrupt or discourage walking. If the sidewalk life of South Grand (its greatest charm) is disrupted or discouraged, South Grand will quickly cease being a destination and will become an area of underutilized parking lots. We really need more people on the sidewalks, not less (resident comment)*

The following resident comments were submitted by letter after the official comment period.

*South Grand Parking Study Steering Committee  
c/o Emily Andrews, SLACO  
emlandrews@hotmail.com*

*Dear Steering Committee,  
After talking with our neighbors in the 3500 and 3600 blocks adjacent to the South Grand Business District, these comments are submitted for your consideration.*

*Residents had five major comments as follows:*

- 1. Methodology for concluding that there is a parking problem: Residents always see empty parking spaces and question the basis for the assumption that there is a parking problem. We suggest that individual businesses look to their own practices that might discourage patronage and that the business district pursue more inviting streetscapes, better lighting, and safety issues (as mentioned in the study) instead of assuming that available parking in every block will bring customers to their door.*
- 2. If there is a parking problem, the greatly underused Commerce parking lot should be considered as the best and most obvious solution. Proposal number 33 is counter-intuitive to residents who see an existing enormous parking lot as an answer rather than creating a Traditional Town Center.*
- 3. Many people in our neighborhoods have a different vision for the future of the business district and of our neighborhoods than this study indicates. We want mostly individual, unique, and neighborhood services types of business that will also attract customers who do not live in the neighborhood. The demographics of residents around the business district can support this type of development. One or two chain type stores may be OK, if they do not destroy the streetscape on Grand and on the adjacent blocks and if the business district's success does not depend on such stores.*
- 4. The business district needs to encourage more walking. Residents are in favor of proposals that create a pedestrian friendly environment. Over the long term, such an environment will be good for the businesses.*
- 5. With regard to creating an environment that is more pedestrian friendly, residents welcome traffic calming proposals as part of the solutions.*

*With regard to the individual proposals from the consultants:*

- Residents were generally **against** 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31,32*
- Generally in favor of 13, 20, 21 if it leads to a more pedestrian friendly environment.*
- Lukewarm on 2, 34*
- Generally in favor of 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15,16, 17. In favor of 25 except that the Amoco Building has historic architectural value and should not be torn down.*
- With regard to 10, 11, 18, 22, more public discussion is needed to make sure the process to any changes is a fair one.*
- Regarding 18, all residents of the proposed blocks should be approached before considering changing direction(s) of their street.*
- Regarding 22, Tower Grove Park should be approached before any proposals adjacent to it are proposed. There are restrictions on property around a historic landmark.*
- There was vehement opposition to 29.*

*Respectfully submitted by Neighborhood residents  
(residents comments)*