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THE
OPPORTUNITY
IN ST. LOUIS
TODAY

OVERVIEW

“If the [framework] is utilized properly, it can be a process for coordination and unity across the city and can help serve as a bridge to break through decades of divisions to bring groups together... with a centralized focus.”

The last decade has provided many reasons for celebration and optimism in the City of St. Louis. Since 2010, St. Louis has grown its jobs base every year. According to the most recent complete annual data, city employment growth was faster than national growth for only the second time since the Great Recession.¹ In addition to these economic measures, there are other visible signs of success: Downtown has added 5,000 residents; NGA is building a new 100-acre campus in North City; Square, the San Francisco-based mobile payment platform developed by two St. Louis natives, is building offices in the former Post-Dispatch building and is expected to anchor the “North of Washington” innovation corridor; Cortex continues to add significant new physical developments, including a \$115 million building at 4210 Duncan Ave.; the Arch Grounds received \$380 million worth of enhancements; Union Station is now home to the St. Louis Aquarium and the Wheel, a 200-foot-tall Ferris wheel; the Brickline Greenway will link 17 neighborhoods across the city; and MLS has awarded St. Louis a franchise, which will begin play in 2022 in a new stadium in Downtown West.^{2,3,4,5,6}

In addition to these high-profile developments, neighborhoods across the city have experienced transformations – 16 out of the city’s 79 neighborhoods gained population from 2000 to 2010, according to nextSTL.⁷ New tools to support neighborhood

investment (e.g., Choice Neighborhoods), local organizational capacity (e.g., CDCs, neighborhood organizations, and faith-based groups, among many others) and data capacity (e.g., Vacancy Collaborative) support these revitalizations. The city’s neighborhoods are one of its strongest assets and provide the city with one of its biggest competitive advantages.

Despite this litany of accomplishments and seemingly bright outlook, other measures paint a bleaker picture. The city started the 21st century with a decade of significant net job loss, and the number of private jobs in the city declined every year from 1995 to 2006.⁸ In 2018, the City of St. Louis ranked 12th in job density among U.S. counties, with approximately 3,200 jobs per square mile; however, of the top 50 U.S. counties by job density in 2018, the city ranked 39th in private sector job growth from 2010 to 2018 (9.4%). The city’s growth lagged St. Louis County (10.3%) and the rest of the region (12.6%) during this period and grew at just over half the U.S. rate (17.3%).⁹ These trends, showing how the city’s economy has fallen behind, are stark but illuminating and make the case for intentional and strategic efforts to support economic growth in the City of St. Louis.

8 QCEW-UDP; Mass Economics analysis

9 QCEW-UDP; Mass Economics analysis

1 QCEW-UDP; Mass Economics analysis

2 Project interviews and roundtables

3 Developer plans \$115M Cortex building. (2019, June 17). *St. Louis Business Journal*. <https://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/news/2019/06/17/developer-plans-115m-cortex-building.html>

4 Stoss Unveils New Chouteau Greenway Plan for St. Louis. (2020, January 20). *ArchDaily*. <https://www.archdaily.com/931927/stoss-unveils-new-chouteau-greenway-plan-for-st-louis>

5 Garth, G. (2018, June 29). Gateway Arch: An American classic gets a major overhaul. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2018/06/29/gateway-arch-national-park-st-louis/744274002/>

6 Johnson, G. (2019, February 11). *St. Louis Wheel Approved for Union Station*. nextSTL. <https://nextstl.com/2019/02/st-louis-wheel-approved-for-union-station/>

7 Understanding Population Change and Density in St. Louis (UIC & nextSTL @ PXSTL). (2014, September 17). nextSTL. <https://nextstl.com/2014/09/pxstl/>

Intertwined with these discouraging growth trends are profound inequities that have compounded over time. Poverty and opportunity sharply demarcate racial groups and neighborhoods, and disinvestment and population loss continue to impact the city's primarily Black/African American neighborhoods. One-third of all Black/African Americans in the city live in poverty, despite the city's recent growth in resident incomes. The poverty rate for Black/African Americans is three times higher than that of white residents and 1.5 times the national poverty rate for Black/African Americans. Overall unemployment rates in the city are high by both regional and national standards. Rates for Black/African American residents are double the citywide average and six times higher than the unemployment rate for white residents.¹⁰ Furthermore, the racial wage gap is dramatic: Black/African Americans working in the City of St. Louis earn just 48% of their white counterparts.¹¹ These statistics confirm the necessity – not to mention urgency – of embedding equity into the city's economic outlook.

Yet, there is strong reason to believe that the battle to contend in a global economy and the fight for economic equity are not two separate struggles, but one. Addressing the single challenge of equitable urban economic growth requires the commitment and capacities of a broad set of public, private, philanthropic, university, and community stakeholders employing a range of tools to address foundational issues of place, prosperity, and people.

At the request of the Board of Aldermen, the St. Louis Development Corporation – the economic development agency for the City of St. Louis – commissioned this Equitable Economic Development Strategic Framework. The framework is intended to link other related economic development plans, thereby creating a unified approach to equitable economic growth in the city: "The purpose of [this framework] is to position the city on a path toward a resilient economy by casting the vision that SLDC, the city and its public, private and institutional partners can coalesce around and act upon to drive investment and growth in the city."

Ultimately, this framework seeks to position St. Louis to compete regionally and globally in its key economic clusters, catalyze the transformation and growth of St. Louis' neighborhoods through a commitment to "quality of place" throughout the city, capitalize on core economic strengths to unlock the opportunity for all to thrive, and maintain a more sustainable tax base driven by commercial and residential investment and renewed population growth. Specifically, the framework aims to:

1. Exceed the national growth rate in jobs and payrolls among our key industries,
2. Close existing opportunity, employment, wage, entrepreneurship, and wealth gaps for people of color, and
3. Achieve sustainable long-term tax revenue growth for the city.

THE PURPOSE IS TO POSITION THE CITY ON A PATH TOWARD A RESILIENT ECONOMY BY CASTING THE VISION THAT SLDC, THE CITY AND ITS PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS CAN COALESCE AROUND AND ACT UPON TO DRIVE INVESTMENT AND GROWTH IN THE CITY.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2018 1-year release; Mass Economics analysis

¹¹ QWI, 2018; Mass Economics analysis

PROPOSITIONS

As the Advisory Committee emphasized from the outset, race, place, poverty and opportunity must be the core concepts for understanding the city's economic trajectory – and they must form the foundation for a framework that lays out a more equitable, vibrant, and resilient economic future. Throughout this process, a wide range of demographic and economic variables (see Ch. 2: Economic and Demographic Report) were evaluated to inform the creation of the following 12 Guiding Propositions:

Broad-based cluster growth:

The city must continue to grow jobs in its traditionally strong clusters, many of which are also regional strengths, as well as support clusters that leverage the city's specific asset base.

Entry-level and middle-wage job focus:

City-specific clusters should have a focus on creating entry-level and middle-wage jobs.

Workforce:

Workforce and educational programs must be better aligned and responsive to the needs of both businesses in growing sectors and job seekers.

Place-based employment and development across the City:

The geography of inclusive business and job growth must build upon the needs, assets, and opportunities, and where necessary, also support adjacent community development.

Diverse entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship opportunities:

The city's strong entrepreneurial ecosystem must continue to evolve to support new priorities: business models for neighborhood retail and amenities and vibrant businesses with diverse ownership.

Economic opportunities for all:

Increased access to jobs, higher wages, real estate ownership and appreciation, and business ownership must be a priority for the city's underinvested neighborhoods and its residents, which have been chronically disconnected from economic opportunities.

Population retention and growth:

In addition to growing the number and quality of jobs, St. Louis must increase its residential population by retaining existing residents, re-growing the black middle class in the city, and retaining and attracting talent from across the globe.

Diverse and distributed leadership:

New models of distributed leadership must be representative of the population of St. Louis, with outreach and focus on the diverse voices of leadership across race, gender, geography and generation.

Public sector capacity:

Implementing an equitable economic development framework will require adequate funding for key public sector functions related to planning, real estate development, infrastructure, and business support.

Investment and capacity alignment across sectors:

Public, private and philanthropic investments must be aligned around key strategies and places within the city. Investments must include a mix of signature projects and longer-term capacity building.

City fiscal health and investment:

Advancing equitable economic growth in St. Louis must contribute to improving the city's fiscal health by increasing the tax base in ways that are equitable and growth-sustaining.

The story of the City of St. Louis:

Advancing equitable economic growth in St. Louis begins with a clear understanding of the value of the city's human capital, innovation, education, technology, and entertainment assets and their existing and potential contribution to the city, regional, and state economies.

GOALS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

As the city embarks on a journey toward a more prosperous and equitable future, progress must be tracked and measured using economic, place-based, and population-based indicators. Taking into account advisory committee input and community outreach, ten specific and measurable goals were developed in support of these objectives:

- 1 Achieve annual growth in employment and payroll among key industry clusters that meets or exceeds their national growth rates.
- 2 Reduce St. Louisan's poverty rates – across all racial/ethnic groups – to below their respective national rates; increase median household incomes – across all racial/ethnic groups – above the U.S. (adjusted for cost of living differential).
- 3 Close the unemployment and wage gap between Black/African Americans and their white counterparts, as well as other disadvantaged racial/ethnic groups.
- 4 Increase the availability of middle-wage opportunities in the city's job base.
- 5 Attain enough employer commitments to adopt workplace policies that: diversify the workforce, increase worker retention, and provide access to wraparound services so that at least half of all job holders in the city work for employers that have committed to such policies.
- 6 Reduce vacancy rates and promote vibrancy on commercial corridors, especially in underserved neighborhoods.
- 7 Promote anti-displacement by increasing home and business ownership opportunities for people of color and other under-represented populations.
- 8 Slow, then reverse, population decline – particularly among Black/African American residents and households with school-aged children
- 9 Increase the quality and capacity of neighborhood organizations, CDCs, and business associations to represent and respond to resident and other local stakeholder interests.
- 10 Strengthen the city's fiscal outlook by responding to post-COVID industry and workplace trends, increasing revenues (overall and per capita), maximizing the efficiency of incentive use and expenditures by promoting job and housing density, and building a budget surplus.

Specific metrics to track each of these goals are presented in Ch. 6: Metrics.

PROCESS

Executing this vision will require a coordinated effort among public, private and philanthropic actors. As was noted in the Board of Alderman ordinance calling for an Economic Development Strategy, “If the [framework] is utilized properly, it can be a process for coordination and unity across the city and can help serve as a bridge to break through decades of divisions to bring groups together... with a centralized focus.” In short, the skills and energy of the people of St. Louis are the primary building blocks upon which an equitable prosperity framework must be developed. At the same time, the prosperity and well-being of St. Louisans is the ultimate goal to which all of the framework’s strategies and actions are oriented.

This framework is being developed in parallel with several other economic development planning initiatives currently underway within St. Louis. These include:

- › Design Downtown STL
- › Brickline Greenway Plan
- › Metro North-South Transit Oriented Development Plan
- › Cortex Revised Strategic Plan
- › GeoFutures Geospatial Strategic Plan
- › St. Louis Metropolitan Economic Development Strategy

While each initiative has a specific focus within the city, there has been an intentional effort to share information and coordinate between plans for the common purpose of moving the city forward. Where appropriate, this framework does propose complementary strategies and tactics (i.e., action items) to support the goals of those plans. In short, this project intentionally created a framework that can absorb the outputs from other planning efforts rather than a fixed set of strategies that must be revisited each time a new strategic effort is undertaken in St. Louis. A graphic of proposed and ongoing projects and initiatives is presented in Figure I-1.

The project was also overseen by a 40+-member advisory committee that represents public, private, philanthropic and faith-based sectors across the city, and had representation across race and gender that closely matched the city’s demographic make-up. Although committee members skewed older than the city’s population and workforce, there was significant representation from younger leaders. Advisory committee members attended four working meetings during which they served as a sounding board for project analyses and strategy development and offered ideas on equitable growth opportunities in the St. Louis economy. The advisory committee was chaired by June McAllister Fowler (Senior Vice President, BJC Healthcare), Reverend Michael Fulton Jones, Sr. (Executive Director, Friendly Temple Missionary Baptist Church), Chris Shearman (Executive Director, Lutheran Development Group), and Travis Sheridan (President, Venture Café Global). In addition to their shared roles with the rest of the advisory committee, the chairpersons participated in public engagement activities with the consulting team and provided advisory services throughout the project.

Proposed/Ongoing Projects and Initiatives

Source: City of St. Louis, Stoss Landscape Urbanism, St. Louis Planning & Urban Design Agency, St. Louis Regional Freighway

Place-based

- Downtown St. Louis includes:
 - Design Downtown St. Louis
 - Streets Department
 - Downtown Multimodal
 - Convention Center Expansion Plan
- Recent Projects
 - 1 Skinker Debaliviere Neighborhood Urban Design & Development Plan
 - 2 Cortex Master Plan
 - 3 Downtown St. Louis Transportation Study
 - 4 Clifton Heights Park Master Plan
 - 5 Gravois-Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods Plan
- Brickline Greenway
- St. Louis Regional Freighway Projects
- NGA West

- ▨ Opportunity Zone
- ▨ Promise Zone
- Northside-Southside Light Rail Project
 - 2008 LPA
 - 2018 Draft Starter Line
 - NGA Option: Cass
 - NGA Option: Florissant
- Other Ongoing Initiatives**
 - STLMade
 - Metro Reimagined
 - Arch to Park
 - CDFI Pro Neighborhoods
 - State of the St. Louis Workforce

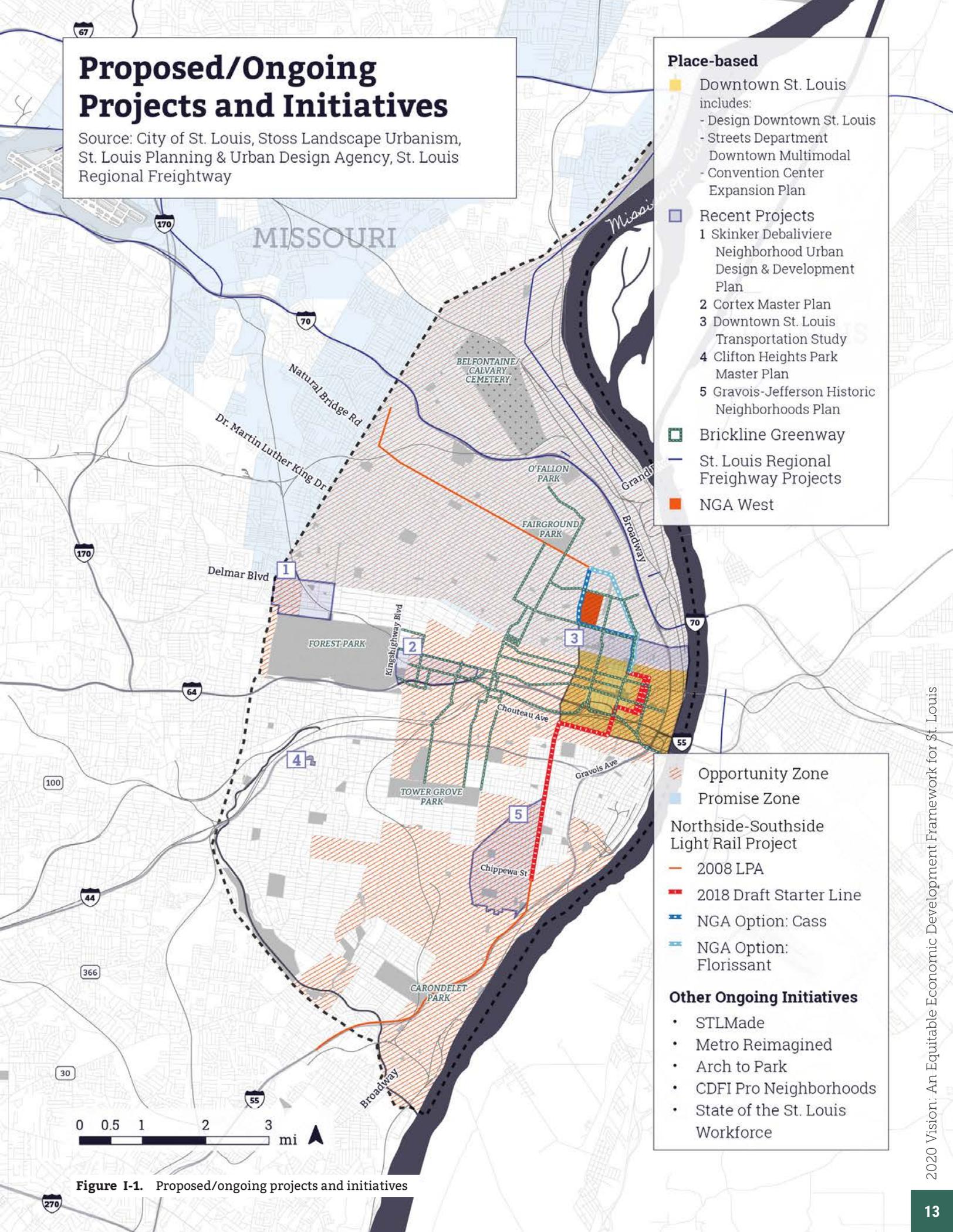


Figure I-1. Proposed/ongoing projects and initiatives

ENGAGEMENT

In an effort to garner the broad support needed, an extensive public input phase was conducted in which the consulting team met with hundreds of residents and businesses leaders, including:

- › Over 225 residents across the city at two public open houses,
- › 20 neighborhood meetings,
- › A dozen roundtables with business and neighborhood leaders, and;
- › 100+ interviews with stakeholders and experts in economic clusters, entrepreneurship, capital, neighborhood development, vacancy, and land development.

Public Outreach Summary

January 2019 - December 2019

3	Advisory Committee meetings
4	Board of Aldermen briefings
12	Group Discussions
+100	Stakeholder Interviews
+200	People from 5 Neighborhood Meetings
225	People from 2 Open Houses
267	Online Survey Responses
1,300	Mayor's Business Luncheon attendees
1	Video
~15	Neighborhood/Business Meetings
4~5	High School Discussion Groups
+	Media Outreach Board of Aldermen & Advisory Committee meetings Digital survey and comment forms

Figure I-2. Public outreach summary



Figure I-3. July Open House social media graphics

Public Engagement Approach

Public and stakeholder engagement is critical to the success of a citywide economic development strategy. Meaningful community input is necessary to develop the priorities, tactics and outcomes of the framework, but the community will also be partners in its implementation. This framework can help guide and inform economic development decisions and investments, but in order to be successful, it needs partnership from the City of St. Louis residents, stakeholders and businesses. As with any effort of this magnitude, the ultimate success of the strategy will hinge upon the support of key partners who regularly work to make this city a better place.

Over the development of the framework there were many ways for the public to provide input.

Public Engagement Goal

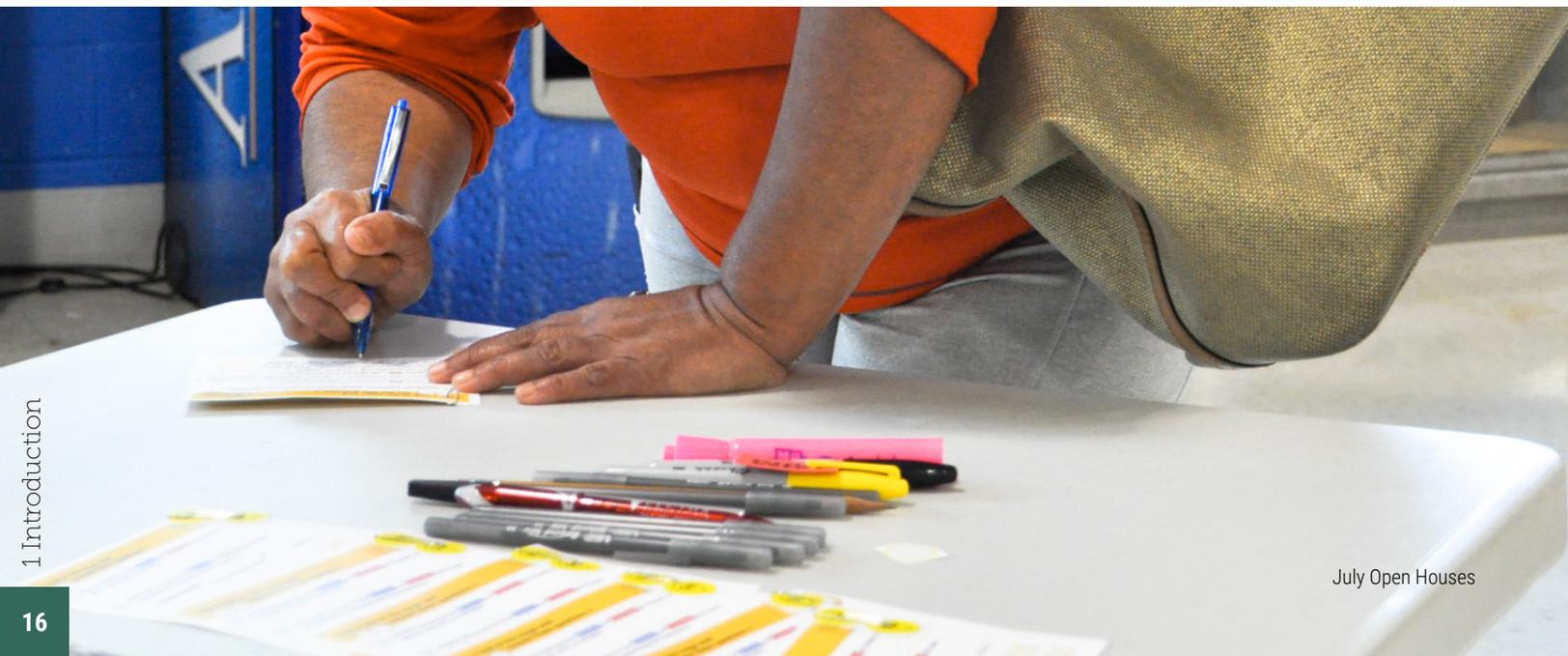
Our commitment is to authentically engage the city's diverse communities and identify actionable strategies that will better distribute opportunity, jobs, and income across the city.

Public Engagement Objectives

- › Collect data about the city's economy and people - both qualitative and quantitative - to help determine cluster, place-based and equitable priorities and strategies.
- › Bring together the key stakeholders – residents, business leaders, employers, developers, non-profits, major institutions, the city and many more – to shape the plan, its strategies and ultimately drive its implementation.
- › Provide a cross-section of opportunities for community voices to engage - digital, in-person, at events and where residents meet.
- › Incorporate community priorities, experiences and ideas into the framework development process.
- › Educate and broaden the discussion about the city's economic potential and the value of a citywide equitable framework.



▲ July Open Houses (top & middle)
 ◀ Neighborhood meeting activities in a box (bottom)



Our Process

The project team adopted a multi-pronged approach to direct community engagement and education, giving the public multiple opportunities, locations, and access points to learn about the framework and provide feedback. This approach included online platforms, an advisory committee, interviews, district discussions, roundtables, public events, and a public comment period on the penultimate draft. (See Figure I-4).

Online Platforms

In order to provide ongoing engagement opportunities, a complete communications platform was developed. These outlets included both digital and paper options for information and feedback in order to allow wider participation.

- › Framework website

www.stleconomicdevelopmentstrategy.com

A website was created in 2019 as an online repository for project information. The website featured a project timeline, map, video, explanation of community input process, description of the Advisory Committee, photos from the open houses and presentations given at neighborhood meetings and Advisory Committee meetings. Individuals could submit comments and messages about the development strategy with the "Contact" form.

- › Email Newsletters

Another way that community members learned about project updates was by signing up for the email newsletter or receiving updates via SLDC. SLDC keeps an email list of over 3,500 email addresses and provided regular updates on the project through their monthly newsletter. The project team sent out two rounds of email updates to advertise the July 2019 open houses and an additional email notice to promote the August - September online survey. The email notices had over 3,000 opens and an average open rate of 31%.

- › Social Media

The project utilized the SLDC's Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote the website, public open houses and online survey.

Overall project timeline

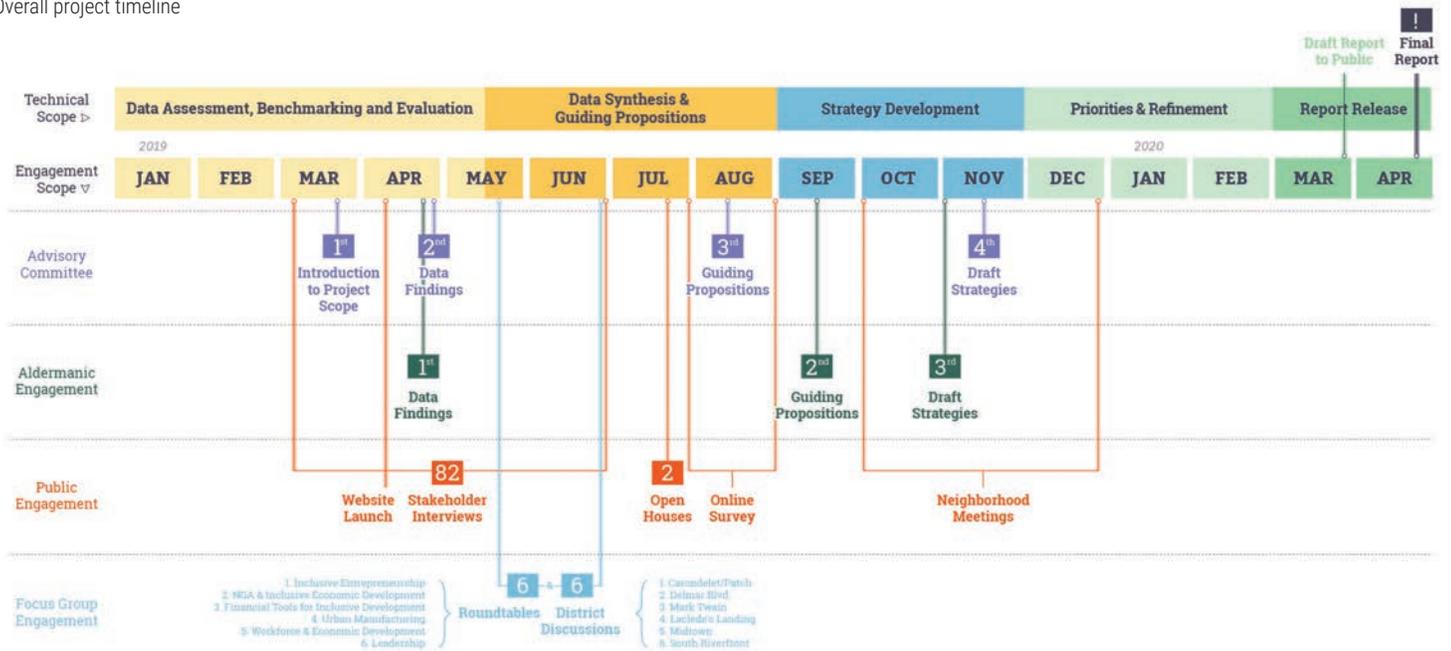


Figure I-4. Project timeline

Advisory Committee

To help provide context, additional information, distribute project updates and prioritize framework guidelines, SLDC formed an advisory committee that included City of St. Louis residents, business owners, organizational representatives, and community leaders. These individuals represented industry clusters that could be featured in the framework, as well as key neighborhoods and development corridors. Finally, faith-based organizations, utilities, major employers, educational institutions, developers and community development and neighborhood organizers were identified and asked to participate.

Advisory Committee Members

- › Amelia Bond, *St. Louis Community Foundation*
- › Marc Bowers, *St. Louis Makes*
- › Zack Boyers, *US Bank CDC*
- › Kevin Bryant, *Kingsway Redevelopment LLC*
- › Antoinette Carroll, *Creative Reaction Lab*
- › Dedric Carter, *Washington University in St. Louis*
- › Jenny Connelly-Bowen, *Community Builders Network*
- › Rodney Crim, *St. Louis Economic Development Partnership*
- › Peter Czajkowski, *Stifel*
- › June Fowler, *BJC*
- › Jenifer Garcia, *Garcia Properties*
- › Laura Gilbert, *SLACO/Commerce Bank/RISE CDC*
- › Brooks Goedeker, *Saint Louis University*
- › Tori Gonzalez, *Justine Petersen*
- › Karin Hagaman, *Grand Center*
- › Patty Hagen, *T-Rex*
- › Jason Hall, *Arch to Park*
- › Carlos Huddleston, *Gonzalez Companies*
- › Brian Hurd, *Rise CDC*
- › Christian Johnson, *MultiPass Ventures*
- › Reverend Michael Jones, *Friendly Temple Baptist Church*
- › Mike Kearney, *Ameren*
- › Missy Kelly, *Downtown STL*
- › Sadik Kukic, *Bevo CID*
- › Dennis Lower, *Cortex*
- › Sal Martinez, *Employment Connection*
- › Kiku Obata, *Kiku Obata & Company*
- › Brian Pratt, *Green Street*
- › Neal Richardson, *US Bank/Dream Builders for Equity*
- › Ron Roberts, *Development Synergy Partners*
- › Felicia Shaw, *Regional Arts Commission*
- › Chris Shearman, *Lutheran Development Group/Gelateria*
- › Travis Sheridan, *Venture Cafe*
- › Steve Smith, *Lawrence Group*
- › Dwayne Smith, *Harris-Stowe State University*
- › Jonathan Smith, *Saint Louis University*
- › Sean Spencer, *Tower Grove South CDC*
- › Keithen Stallings, *Bayer*
- › Ellen Theroff, *Spire*
- › Susan Trautman, *Great Rivers Greenway*
- › Randy Vines, *STL-Style*



During Carondelet/South Broadway and East Delmar district discussions.

The advisory committee met on the following dates:

- › March 29, 2019: Kick-off meeting to introduce the project, discuss committee expectations and discussion the following questions:
 - › What does a citywide equitable economic development strategy need to be successful?
 - › What are the key things particular to St. Louis that need to be considered in structuring and implementing an economic development strategy for the City?
 - › What are the top 3-5 metrics for equitable economic development in the City?
- › April 25, 2019: Review of initial economic and demographic data and discussion of economic nodes and assets throughout the City
- › July 25, 2019: Review and discussion of public engagement findings to date, including stakeholder interviews, district discussions and public open houses. Brainstorming and refinement exercise for equitable guiding propositions.
- › November 15, 2019: Reveal and discussion of framework first draft.

Interviews

Over the course of the project and particularly during the fact-finding phase, the project team met with and interviewed 110 stakeholders, residents and business owners to introduce the purpose of the framework, find out about local economic conditions, assets and challenges and hear their ideas and concerns. These interviews were critical to help the team understand the specific challenges that impact economic development across the city.

District Discussions

District discussions were an opportunity to introduce the framework to stakeholders in identified employment districts. Stakeholders included property owners, residents, organizational leaders, elected officials and community members who have a vested interest in the equitable economic and social future of their neighborhood/area. District discussions allowed team members to get a fuller understanding of what the data was showing, as well as hear ideas, concerns and challenges to economic growth.

District discussion participants were selected through feedback from SLDC, area elected officials, property owner listings and neighborhood groups.

- › May 22 – Carondelet/South Broadway @ 6721 S. Broadway Avenue
- › May 23 – East Delmar @ Legacy Bar and Grill
- › June 11 – North Riverfront/Laclede’s Landing @ William A. Kerr Foundation
- › June 12 – Midtown/Grand Center @ Cafe Ventana
- › June 12 – Mark Twain/I-70 Industrial Park @ MOKAN
- › June 26 – South Riverfront/Soulard @ Joanie’s Pizzeria



Welcome card for July Open Houses



Roundtables and Student Focus Groups

› Roundtables

In order to get a more complete understanding of how various industry ecosystems worked and hoped to grow in the future, the project team organized and executed a number of cluster-oriented roundtables with industry leaders in St. Louis. These roundtables aided the project team in identifying existing and emerging growth prospects, opportunities for inclusive growth, long-term visions, biggest challenges, and areas of potential assistance and support.

- › Coordinating Physical Planning
- › Financial Tools for Inclusive Development in St. Louis
- › Inclusive Entrepreneurship
- › Land and Vacancy
- › NGA and Inclusive Economic Development in St. Louis
- › Redevelopment Bank
- › Software Tech
- › Urban Manufacturing
- › Workforce and Economic Development in St. Louis

An additional roundtable was hosted with executive leadership in the city.

› High School Focus Groups

To gain a different perspective on economic opportunities and possibilities in St. Louis, four focus groups were held at area high schools: Clyde C. Miller Career Academy, Central Visual Performing Arts High School and Sumner High School. At these focus groups, 32 high school juniors

and seniors were asked about their perception of economic opportunity and their career goals.

- › 11/12: Sumner High School
- › 11/13: Clyde C. Miller Career Academy
- › 11/19: Central Visual Performing Arts High School
- › 11/20: Clyde C. Miller Career Academy

The high school students reflected on what kinds of jobs and opportunities they wished they could access and citywide barriers to prosperity. High school juniors and seniors perceived a lack of connections or exposure to industries and personal motivation and attitude as barriers to success. They believed that mentorship opportunities, having support throughout the training and education process and advice to narrow down or explore different career options are needed in order to be successful in a career.

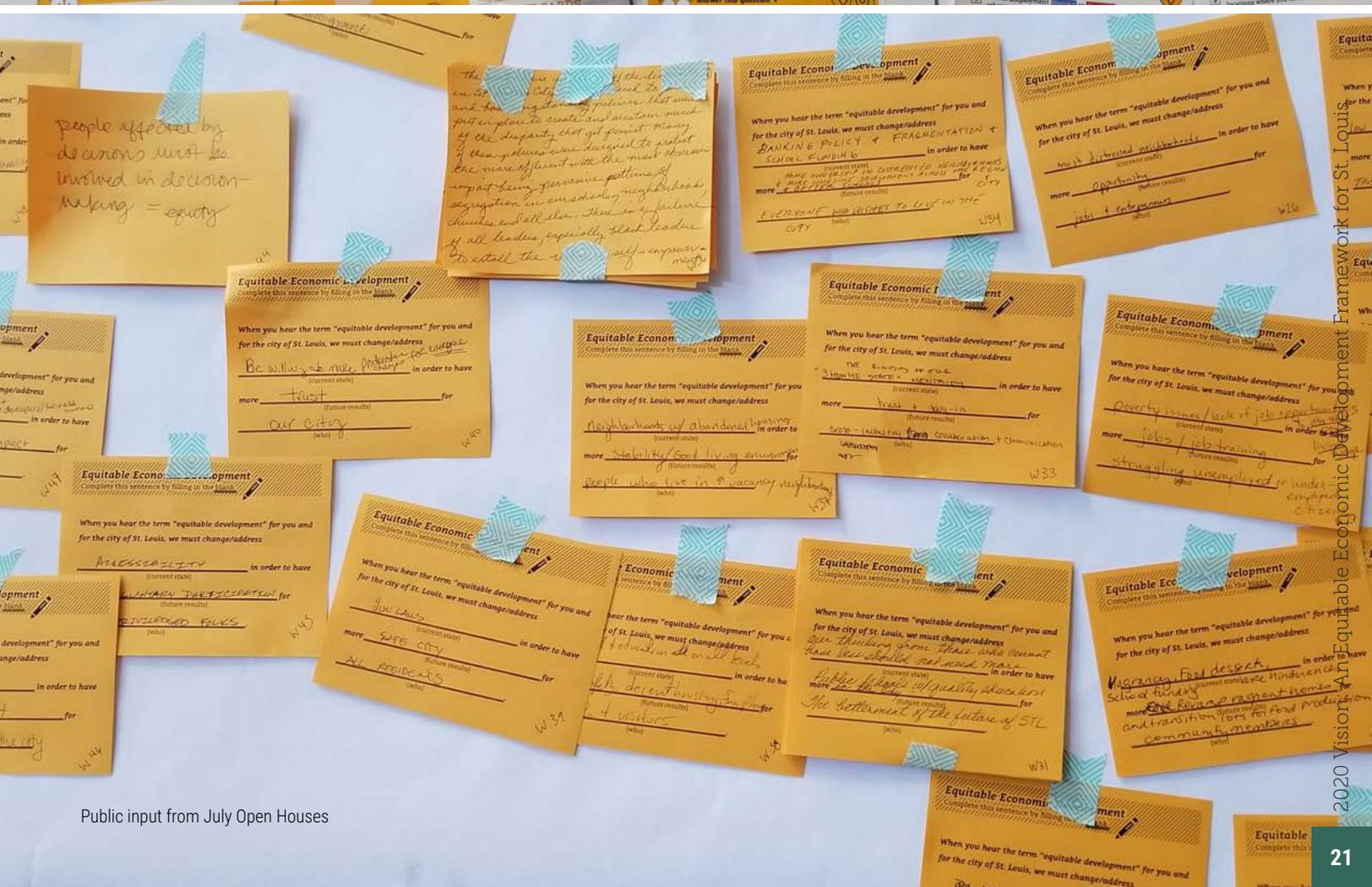
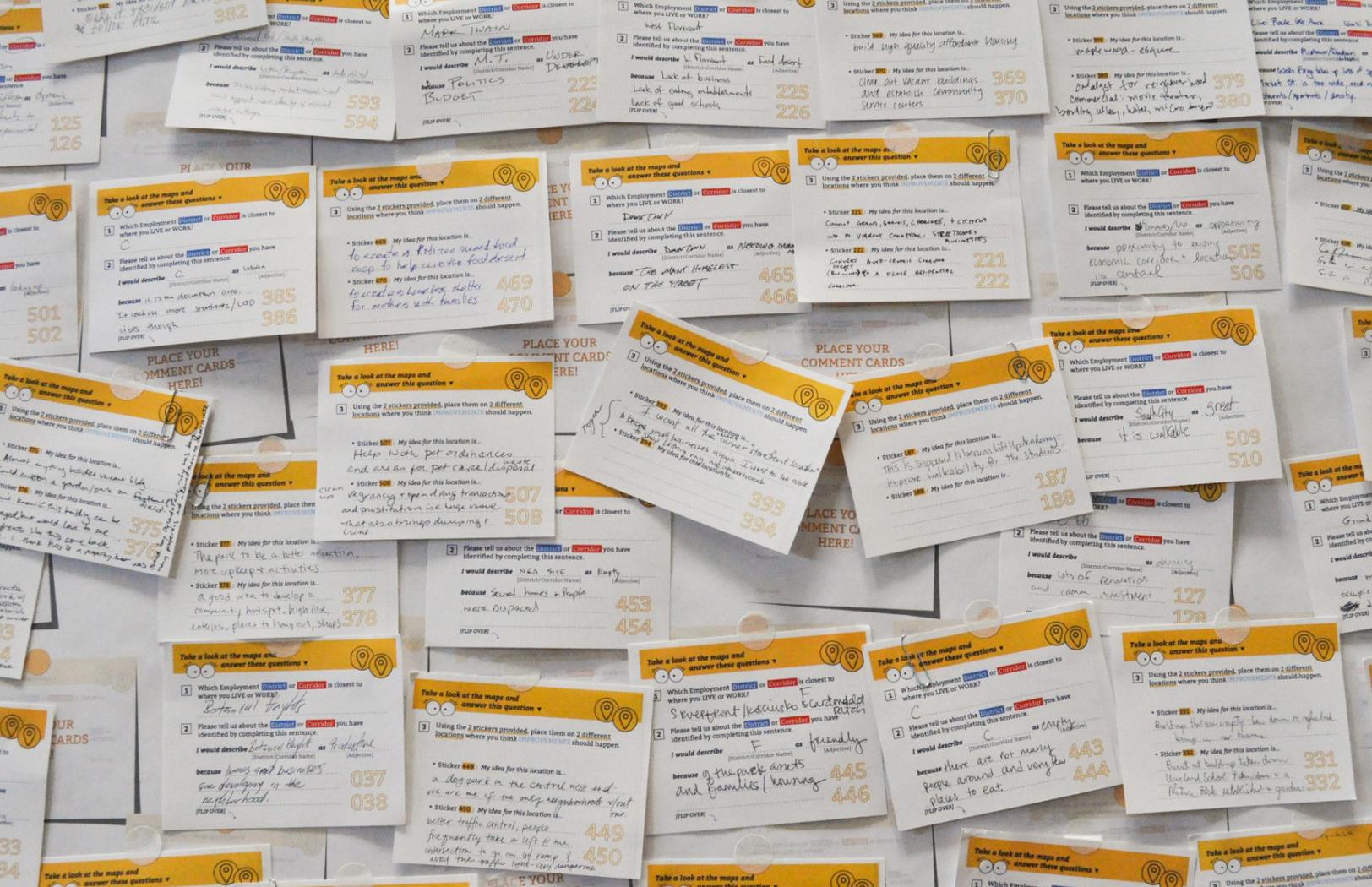
High school students were asked what jobs are currently in demand in St. Louis. Students believed nursing and health care positions, food delivery, teachers and game designers to be in demand. Most high school students shared that they are hoping to go to college outside of the St. Louis area and are not planning on returning to the St. Louis area. Students shared that they feel opportunities for higher education, employment and entertainment are outside of St. Louis. Vacancy, littering and blighted neighborhoods were mentioned as signs of lacking economic prosperity and opportunity.

Public Events

› July 2019 Open Houses

Two open houses were hosted in July 2019 to share information about the project and collect feedback from community members and neighborhood leaders. The open houses took place at the Sheet Metal Workers Union Hall in South City and Vashon High School in North City and lasted three hours. Participants could come and go as they wished. Aldermen were invited to attend in the hour prior to the public to discuss project developments with team members.

Over 250 community members participated in the open houses. Community members learned about the open house through social media, yard signs, traditional media coverage, email to their neighborhood association and community organizations. Participants engaged with a series of exhibits with questions about how they utilize different parts of the city. Participants provided feedback and ideas about what they would like to see in each commercial corridor and employment district. Participants also learned about community resources like STL Made, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, and Great Rivers Greenway, and heard from representatives of other city projects. Due to the fact that two open houses were organized, the feedback and comments were tabulated separately in the accompanying graphics.

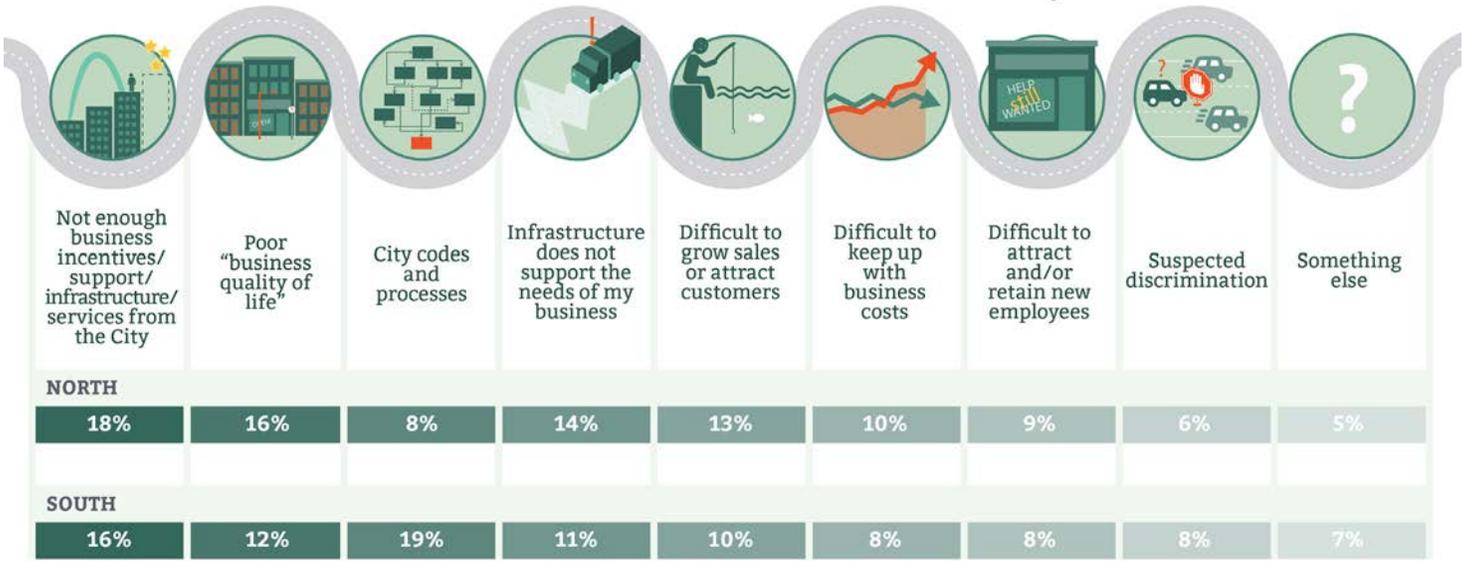


Public input from July Open Houses

5

WHAT BARRIERS HAVE YOU FACED?

On the road to operating a business



5

WHAT BARRIERS HAVE YOU FACED?

On the road to job and career opportunities

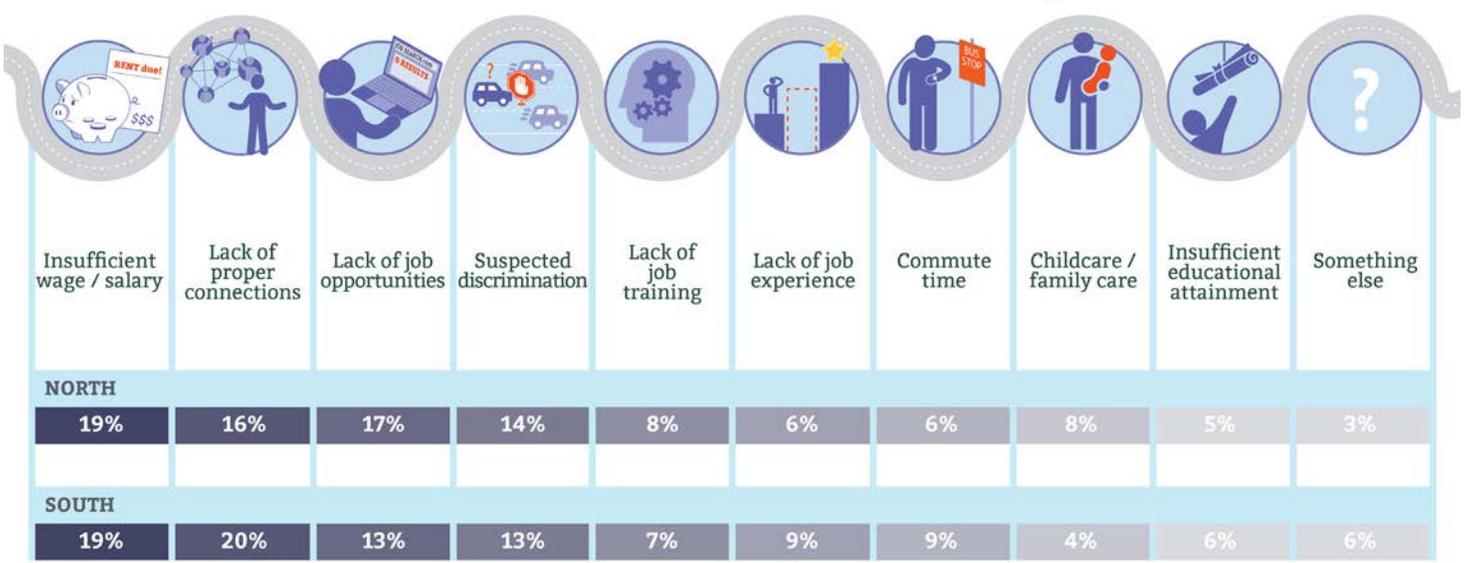


Figure I-5. July Open House: "What barriers do you face?" activity results

6

WHERE DO YOU THINK IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD HAPPEN?

What types of **IMPROVEMENTS** would you like to see?

TOP 3

NORTH		SOUTH	
14%	Mixed-Use Development "Residential / mixed-use development that is more urban and dense"	13%	Create Destinations "Shops, cafes, small start ups, small park...NO gas stations."
11%	More Businesses and Development "Bring thriving businesses similar to the top 10 or 25 cities."	12%	Street Improvement "Improved traffic infrastructure, added bike transportation infrastructure."
11%	Support Job Creation/ Development "Investing in the people and local businesses. Education, job centers / training centers."	9%	More Businesses and Development "There are a lot of commercially zoned vacant buildings - more local businesses!"

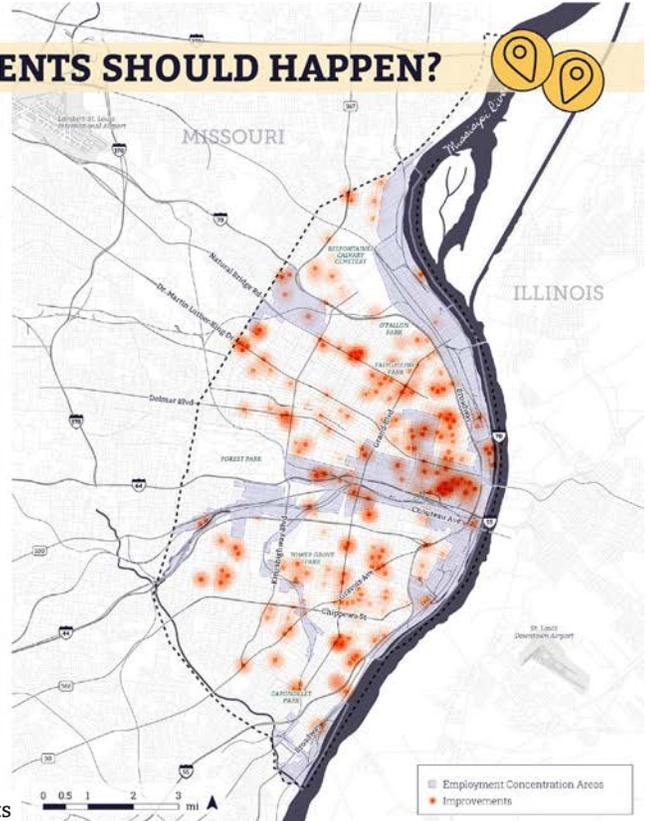


Figure I-6. July Open House: "The geography of jobs in the city" activity results



July Open House: "The geography of jobs in the city" activity cards and participants filling out their responses

7

WHAT DOES EQUITY MEAN FOR ST. LOUIS?

When asked what **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT** means for them and for the city of St. Louis, participants responded...

	WE MUST CHANGE/ADDRESS...	IN ORDER TO HAVE MORE...	FOR...
TOP 3	17% Public Education System "Our public education system." "Access to quality education."	14% Opportunities "Equal opportunities." "Opportunities for individuals to thrive."	25% Everyone "People black and white." "...Everyone with skills that [can] grow The community for everyone's benefit."
	13% Disparity in Investment "Uneven allocation of resources." "Disparities of knowledge & access."	8% Job Opportunities "Employment opportunities." "Jobs/job training."	17% Residents "Potential worker in north/south St. Louis." "City residents."
	6% Distressed Neighborhoods "Neighborhoods with abandoned housing." "Vacancy/derelict buildings."	6% Equitable Growth "Positive outcomes for all residents." "Equitable future, development."	10% Underserved Residents "The sectors of population who Have been ignored." "Marginalized communities, historically Disinvested communities, and Communities of color."
	6% Lack of Employment Opportunities "Low employment rate, Low income."	6% Wealth Creation "Better ways to build wealth." "Economic growth and cash flow."	
	6% Racism "Systemic/structural racism." "Structural racism and discrimination."		

Figure I-7. July Open House: "Equitable Economic Development" activity results



WHAT DOES EQUITY MEAN FOR ST. LOUIS?

① Our working definition for EQUITY means...

Equity for St. Louis means *creating an environment for equal opportunity that produces just and positive results for people of various races, nationalities, genders, sexualities, ages, incomes and abilities.*

In particular, any plan to advance economic development in the city must boldly address the racial disparities of income, employment, business participation and ownership inequality that limit prosperity for all. In this instance, equitable economic development for St. Louis means working to create, retain and support jobs and businesses, and increase wealth and entrepreneurship for all St. Louisans, especially people of color, women, and other groups traditionally marginalized from economic opportunity.

② Tell us what you think.

Grab a postcard and help us define what EQUITY means by completing this sentence:

When you hear the term "equitable development" for you and for the city of St. Louis, we must change/address _____ in order to have more _____ for _____.

July Open House: Participants filling out "Equitable Economic Development" activity (left). Activity board (right).



OVER 250 COMMUNITY MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN THE OPEN HOUSES.

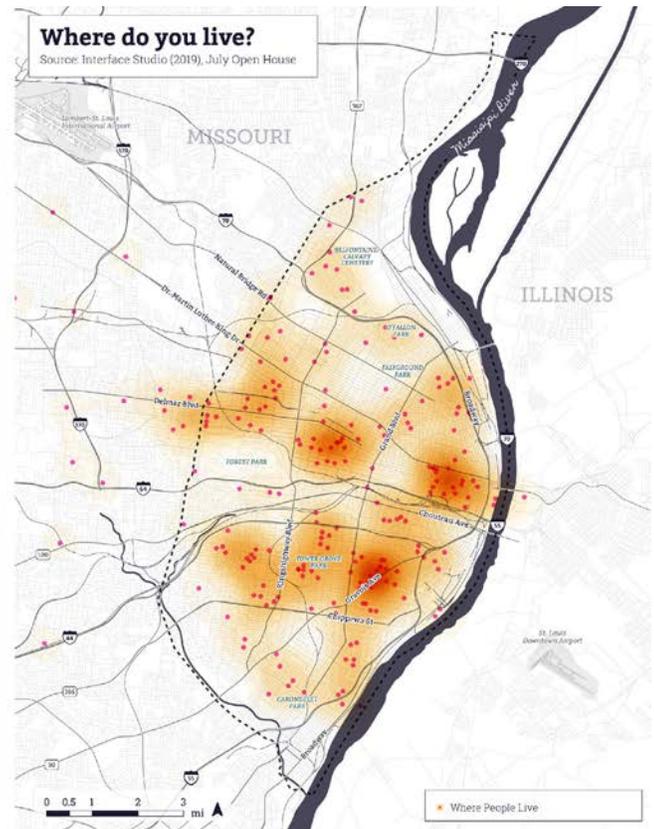


Figure I-8. July Open House: Demographic and location results of participants

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF A CITYWIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY. MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY INPUT IS NECESSARY TO DEVELOP THE PRIORITIES, TACTICS AND OUTCOMES OF THE FRAMEWORK, BUT THE COMMUNITY WILL ALSO BE PARTNERS IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

› **Online MetroQuest Survey**

In addition to in-person participation, an online survey mirrored the open house materials and feedback. About 175 participants completed the online survey to share what they would like to see in each commercial corridor and employment district.

› **Neighborhood Meeting Presentations**

To further educate the public about this project, we visited nine neighborhood meetings throughout the City of St. Louis. Neighborhood meetings were selected based on available meeting dates and proximity to economic districts and corridors that did not host District Discussions. These meetings included neighborhood, ward and community events.

During the presentation or events, community members had an opportunity to learn about the project and share feedback and ideas. At each neighborhood meeting, residents heard a presentation about the goals, framework and timeline of the project. The presentation highlighted twelve guiding propositions established during the July open houses and stakeholder interviews. Attendees at the neighborhood meetings had the opportunity to fill out a demographic survey, complete "Idea", "Story Share" and "Equitable Development" cards and sign up for project updates. From these neighborhood meetings, we received an additional 125 demographic surveys and valuable recommendations and ideas to inform the strategy development process.

- > 10/1: National Night Out at Kingsway West/CWE (50 people)
- > 10/12: O'Fallon Neighborhood Association (15 people)
- > 10/16: Ward 17 Economic Development Town Hall (100 people)
- > 10/24: Fox Park Neighborhood Association (40 people)
- > 10/26: Riverview West Business Association (10 people)
- > 10/26: Ward 4 monthly meeting (30 people)
- > 11/4: Wellston Loop Community Development Corporation (14 people)
- > 11/5: Downtown Dutchtown Business Association (DT2) (8 people)
- > 11/5: Benton Park Neighborhood Association (53 people)

Public Input on the Penultimate Draft

A draft of the equitable economic development framework was made available for public comment in August 2020. The framework primarily deals with strategies that would be implemented by the economic development, community development and workforce development agencies working in the city. While the strategies were developed to be comprehensive, feedback from the public comment period reaffirmed the importance of topics – housing, education, local planning, city and regional governance, transit and accessibility, crime, and reparations to the Black/African American community, among others – that fall outside the scope of this framework, despite their undeniable importance to inclusive economic growth. These factors are discussed at a high level below:

Housing: The framework devotes several strategies to housing-related topics, such as homeownership and anti-displacement, and calls for housing development in or near commercial corridors and employment districts. It also discusses the lens through which public agencies like SLDC evaluate housing developments and prioritize different types of housing, especially affordable housing. However, this document does not provide a deeper analysis or assessment of what types of housing should be prioritized in which neighborhoods. Recent work on housing issues in St. Louis includes the Community Development Administration's 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan and 2020 Annual Action Plan, which "assesses market conditions, affordable housing, and community development needs in the City of St. Louis and establishes data-driven, place-based priorities for investment in community development."¹²

Education: Education is another issue that has obvious implications for economic development and workforce readiness, as well as resident attraction and retention. The city's schools are often viewed as under-resourced compared to the county's, making it hard for the city to retain young families with children, especially Black/African Americans. Initiatives like the Opportunity Trust are already making headway to improve school quality across the region, and the city's racial and ethnic diversity offers a huge opportunity for culturally diverse, language immersive, and innovative school experiences. The framework identifies opportunities to engage with area high schools, including presenting the annual "State of the City Economy" to students, communicating new and emerging opportunities in manufacturing, and establishing a trade-oriented high school. However, interventions that address school operations and quality are not directly covered in the framework.

12 City of St. Louis 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan & 2020 Annual Action Plan. (2019). Community Development Administration. https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/community-development/documents/upload/CityofStLouis_2020-2024ConsolidatedPlan_and_2020AnnualActionPlan_2019-11-15.pdf

Local Planning: Planning efforts and collaboration with the city’s Planning & Urban Design Agency are critical to the strategies throughout this report. The framework takes a place-based approach to economic development in the Places chapter and assesses the needs of different employment districts and centers and commercial corridors at a high level, but it does not make a comprehensive evaluation of the city’s neighborhoods or their planning needs. The Planning & Urban Design Agency is scheduled to undertake neighborhood planning initiatives in the near future, which will fill some of these gaps. Calls for a new citywide land use plan, which were heard throughout the creation of this report, would also address some of these issues.

Governance: City and regional governance has been the topic of much debate in recent years, most visibly in the Better Together initiative that sought to merge the governments of the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County. Other concerns have been raised about the city’s own governance structure, recommending it transition from a mayor-council to a council-manager structure. While these governance topics are outside the scope of this framework, they are important to the future of the city and region and would undoubtedly affect framework implementation.

Transit and Accessibility: Another important topic that falls outside the extent of this work is physical accessibility. The City of St. Louis is known for its car dependency, but as the city embraces opportunities for growth, this approach will no longer be sustainable and support for public transit must increase. Metro’s Rapid Transit Connector Study, part of the implementation of “Moving Transit Forward,” the agency’s long-range transit plan, recognizes the importance of transit and assessed two potential bus rapid transit (BRT) routes: Downtown St. Louis to Chesterfield along I-64, and Downtown St. Louis to the North County Transit Center. These routes will be integral to regional accessibility and job access.

Crime: Crime was one of the most common concerns raised by residents and business owners. The primary reason why the framework does not directly address crime reduction is because it is not a policing/public safety document. Nevertheless, there are efforts being made by the Police Department and others to address crime in the city. The role that this plan plays in reducing crime is to address the underlying causes of poverty, which contribute to criminal activity. However, the framework recognizes the need for community-driven public safety, as well as a reduction in crime and reliance on the police, and the commercial corridors strategies call for a collaborative approach to mining best practices and sharing knowledge about crime reduction interventions.

Reparations: The economic and demographic report charts recent trends in the city, illustrating dramatic racial and spatial divides. Although reparations are not discussed in the framework, this report does strive to embody the imperative of racially equitable and inclusive economic growth. Strategies aim to prioritize Black/African American residents, entrepreneurs, and neighborhoods, identifying the need to create a plan to retain and grow the city’s Black/African American middle class, support future generations of diverse entrepreneurs, and accelerate investments in long-disinvested areas across the city. As discussed previously, recent trends have illuminated stark racial disparities in coronavirus mortality rates, which combined with the so-called “digital divide,” are likely to generate additional disparities in education, income supports, and access to basic consumer goods. As part of the strategy to support the city’s Black/African American middle class, the framework calls for a convening of local employers and philanthropy to make a commitment to end the digital divide and support universal broadband investment in Black/African American neighborhoods. While these strategies do not constitute reparations by any means, the data and strategies in the framework could be used in future discussions about how to best support the city’s Black/African American residents and pursue reparative outcomes.



A participant at a July Open House

STRATEGIES

Strategies aimed at addressing the ten goals listed above are organized around three major strategic areas:

Opportunity to Thrive: Identifies the types of supports needed to translate economic growth into higher and more stable incomes and opportunities – and increased household wealth – for St. Louisans and eventually to support population growth in the city;

Clusters: Identifies the sets of industries that can provide the foundation for significant growth in jobs and entrepreneurship, with a focus on clusters that can provide quality opportunities for St. Louisans of all educational attainment levels; and

Places: Recognizes that conditions and opportunities vary across the city and that a place-based approach is necessary to create a high quality of life for all residents.

These areas are used to classify the strategies but are by no means siloes – and in practice, many strategies are interconnected and cut across two or three areas. This sequence from opportunity to thrive, to clusters, to places does not imply prioritization of one section over another, but rather reflects the linkages across the strategic areas: equitable growth requires vibrant corridors and districts across the city that can support a wide range of jobs; these jobs must be accompanied by supports that increase opportunities for St. Louisans from all neighborhoods and racial groups for stable and prosperous careers; and jobs and careers must translate asset building, especially home ownership and equity, for households.

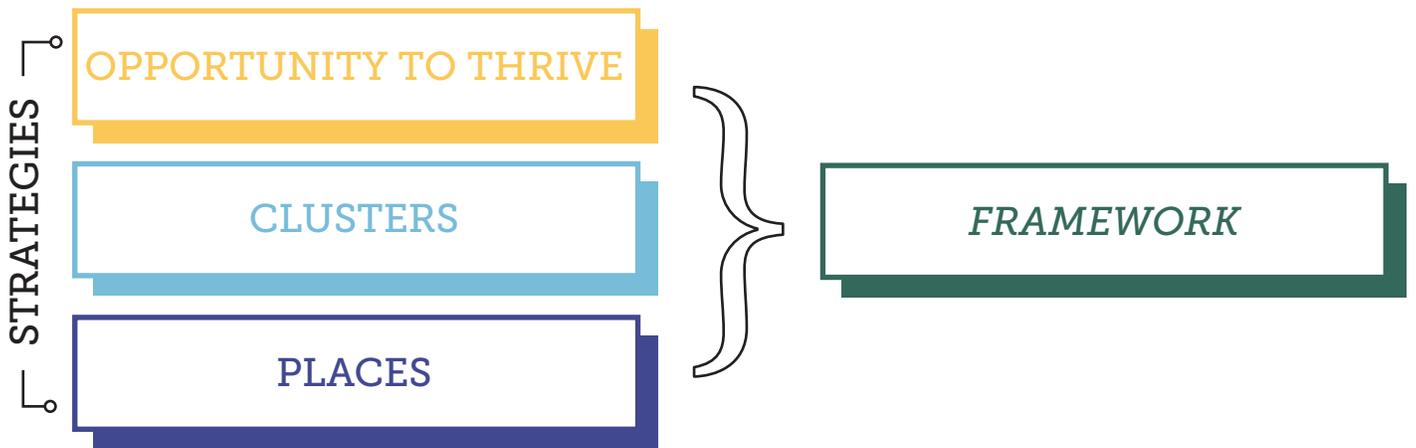


Figure I-9. Framework organization

IMPLEMENTATION

From the high-level propositions and goals, down to strategies and action items, the framework is designed to be actionable and to retain and build on the city’s existing strengths, partnerships, and opportunities to share and collaborate, rather than starting anew. Its strategies are structured to provide detail on specific tactics, including roles of specific organizations (SLDC alongside other economic development organizations in the city and region) and potential partners, timing of implementation, potential funding, goals, and evaluation metrics. These are designed to provide SLDC staff, the city, and their partners with a playbook for implementing the strategies in each of the three strategic areas (opportunity to thrive, clusters, and places) and expand opportunities for collaborating and sharing. Strategies in these areas work in tandem to make the city attractive to current and prospective residents, workers, entrepreneurs, businesses, and leaders.

While this level of detail and guidance is critical for shaping day-to-day priorities and decision-making at SLDC (and, where relevant, its partners), the stakes, of course are much larger: collectively, the strategies and action items are meant to transform the St. Louis economy into one that is more equitable and prosperous, generates higher tax revenues, and supports population retention and growth.

THE FRAMEWORK IS DESIGNED TO BE ACTIONABLE AND TO RETAIN AND BUILD ON THE CITY’S EXISTING STRENGTHS, RATHER THAN STARTING ANEW.

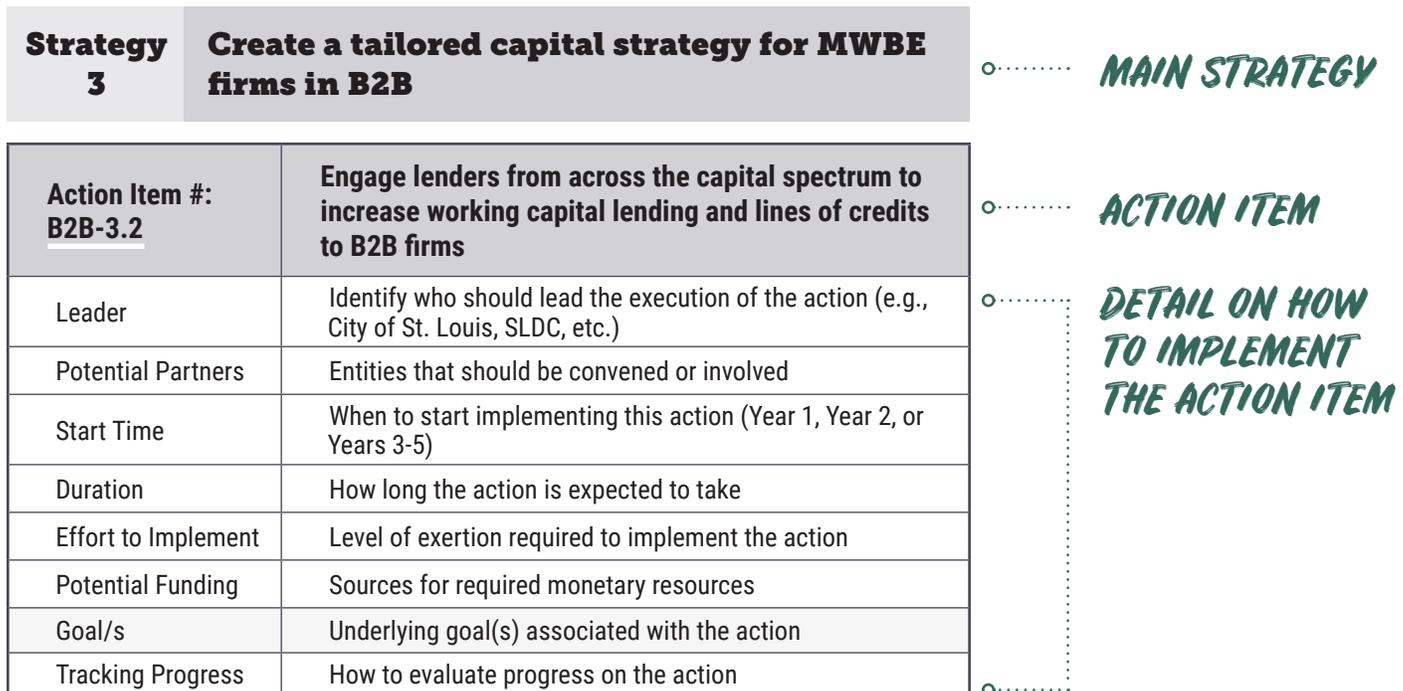


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