

Goals and Objectives

Olivette Park is a neighborhood with many issues, both positive and negative, that must be addressed in a stabilization and improvement plan. Any improvement effort undertaken in the neighborhood must bring together a wide coalition of people, organizations, and agencies to address the most pressing problems confronting the neighborhood in order to stop the deterioration. Further, after the neighborhood is stabilized, community development efforts must focus on building upon the neighborhood's many strengths and improving the overall environment of Olivette Park. Because of the broad-based cooperation that exists in support of Olivette Park and its improvement efforts, community development efforts undertaken have a high chance of success. Over time, Olivette Park can become a model for other distressed neighborhoods in East St. Louis.

Overall Development Goal

This plan relies upon the following goal to guide the stabilization and redevelopment of the Olivette Park Neighborhood:

To utilize Olivette Park's substantial physical, social, spiritual, and human resources to improve the quality of life for local residents and business owners through a comprehensive community development program focused on environmental improvement, crime prevention, youth development, housing improvement, business expansion, and arts programming activities.

Objectives

The six program areas listed in the overall development goal were identified through the project's various data collection exercises

and were confirmed by residents. Subsequent chapters outline specific initiatives and policies for each program area. The following is a brief description of each program area and its relationship to the overall improvement goal of the neighborhood.

Objective One *To enhance the residential quality of Olivette Park by preserving and improving the existing housing stock as well as finding opportunities for new affordable housing construction.*

This plan seeks to ensure that all Olivette Park residents have access to safe, affordable housing, and that the quality of the overall housing stock in the neighborhood is improved. This plan recommends programs that encourage and aid residents in making necessary home improvements which will stabilize the existing housing stock. The plan also identifies the structures in the neighborhood in need of demolition and outlines a method for ridding the neighborhood of derelict structures. In the long-term, projects are recommended that address rehabilitation of deteriorated structures in the neighborhood and construction of new housing.

Objective Two *To improve the health and safety of all residents as well as improve the appearance of the neighborhood through a series of environmental improvement programs.*

Deteriorated buildings, burnt-out structures, illegally-dumped trash, and unattended lots threaten the health and safety of all Olivette Park residents. Deteriorated, unoccupied buildings provide a protected venue for illegal activities and decrease the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Lots that are unattended are often perceived as ideal locations for illegal dumping and can become breeding grounds for rodents and insects. Furthermore, high weeds, trees, and trash isolate neighbors from each other, diminishing the sense of community in Olivette Park. This plan seeks to find ways to work with local residents and government to rid the neighborhood of this blight. In addition, the plan identifies park, landscaping and infrastructure improvements that will greatly enhance the appearance of the neighborhood, making it more attractive to private and public investors.

Objective Three *To improve the level of security in Olivette Park through crime prevention and home and business security programs.*

This plan seeks to improve the security and safety of the community. The plan identifies immediate opportunities for local residents to work with municipal officials to eliminate illegal activities from the neighborhood. In addition, this plan seeks to help individual residents and business owners make their homes and businesses more safe and secure. By reducing the risk of fire and burglary in individual structures, the whole neighborhood will become more secure.

Objective Four To expand local business activity and employment opportunities by informing residents and business owners of available resources, providing unemployed and underemployed residents with basic job skills that can improve their employment prospects and creating a business environment that fosters local business.

Economic development is inter-related to a variety of issues, including infrastructure, education, crime, and environmental conditions. The plan recommends three techniques for improving local economic conditions. First, the plan suggests ways to increase spending by East St. Louis residents at local businesses through a buy-local campaign. Second, it provides information for improved job training opportunities for residents seeking employment. Finally, the plan outlines methods for improving local infrastructure, a major factor in promoting business creation and expansion.

Objective Five To stabilize and use the neighborhood's considerable existing cultural resources and historic assets to promote the revitalization of the physical environment and to strengthen the social fabric of the community.

Olivette Park is home to some of the most important cultural and educational resources in the city. This plan seeks to capitalize on these resources by strengthening them and expanding cultural arts programming in East St. Louis. Residents realize that the wealth of historical assets and cultural resources in the neighborhood can be used as an important community revitalization tool.

Objective Six To increase educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities for youth in the neighborhood, and encourage their participation and commitment to the redevelopment of the neighborhood.

This plan seeks to increase the involvement of youth in neighborhood and city activities. Youth participation in the community contributes to organizational development and creates lasting community change. Some adults believe that youth do not possess the skills to assess community conditions, to set priorities, to develop action plans, or to formulate strategies to implement programs. This plan seeks to disprove that belief. The future of Olivette Park and the City of East St. Louis is dependent upon community leaders recognizing the value of youth participation in planning, and it is suggested that a strong base of young leaders be cultivated.

Summary

The preceding program areas were deemed most important to neighborhood redevelopment by participants at the Olivette Park Neighborhood Summit. Therefore, these areas form the basis of the organization of the remainder of the plan. Projects for each program area are outlined in the following chapters. Projects are listed in order of difficulty, with the first projects being the least difficult to implement and requiring the least resources, and the later projects being more complex, requiring more planning, organization, and resources.

One other program area is provided in this report: organizational development. Discussions with committees working on each program area have revealed a consistent concern about building the capacity of the neighborhood organization so the neighborhood association can realistically implement the recommended programs. Organized neighborhood involvement and community empowerment is necessary for the revitalization of Olivette Park. The Olivette Park Neighborhood Association is poised to steer the implementation of this plan and the redevelopment of the neighborhood. The implementation chapter will address organizational development, outlining ways for the organization to build its membership and capacity.