

## **HEART OF PEORIA URBAN DESIGN FORUM DESIGN CHARRETTE MAY 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>**

The following comments provided by charrette participants express their vision for the Warehouse District. Comments were transposed directly from presentations and graphics prepared by each table. The consultant team makes no claim as to their accuracy or validity. These valuable insights will be used to guide the consultants as the team analyzes the issues and develops the community's vision for the area.

### **WAREHOUSE DISTRICT**

#### **TABLE NO. 1**

##### **Spokesperson – David Henebry**

- Bring people/developers in to see the inside of buildings -- take advantage of the personality of the area; clean up existing properties (wash/paint/repair windows);
- Maintain and expand current businesses;
- Encourage/expand and develop identity for Arts District;
- Make use and reclaim the waterfront as public realm for day-to-day use;
- Introduction of a potential arts/industrial school to work with businesses Downtown, as well as District 150 and possibly ICC to develop technical skills that could potentially be used in the area;
- Concentration of residential;
- Possible relocation of Post Office;
- Street market;
- Primarily mixed-use development;
- Emphasis on Washington corridor and redevelopment of the Jefferson corridor with idea of streetscape to improve the image of the area and district as a whole;
- Concentrate on some new investment and expand what has already been developed down at the 401 area;
- Make Adams and Jefferson two-way;
- Washington Street – maintain truck traffic, but introduce things to slow traffic to become pedestrian friendly;
- Focus some of the first development on infilling between the existing empty areas so that the existing buildings maintain their functions, but also so developments can “feed off” one another;
- Extend Water Street;
- Ballpark being primary draw to the City - Want to introduce development around the concentration area to feed off the energy that is occurring and get 24/7 experience and also help extend what is already occurring down at the River;
- Suggest the entire area be raised high enough so it could be built out over the existing railroad tracks to get the people closer to the River without the existing railroad barrier;
- Vacant Hardees building needs “to go”;
- Dangerous intersection at base of bridge at MacArthur – Research needs to be done to make it a friendly area for transportation, but at the same time, maintain the truck traffic access in this area.

The following were not mentioned, but were included with the written information:

- Limit density of low income and rental housing;
- Vacant or parking areas are “ripe” for infill;
- Walkway/bikeway along River;

- River to have vista with sculpture;
- River feature/fountain.

**TABLE NO. 2****Spokesperson – Mark Misselhorn**

- Define and/or redefine Washington Street as Warehouse District artery with Route 24 possibly switched to Jefferson and/or Adams so that this becomes not covered by IDOT in terms of the streetscape; calm traffic but create a different environment on Washington in terms of wider sidewalks and streetscape to make it more pedestrian friendly; possibly create two nodes: 1) MacArthur, as a natural southern boundary of the Warehouse District, with the bridge across the River, with the northern boundary being the Bob Michel Bridge; and 2) State Street, where it intersects with Washington, could also be an entry node into the District;
- Encourage diverse residential development, not only condominiums, but also apartments (different levels of income) to create 24/7 type of activity;
- Encourage mixed-use and balance the diversity of the existing businesses;
- Create open green space – e.g., a dog park would be useful for people with pets;
- Utilize Riverfront - State Street as cross access with the Ballpark and the River; take advantage of Commercial Street;
- Branding the district – Not only streetscape and lighting, but also boundary identification; refurbish some of the signage on buildings;
- Connection from Jefferson through Maple - depending on the nature of the buildings, and extending through Maple to get another access from the urbanized area to the Riverfront;
- Redirect rail line along Riverfront;
- Continue lighting on Bob Michel Bridge and light bridge across MacArthur;

**Spokesperson – Joe Richey**

- There are 40 to 50 viable and diverse businesses located in the area. Some of those he listed were as follows: Utility companies, developers, residential, auto repair, arts services, manufacturing companies, car wash, used car sales, attorneys, residential, Ballpark and the Police Department.

**TABLE NO. 3****Spokesperson – Nancy Biggins**

- Develop north to south;
- Washington would be the “spine” of the area;
- Slow down traffic on Washington and Adams;
- Encourage the view and to connect it with the River;
- More public and green space;
- Preserve historic buildings and keep the history of the area and agree with the branding of the area;
- Keep the arts, but not rule out the warehouse aspects;
- Explore public and private partnerships to finance improvements of the area.

**Spokesperson – Henry Lawrence**

- To help problem with Washington Street not being pedestrian friendly: Have an overpass, starting at grade level at Oak and Adams, going straight across and then have a stairway, elevator, or ramp, to facilitate pedestrian traffic flow toward the River from the Ballpark, without having to encumber the five lanes of traffic on Washington Street.

**TABLE NO. 4****Spokesperson – Greg Rastatter**

- River is what makes Peoria special;
- Would like to see marina with green space along the Riverfront and a boardwalk;
- Pedestrian access to Ballpark and River;
- Signature River restaurant;
- Bike lane;
- Public trolley;
- Charter school;
- Hotel – accessible to Civic Center, Ballpark, Renaissance Park, and Museum;
- More casual retail, book store, grocery store;
- Road houses;
- Traffic study for Washington, Adams, Jefferson (pedestrian oriented);
- Street – like a gas-lamp district representing the historical aspect;
- New buildings should have architectural character to fit the Warehouse image.

**TABLE NO. 5****Spokesperson – Geoff Smith**

- Create a place – give brand identity, some type of name; create an icon or visual identity;
- Make it a destination for people to go - Promote pedestrian, bike, and trolley on a loop pattern, linking the Warehouse District, Riverfront, and business district; main trolley from Washington Street, linking the Warehouse District and the Riverfront, turning onto Main Street, going through the Business District and to the Renaissance Park to Bradley and come back on University down the hill to MacArthur, thereby reducing dependence on the automobile;
- Empower developers and business owners to create mixed-use opportunities;
- New development: Residential with reasonable rent and ownership opportunities; provide incentives for new businesses; grocery store;
- Create nicely scaled public gathering areas, where seating areas can have streetscape locations with tables and chairs;
- Area around the Ballpark – To give people a place to go before/after a game; the large warehouse buildings on Oak Street that come down to the Ballpark could lend themselves to development in terms of different functions and create a pedestrian-friendly Washington Street, and there could be some type of interesting gateway to identify the Warehouse District, such as a steel structure or large lanterns to shine on the district;
- Depot Street would be an opportunity for a new urbanist type of laboratory, e.g., townhomes or different types of buildings; and principles of new urbanism could be applied to the backs of existing warehouse buildings;
- Arts collaboration;
- Banners to assist with branding;
- New park on south side of Bob Michel Bridge;
- Green space along River;
- Connect bike path to Keller and then connect on the north side to the Rock Island Trail;
- Locate new school – K – 8 near the Ballpark;
- A public space or plaza on the opposite side of the Ballpark;
- Water feature on Riverfront.

**TABLE NO. 6****Spokesperson – Pat Sullivan**

- Existing assets – Existing buildings, architecture, River, Civic Center, Post Office, 401 Water; Le Vieux Carre area; Arts District; WTVP;
- Problems: Infrastructure, wiring, no sidewalks, railroad noise, rails that block access to River; unfriendly roadways; empty lots/buildings; and garbage;
- Washington – 3 lanes, with parking on both sides, and a turning lane in the middle;
- Widen sidewalks;
- Slow traffic down;
- Improve permitting process;
- Bicycle route coming to Water or Depot Street;
- Keep businesses in area;
- Council Member Gulley is working to get an industrial park;
- Access to River – Walnut;
- Use unused land that was a parking lot for park and beach;
- East/west streets coming down – put brick back in streets;
- Change to underground wiring.